Preparing the Way: Teaching English Learners in the PreK-12 Classroom

Power Point by: J. Govoni
Did You Know...

English Learners (ELs) are the fastest growing population in PreK-12 classrooms across the nation?
There are few teacher preparation programs requiring candidates to have ESOL training.

In fact, training to teach, support, and assess ELs is *not* required across many states.
The population of ELs in the U.S. is continuing to increase (Pandya, Batalova, & McHugh, 2011).

Most elementary teachers have little to no preparation in working with ELs (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008, Lucas & Villegas, 2013, Daniel & Peercy, 2014).
Less than 20% of elementary and secondary pre-service programs require any course work on ways to teach ELs

Fewer than 1/3 of candidates in pre-service programs are required to have a field experience directly with ELs
Samson & Collins (2012) reported …

• Most, if not all, teachers have or can expect to have ELs in their classrooms …(2)

• All teachers must understand the principles and best practices in supporting ELs’ unique needs(4)

• Improving policies on teacher knowledge and skills in working with ELs is one way to enhance educational outcomes (7)

Source: Preparing All Teachers to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners: Applying Research to Policy and Practice for Teacher Effectiveness
Daniel and Peercy (2014) point out …

- Academic achievement for elementary students directly predicts academic success and the likelihood of high school graduation (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Hernandez, 2011)

- ‘Feeling’ responsible for guiding teachers to work with ELs does not enable them to do so effectively or cohesively (Daniel & Peercy, 112, 2014)
According to the Migration Policy Institute (State Immigration Data Profiles), the top five states with large populations of ELs are:

California, Texas, Florida, New York, & Illinois

Map Source: [http://www.epa.gov/enviro/facts/sdwis/search.html](http://www.epa.gov/enviro/facts/sdwis/search.html)

Yet, all educators are responsible for preparing students to be productive citizens in the global workforce.
The ultimate question is:
How can states improve on providing training for all educators in order to better serve the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and at varying English proficiency levels?
The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) stipulates that all students access the core curriculum and meet specific measurable goals. Standards, policies, and procedures have been identified; yet, knowledge of best practices in ESOL are still needed to enhance teaching and learning.
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Read the Introduction and Part One of the text to learn more about the legal policies and practices regarding the education and rights of ELs.