



*National Adult English Language Learning
Professional Development Network*

English Language Learner University (ELL-U) Professional Development Plan

Kratos Learning

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Foreword

This document was created under a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, known as ELL-U (English Language Learner University). It was initially drafted in 2010 and revised in 2012. The Professional Development Plan contained herein was in effect until the project ended in July 2013. However, all descriptions of activities and, especially, of “Lessons Learned and Next Steps for ELL-U” refer to the project’s status at the time of the document’s final version in November 2012. The website created under this project no longer exists as a separate entity. However, the online courses created for ELL-U may be accessed at the [Literacy Information and Communications System \(LINCS\) website](#). References to the course names can be found in several sections of this plan, including footnotes.

This document has been included in the LINCS Resource Collection as an example of how a research-based, hybrid (online and face-to-face) professional development plan for teachers of adult English language learners was created. It may be used a resource for those who are interested in developing something similar, or who are interested in learning from the planning and processes related to its execution.

Purpose of the Project

Given the inextricable connection between teacher quality and student learning, there is an urgent need in adult education, and specifically in the field of adult English language learning, for a cohesive and coherent system of high quality professional development (PD). It is essential that PD addresses the knowledge required for efficient second language acquisition, while providing instructors and administrators of adult English language learners (ELLs) with models of effective instruction and the support necessary to apply these skills in their daily practice.

Kratos, under contract with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), has created a comprehensive framework that organizes PD opportunities for educators of adult ELLs around an online learning community. English Language Learner University (ELL-U) is an innovative, accessible, and free learning portal that aims to enhance teacher quality through sustained professional development opportunities and the use of technology.

ELL-U is designed to mirror a traditional college campus. Within ELL-U, educators have access to a team of expert faculty, academic offerings designed around learning priorities, and practical resources. Features such as topical clubs, course catalogs, and a variety of learning activities create a simulated university experience. Users can also engage in campus life through social media and networking tools designed to create a virtual community of practice.

This Professional Development Plan identifies learning priorities for educators of adult ELLs at the state, regional, and program levels. This plan, coupled with the learning priorities, provides the foundation for the development of ELL-U's academic offerings.

Project Goal

The primary goal of this federal investment is to identify and enhance resources to support teacher development and the overall quality of adult English language instruction. ELL-U aims to broaden, deepen, and strengthen the knowledge and skills of educators who work with adult ELLs through a hybrid approach of face-to-face professional learning activities coupled with and augmented by virtual learning and networking opportunities.

To accomplish this goal, ELL-U:

- Establishes professional learning priorities for educators that are grounded in what is known about effective ELL instruction by conducting a thorough analysis of research and data.
- Identifies and disseminates existing high quality PD resources, as well as new resources to address gaps in materials.
- Provides content-rich training events and learning opportunities to individual teachers of adult ELLs and provides train-the-trainer opportunities to build states' capacity to support teacher quality.

- Creates and sustains a range of learning activities that take advantage of available technologies to increase access to PD by ELL teachers across the country, including online courses, virtual and face-to-face study circles, training events, and clubs.
- Connects national, regional, and state professional developers and educators of adult ELLs to expand and strengthen their respective PD infrastructures through communities of practice.

Introduction to the ELL-U Professional Development Plan

The ELL-U Professional Development Plan is framed around five current learning priorities that have been identified by experts in the field as crucial skill and knowledge areas. The learning priorities were developed by conducting a thorough review and analysis of published research related to teaching adult ELLs. The learning priorities for PD that arose from this analysis were augmented by the years of experience of the project's subject matter experts (SMEs): Dr. Stephen Reder and Dr. Kathy Harris (Portland State University), Dr. Martha Bigelow (University of Minnesota), and Dr. Susan Finn Miller (Lancaster-Lebanon, Pennsylvania, Intermediate Unit 13 education service agency). Each learning priority encompasses several potential sub-topics that further expand and identify core content areas that instructors of adult ELLs need in order to develop a robust and adaptable set of professional knowledge and practices. Each learning priority is supported by a research-based rationale and ordered in terms of which should be addressed early in the contract and which can be addressed later, or in subsequent years. The ELL-U Professional Development Plan was devised in October 2010 and updated in November 2012.

A summary of quality factors for PD follows the current and future learning priorities. This section provides key findings from various reports and guides on teacher PD (e.g., Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Center for Adult English Language Acquisition, 2010; Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Desimone, 2009, 2011; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005; Rodriguez & McKay, 2010; Schaetzel, Peyton & Burt, 2007; Smith, 2010; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). The PD activities designed throughout the duration of this initiative are constructed with these research-based quality factors in mind.

Additionally, a brief summary of various delivery mediums and approaches to differentiating learning is provided. This section describes how opportunities for learning vary in delivery and intensity. Universal design, adult learning theory, and the framework for explicit instruction are all considered in each of the PD offerings. Also an overview of partner organizations and leveraging project resources is described. Partner organizations and leveraged opportunities through state and local entities contribute to outreach efforts, event recruitment, and the dissemination of project resources to ensure that ELL-U PD opportunities are available and accessible to all educators.

Lastly, a brief synopsis of lessons learned through implementation in the first two years as well as recommended next steps to move the project forward are provided. These sections ensure that

the federal investment will reach a broad audience and engage the maximum number of educators in the ELL-U learning experience.

The appendix attached to the PD plan includes the full references to the research upon which the plan is based, much of which is cited throughout this document.

Professional Development Learning Priorities

The following learning priorities for ELL-U were developed through a review of the research base as well as literature reviews on adult ELLs and PD. These learning priorities serve to inform the content of all of the ELL-U PD activities. The audience for the PD activities includes teachers of adult ELLs, professional developers, program administrators, and volunteers.

This list of learning priorities and accompanying subtopics is not intended to be exhaustive, but begins to address some of the most important foundational content knowledge needed for instruction and common gaps found in training among adult English as a second/other language (ESOL) professionals. An overarching theme found throughout all of the learning priorities is the integration of technology. As programs and classrooms move into the digital age, all PD activities provided by ELL-U incorporate current available technologies to model use and best practices.

Principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a central area of content knowledge for all educators working with ELLs. There is a great need among adult ESOL educators for training in this area (Crandall, 1993, 1994; Crandall, Ingersoll, & Lopez, 2008; Smith & Hofer, 2003). Furthermore, there is evidence that educators need and want PD in this content area (Chung Wei et al., 2009).

The SLA subtopics are approached with the assumption that some educators have had recent high quality formal training while others have had no background at all in SLA.¹ This topic has been identified as the first learning priority because it serves as an anchor for all PD events delivered through ELL-U. The first way this learning priority is addressed is through an online course on the common facts and myths of SLA for adults.² The content of this course is based on a widely used book for practitioners by Lightbown and Spada (2006). This course includes materials which are useful to participants of all experience levels. Teachers new to this topic are provided with the foundational concepts, while experienced teachers can use it to refresh their knowledge and access helpful resources.

The second subtopic concerns teachers' knowledge of the English language and how this knowledge intersects with SLA. What educators know about how the English language works as a linguistic system (Andrews, 1994, 1999, 2007; Andrews & McNeill, 2005), as well as the beliefs they hold about the role of grammar teaching in SLA play significant roles in the choices

¹ This is based on the ELL-U project team's work with states. See the *Lessons Learned and Next Steps for ELL-U* section of this plan for more information.

² The course developed to support this learning priority, Second Language Acquisition: Myths, Beliefs, and What the Research Shows, is a pre-requisite for enrollment in other ELL-U learning activities.

teachers make in their curriculum and instruction (Andrews, 1994, 1999, 2007; Andrews & McNeill, 2005; Borg, Simon, 1998a, 1998b, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2003a; Larsen-Freeman, 1995). This subtopic is addressed through study circles, training events, and a club.³

The third subtopic focuses on the issue of how students' first language (L1) can be used to aid SLA. The PD strategy for this subtopic is a study circle.⁴ The rationale for this choice is that teachers must not only be provided with research on this topic (Auerbach, 1993; Bell, 1995; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Condelli & Wrigley, 2004a, 2004b; Condelli, Wrigley, Yoon, Cronen, & Seburn, 2003; Davis & Bistodeau, 1993; Edelsky, 1982; Goldenberg, 2008; Huerta-Macias, 2003; Huerta-Macias, & Kephart, 2009; Koda, 1993; Lee & Shallert, 1997; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009a; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009b; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009), but they must have a forum to explore pedagogies that use the L1 in specific and mindful ways (Cook, 2001; Rivera, 1999; Stewart, 2010; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). It is also critical that teachers view adult learners as adding English to their linguistic repertoire, i.e., they are emerging bi- or multilinguals (Fishman & Garcia, 2010, 2011; Garcia & Sylvan, 2011).

The fourth subtopic focuses on the concept of interlanguage and its implications for instruction. Interlanguage is a term used to describe the language of learners as they move through developmental stages, adopt different strategies, use their L1 to make assumptions about English, and the ways learners change their usage patterns across contexts of use (e.g., tasks, interlocutors). Learning about interlanguage and its role in teacher decision-making is addressed in this learning priority areas' online course and can be further explored in a study circle. The connections of interlanguage to practice, although multiple, focus primarily on decision-making related broadly to assessment practices. Some of the ways understanding interlanguage matters in assessment practices include designing feedback instruments that take into consideration the linguistic demands of the task (Tarone, 2000; Tarone & Parrish, 1988), the learners' proficiency/developmental level (Huebner, 1979; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), and the learners' L1 (Harley & Swain, 1978).

³ Second Language Acquisition in Action (study circle); Second Language Acquisition For Teachers Of Adult English Learners (training event); Teaching Vocabulary: Practical, Research-based Approaches to Instruction (study circle and training event); Vocabulary Instruction for ESL English Language Learners in ABE Classes (training event); Teaching Vocabulary Club.

⁴ The Role of The First Language In Learning English: Asset Or Barrier? (study circle) and Developing Oral Proficiency of Adults Learning English (study circle).

Table 1: Principles of Second Language Acquisition – Subtopics

Subtopics	PD Strategy	References supporting the need for this subtopic
Common myths and beliefs about SLA	Online Course	Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Kalaja & Ferreira Barcelos, 2004; Lightbown & Spada, 2006
Knowledge about language and SLA	Study Circle, Training Event, and Online Course	Andrews & McNeill, 2005; Borg, Simon, 1998b, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2003a; Borg, S., 2003b; Borg, Simon, 2005; Borg, Simon & Burns, 2008; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 1995
Using students' first language strategically	Study Circle	Auerbach, 1993; Bell, 1995; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Condelli & Wrigley, 2004a, 2004b; Condelli, Wrigley, Yoon, Cronen, & Seburn, 2003; Davis & Bistodeau, 1993; Edelsky, 1982; Fishman & Garcia, 2010, 2011; Garcia & Sylvan, 2011; Goldenberg, 2008; Huerta-Macias, 2003; Huerta-Macias, & Kephart, 2009; Koda, 1993; Lee & Shallert, 1997; Rivera, 1999; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009a; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009b; Stewart, 2010; Turnbull & Daily-O'Cain, 2009; Téllez & Waxman, 2004
Focusing on learner language to make teaching decisions (interlanguage)	Online Course and Study Circle	Adjemian, 1976; Bialystok & Sharwood Smith, 1985; Corder, 1981; Davies, Criper, & Howatt, 1984; Duff, P., 1986; Ellis, 1987; Huebner, 1979; Lantolf & Ahmed, 1989; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1988; Long & Porter, 1985; Muranoi, 1996; Norris & Ortega, 2011; Pica, 1988; Selinker, L., 1972; Selinker, Larry, 1992; Tarone, 1983, 1985; Tarone & Parrish, 1988; Tarone & Swierzbin, 2009

Teaching Adult ELLs who are Emergent Readers

Around the world, there are many adult learners who have not been schooled in their home language(s) and for whom print literacy is a new experience. In the U.S., these learners are common in adult programs. Between 2004 and 2007, 17 to 21 percent of the total population of ELLs enrolled in federally funded adult ESOL programs were determined to be at the beginning literacy level as evidenced by the National Reporting System. Nevertheless, most teachers of adult ELLs have not been trained to work with learners who are emergent readers and unaccustomed to western classroom language learning (Bigelow & Lovrien Schwarz, 2010; Paiewonsky, 1997; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010; Watson, 2010). This learning priority is important to fill a training gap in the professional knowledge of many adult ESOL teachers.

The first subtopic in this priority area focuses broadly on how adult emergent readers with limited formal schooling are unique among the larger population of adult ELLs with uninterrupted schooling and print literacy in their home language(s). This subtopic also explores how adult emergent readers vary in terms of the many reasons and circumstances leading to low print literacy and limited formal schooling including coming from a primarily oral, agrarian society, and protracted time in refugee camps (Bigelow & Lovrien Schwarz, 2010; Peyton et al., 2007). The reasons for adult ELLs not acquiring print literacy rests in experiences far out of reach of most ESOL teachers (Watson, 2010). Therefore, it is important for educators to understand how and why this occurs and begin to understand some of the background

experiences of this population in order to better teach them. An overview of instructional strategies that build on oral language skills and the life experiences of the learners are included in this subtopic as well. This content is addressed through an online course and club activities.⁵

The second subtopic focuses on what basic literacy skills to teach (e.g., alphabets, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) and how to teach them in meaningful and age-appropriate ways. Teaching approaches which draw on learners’ goals, strengths, and background experiences are taught and discussed (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Peyton et al., 2007). The PD strategy for delivering this content is through a study circle, training event, and club activities.⁶

The third subtopic focuses on identifying adult ELLs without print literacy and placing them in programs appropriately. Their needs for meaningful, engaging, literacy skill building can rarely be met in classes with learners who are print literate (Juffs & Rodrigues, 2008). There are some instruments available to measure native language literacy for placement purposes (Native Language Screening Device, n.d.) as well as tests in English which assess learners at the emergent level (e.g., BEST Test). This subtopic focuses on these types of instruments as well as classroom assessment tools which allow educators to assess and monitor literacy development in ways which inform instruction. The PD strategy for this subtopic includes a training event and club activities⁷ to give participants the opportunity to learn about and discuss their assessment practices for this unique population.

Table 2: Teaching Adult ELLs who are Emergent Readers – Subtopics

Subtopics	PD Strategy	References supporting the need for this subtopic
Uniqueness of adult emergent readers with limited formal schooling, a primer	Online Course and Club	Bigelow, 2010; Bigelow, & Lovrien Schwarz, 2010; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, & Queen, 1998; Peyton et al., 2007; Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2009; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010
Strategies for teaching literacy	Study Circle, Training Event and Club	DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009; Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Freire, 1970; Vinogradov, 2008, 2010
Identification, placement, and assessment of LFS learners	Training Event and Club	Ardila, 2004; Ardila, Ostrosky-Solis, & Mendoza, 2000; Ardila, Rosselli, & Rosas, 1989; LDA of Minnesota, 2006; Schöneberger, van de Craats, & Kurvers, 2011

Assessment in Adult ELL Programs

Beyond standardized assessment as an integral part of accountability in adult ESOL programs across the nation (Kenyon, & Van Duzer, 2003; Van Duzer, 2002; Van Duzer & Berdan, 1999),

⁵ Teaching Adult ELLs Who Are Emergent Readers (online course) and Working with Emergent Readers Club.

⁶ Teaching Adult English Language Learners Who Are Emergent Readers (training event); Professional Development for Teaching Adult Emergent Readers (training event); Teaching Adult ELL Emergent Readers: Next Steps in Linking Research & Practice (study circle); and Working with Emergent Readers Club.

⁷ Professional Development for Teaching Adult Emergent Readers (training event) and Working with Emergent Readers Club.

assessment can and should be used for various purposes, (i.e., to screen and place learners, to diagnose areas of strength and weakness, to design and modify instruction, and to measure learning gains). Teachers of adult ELLs need to understand the basics of assessment and how the results of assessment can be used to guide instructional decisions (Bailey, 1998; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Brown, 2005; Gottlieb, 2006; Wrigley, Chen, White, & Soroui, 2009). Accordingly, an online course⁸ outlines the basics of both formal and informal assessment, also referred to as “assessment for learning” and authentic assessment (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996) for teachers who do not have this background knowledge. A complimentary training event can be created, based on training demands, to build on the content of the foundational course.

Around the globe, there is a growing research base in adult literacy (Looney, 2007) and K-12 showing the positive impact of formative assessment on students’ learning (Black & William, 2009, 2010; Cauley & McMillan, 2009; Looney, 2007; McManus, 2008; Nassaji, 2009; O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996; Parr & Limbrick, 2010; Parr & Timperley, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006; Shepard, 2008, 2009; Spinelli, 2008; Stiggins, 2005, 2008; Timperley & Parr, 2009; Wiliam, 2007, 2011; Wylie, 2008). This research shows that when teachers carefully plan instruction with the end in sight, learners are able to demonstrate their learning and, thus, provide rich information to teachers about next steps in their teaching. Moreover, as Marzano (2009) and Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and others (e.g., Fluckiger, Vigil, Pasco & Danielson, 2010; Lundstrum & Baker, 2009) have shown, students should be involved in assessing and tracking their own progress; when learners do so, this has a positive impact on their learning. ELL-U will use a study circle on formative assessment to give practitioners the opportunity to examine their assessment practices and deepen their knowledge of how to apply assessment for learning in their teaching, as well as how to effectively involve students in peer and self-assessment.

Table 3: Assessment in Adult ELL Programs – Subtopics

Subtopics	PD Strategy	References supporting the need for this subtopic
An overview of assessment in language teaching with a focus on formative assessment and using assessment for instructional decisions	Online Course and Training Event	Bailey, 1998; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Brown, 2005; Gottlieb, 2006; Kenyon, & Van Duzer, 2003; Van Duzer, 2002; Van Duzer & Berdan, 1999; Wrigley, Chen, White & Soroui, 2009
Assessment for learning (formative assessment)	Online Course and Study Circle	Black & Wiliam, 2009, 2010; 2010; Cauley, & McMillan, 2009; Fluckiger, Vigil, Pasco, Danielson, 2010; Looney, 2007; Lundstrum & Baker, 2009; McManus, 2008; Marzano, 2009; Nassaji, 2009; Nicol, & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996; Parr & Limbrick, 2010; Parr & Timperley, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006; Shepard, L. 2008, 2009; Spinelli, 2008; Stiggins, 2005, 2008; Timperley & Parr, 2009; William, 2007, 2011; Wylie, 2008

⁸ Formative Assessment to Inform Quality Adult ESL Instruction (online course).

Principles of Second Language Teaching: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction

As the research illustrates, PD must be meaningful and relevant to the daily work of teachers. By the same token, it is critical that teachers design instruction that is authentic and relates to learners' lives outside of the classroom (Auerbach, Barahona, Midy, Vaquerano, Zambrano & Arnaud, 1996; Cooke, 2006; Condelli, Wrigley, Yoon, Cronen & Seburn, 2003; National Research Council, 2011; Mathews-Aydinli, 2007; Nash & Kallenbach, 2009; Norton Peirce, 1995, 2000; Peyton, Moore & Young, 2010; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson & Soler, 2002; Jacobson, & Soler, 2002; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Walker & Leary, 2009; Wallace, 2006; Warriner, 2007, 2010; Weinstein, 2002).

Saunders and Goldenberg (2010) reviewed the extant research as well as the available meta-analyses and works synthesizing experimental and quasi-experimental research among language learners, the bulk of which were conducted among college-age learners studying a foreign language. The authors suggest the research supports several guidelines for English learners in K-12. The following adapted list with added references is pertinent to instruction with adult ELLs:

- Instruction should include carefully planned interactive activities (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Canale & Swain, 1980; Ellis, 2003; Foster & Ohta, 2005; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian, 2006; Keck, Iberri-Shea, Tracy-Ventura & Wa-Mbaleka, 2006; Tellez & Waxman, 2006).
- Instruction should emphasize listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Cranton, 2001; McElvain, 2010).
- Instruction should teach elements of English explicitly (e.g., decoding, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, functions, conventions) (Alamprese, 2009; Alamprese, MacArthur, Price, & Knight, 2011; Davidson & Strucker, 2002; MacArthur, Konold, Glutting, & Alamprese, 2011; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Strucker, Yamamoto, & Kirsch, 2007).
- Instruction should integrate meaning and communication in explicit language teaching (Kruidenier, MacArthur, & Wrigley, 2010; Ellis, 2005).
- Instruction should provide explicit feedback to learners (Carroll, Roberge, & Swain, 1992; Russell & Spada, 2006).
- Instruction should include attention to communication and language-learning strategies (McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009 suggest a careful rethinking of reading strategy instruction).

Regarding vocabulary, in particular, recent studies have shown the efficacy of explicit vocabulary instruction that includes many opportunities for students to interact and use vocabulary in meaningful ways (Baumann & Kame'enui, 2004; Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Carlo, August, Mclaughlin, Snow, Dressler, & Lippman, 2008; Coxhead, 2006, 2011; Dutro & Kinsella, 2010; Folse, 2004; Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010; Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller, & Kelley, 2010; Liu, 2003, 2011; McKeown & Beck, 2004; Marzano, 2004; Nation, 2001, 2008; Snow, 2010; Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

August and Shanahan (2010) in an update of their important (2006) edited volume, *Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-*

Minority Children and Youth, reaffirm the following guidelines for teaching literacy to ELLs in K-12. Effective literacy instruction: (a) emphasizes essential components of literacy (i.e., phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension); (b) is similar to effective literacy instruction for native speakers; (c) must be adjusted to meet learners' needs, (i.e., strategic use of L1, small groups, more time, more scaffolding, etc.); (d) is comprehensive and multidimensional; (e) develops oral proficiency; (f) requires well-prepared teachers; and (g) is respectful of the home language.

August and Shanahan (2006) asserted that a learner's educational background and the relationship between the L1 and L2 play critical roles. Studies with young children indicated that L2 oral language ability is tied more to reading comprehension than it is to word level skills; thus, devoting time to developing oral language and vocabulary is crucial for ELLs.

Knowledge of the field suggests the need for an online course to provide an overview of communicative language teaching. Subtopics on *interactively* teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, and grammar can be offered through a study circle and/or a training event.⁹ Recent research has been particularly strong on effective methods for teaching vocabulary; ELL-U offers a study circles, training events, and activities through the Teaching Vocabulary Club to ensure this topic is a priority offering.¹⁰ Other topics such as contextualized instruction, especially for various authentic purposes (e.g., college and career readiness, civic engagement, health and family-related needs), are pursued through study circles and training events as well.¹¹

When adult ESOL teachers complete needs assessments for PD, issues around managing the classroom always rise to the top. Research in K-12 (Slavin, 1987) among native English-speaking children suggests that grouping students according to their needs is most effective in raising reading achievement. Moreover, the research with adult ELLs shows that it is advantageous to group learners in pairs to encourage the negotiation of meaning (Smith, Harris & Reder, 2005; Watanabe & Swain, 2007). Furthermore, learners actively engage in their learning when involved in task-based (Ellis, 2003) as well as problem-based (Walker & Leary, 2009) and project-based (Alan & Stoller, 2005) learning. Each of these learning activities requires students to work collaboratively and to use language in meaningful ways. Managing the classroom is a prevailing issue in the field; various approaches to purposeful grouping will be explored through the online course and a training event.¹²

⁹ Developing Oral Proficiency in Adults Learning English (training event and study circle).

¹⁰ Teaching Vocabulary: Practical, Research-Based Approaches To Instruction (training event and study circle); Vocabulary Instruction for ESL English Language Learners in ABE Classes (training event); and Teaching Vocabulary Club.

¹¹ Learner-Centered Practice in Adult ESL (training event and study circle)

¹² Cooperative Learning – A Team Approach (training event)

Table 4: Principles of Second Language Teaching: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction – Subtopics

Subtopics	PD Strategy	References supporting the need for this subtopic
Communicative language teaching	Online Course	Canale & Swain, 1980; Carroll, Roberge, & Swain, 1992; Mohan & Beckett, 2001; Oxford, 1997; Richards, 2006; Schaetzel & Young, 2007; Young & Smith, 2006; Baynham, et al., 2007; Casey, Derrick, Duncan & Mallows, 2007
Teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening, and pronunciation	Online Course, Study Circle and Training Event	Alamprese, 2009; Alamprese, MacArthur, Price, & Knight, 2011; August & Shanahan, 2007, 2010; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian, 2006; Davidson & Strucker, 2002; Kruidenier, MacArthur, & Wrigley, 2010; Lundstrum & Baker, 2009; MacArthur, Konold, Glutting, & Alamprese, 2011; Mathews-Aydinli, J. 2007; Saunders and Goldenberg; 2010; Strucker, Yamamoto, & Kirsch, 2007
Teaching vocabulary	Study Circle, Training Event and Club	August & Shanahan, 2007, 2010; Baumann & Kame'enui, 2004; Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Carlo, August, Mclaughlin, Snow, Dressler, & Lippman, 2008; Coxhead, 2011; Dutro & Kinsella, 2010; Folse, 2004; Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010; Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller, & Kelley, 2010; Liu, 2003, 2011; Marzano, 2004; McKeown & Beck, 2004; Nation, 2001, 2008; Saunders and Goldenberg; 2010; Snow, 2010; Stahl & Nagy, 2006
Issues in teaching grammar	Study Circle and Club ¹³	Carroll, Roberge, & Swain, 1992; Ellis, 2005; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Russell & Spada, 2006; Spada & Lightbown, 2008
Contextualized/authentic language teaching	Study Circle, Training Event and Online Course	Auerbach, Barahona, Midy, Vaquerano, Zambrano & Arnaud, 1996; Baynham et al., 2007; Cooke, 2006; Condelli, Wrigley, Yoon, Cronen & Seburn, 2003; Learning Skills and Improvement Service, 2010; Mathews-Aydinli, 2007; National Research Council, 2011; Norton Peirce, 1995, 2000; Peyton, Moore & Young, 2010; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2002; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Walker & Leary, 2009; Wallace, 2006; Warriner, 2007, 2010; Weinstein, 2002
Managing the language classroom	Study Circle, Training Event and Online Course	Nash & Kallenbach, 2009; Slavin, 1987; Smith, Harris & Reder, 2005; Watanabe & Swain, 2007

The Role of Culture in Teaching Adult ELLs

Effective teachers of adult ELLs have a strong grasp of the role of culture in teaching culturally diverse classes (Tedick & Walker, 1994; Téllez & Waxman, 2004). There is broad,

¹³Teaching grammar to emergent readers is addressed through activities available in the Working with Emergent Readers Club.

interdisciplinary research supporting the fact that culture and language are intertwined (Ferdman, Bernardo & Weber, 1994; Gars & Neu, 1995) and that this fact plays an important role in teaching and learning (Cole, 1985; Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981; Denny, 1991; Devine, 1994; Duff, 2001; Durgunoğlu & Verhoeven, 1998; Greenfield, 1997). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching is an endeavor to help educators uncover how the strengths of the home lives of immigrant families can be included in academic learning (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

The first subtopic consists of an online resource which draws from the online Culture Orientation Center at the Center for Applied Linguistics. The assumption is that there are many useful facts about immigrant, migrant, and refugee groups that can give teachers an important starting point for designing culturally relevant teaching. Teacher learning expands from these resources to include discussions about how ELLs from any particular nationality or ethnicity do not always fit assumptions made about them. A culture-focused study circle which recognizes cultural hybridity or the non-static, dynamic nature of culture among various immigrant groups (Bhabha, 1990; Bhatia & Ram, 2004; Bigelow, 2010; Chhuon, 2009; González, 2005; Ngo, 2008, 2010) includes discussion as a key component. This topic will also be addressed in an online course.¹⁴

The second subtopic in this learning priority is an exploration of the relationship between culture(s) and literacy development. This subtopic helps educators connect community, cultural, and family literacy practices to their instruction. Much research has explored the many ways in which culture informs language use, including the way print literacy is used. It is important to approach this subtopic from an assets stance and recognition that home or community-based literacy practices are often unknown to educators (Auerbach, 1995). The proposed online course raises awareness of the issues related to the role of culture in teaching.

Table 5: The Role of Culture in Teaching Adult ELLs – Subtopics

Subtopics	PD Strategy	References supporting the need for this subtopic
Inquiry into different cultural groups	Study Circle and Online Course	Culture Orientation Center http://www.cal.org/co/ Bhabha, 1990; Bhatia & Ram, 2004
The role of culture in language and literacy development	Online Course	Biber & Hared, 1991; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Farr, 1994; Ferdman, B. M., 1990; Ferdman, Bernardo & Weber, 1994; Grant, 1997; Kalmar, 2001; Klassen & Burnaby, 1993; Levinson, 2007; Moje, 2008; Moje & Hinchman, 2004; Perry, 2008; Reder, 1994; Reder & Bynner, 2009; Reder & Davila, 2005; Robson, 1983; Sarroub, 2008; Street, 1993; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009; Watson, 2010; Weinstein, 1986

Future Learning Priorities

Learning priorities for future activities could focus on extending PD for educators and broadening efforts to include program administrators. These topics were identified through a review of the updated research and topics suggested by the field were also taken into consideration. Future subtopics appear in Table 6.

¹⁴ The Role of Culture in the Education of Adult English Language Learners (online course)

Table 6: Future Learning Priorities

Subtopics	Target Audience	References supporting the need for this subtopic
Integrating content and language learning through topics such as EL civics, workplace literacy, parenting, health education, and digital literacy	Educators	Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Kasper & Weiss, 2005; Stoller, 2004; Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Otieza, 2004; Crandall & Kaufman, 2004; Mohan & Beckett, 2001; Pally, 2000; Master, 2000
Developing curricula to meet the needs of students with disabilities using a range of resources	Educators	Lovrien Schwarz, 2009; Isserlis, 2000
Evaluating program effectiveness through outcomes such as attendance, retention, and learning	Program Administrators	Beder, Tomkins, Medina, Riccioni & Deng, 2006; Cooke, 2006; Lambert, 2008; Nash & Kallenbach, 2009; Reder, 2010; Reder, 2010; Reder & Bynner, 2009; Reder, 2009; Schlage & Soga, 2008; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Strucker, 2006; Timperley, Parr & Bertanees, 2009
Supporting teacher learning and change through PD, classroom observations, supervision, and evaluation	Program Administrators	Bailey, 2006; Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001; Borg, 2006; Borg, 2011; Burton, 2009; Chen, Chen & Tsai, 2009; Crane, 2012; Croft, Cogshall, Dolan & Powers, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009; Davis, Kiely & Askham, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Desimone, 2011; Fernandez, 2002; Foord, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Johnson & Golembek, 2011; Johnson & Golembek, 2011; Johnston, 2009; Malderez, 2009; Marshall & Young, 2009; Meskill & Anthony, 2007; Meskill & Sadykova, 2011; Pawan & Jacobson, 2003; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Smith, 2010; Smith & Gillespie, 2004; Sullivan & Glanz, 2004; Vasquez & Reppen, 2007; Young, 2009
Language and education policies that affect programs serving adult ELLs	Program Administrators	Beder, Tomkins, Medina, Riccioni & Deng, 2006; Condelli, Kirshstein, Silver-Pacuilla, Reder, Wrigley, 2010; Nash & Kallenbach, 2009; Smith, Harris & Reder, 2005; Strucker, 2006; Weinstein, 2004
Transitioning adult ELLs to postsecondary, training, and workplace options	Program Administrators	Baker, Hope, & Karandjeff, 2009; Bragg, Dresser, & Smith, 2012; Chisman & Crandall, 2006; Crandall, 1998; Dove & Honigsfield, 2010; Fillmore & Fillmore, n.d.; Hector-Mason, 2009; Hiebert, 2011; Hiebert, 2010; Holmes & Marra, 2011; Jenkins, Zeidenberg, & Kienzl, 2009; Jurmo, 2011; Nash, 2001; National Research Council, 2012; Parrish & Johnson, 2010; Pimentel, 2011

Research-based Quality Indicators for Professional Development

Professional development offered through ELL-U follows research-based quality indicators articulated in a number of recent reports on PD (Darling-Hammond, L., 1996; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphano, 2009; Desimone, 2009, 2011; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Sherman et al., 2007; Smith, 2010; Timperley, Parr, & Bertanees, 2009; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007; Wilde, 2010). As identified by Desimone (2009, 2011) the following qualities characterize effective professional learning for teachers: (a) a focus on content, (b) active engagement, (c) coherence with other professional development initiatives, (d) occurrence over a period of time, and (e) participation with colleagues to form a community of practice.

Quality indicators addressed in ELL-U PD activities are in the first column of **Table 7**. The ways in which ELL-U incorporates these characteristics are described in the second column of the table.

Table 7: PD Quality Indicators and Implementation Methods

High Quality PD	Implementation in ELL-U
<p>1. Sustained, ongoing PD has better results than one-shot PD (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Desimone, 2009, 2011; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Téllez & Waxman, 2004; Timperley, Parr, & Bertanees, 2009; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). This allows educators time to apply new learning to their work, learn at their own pace, reflect on their learning, and incorporate new PD with support.</p>	<p>All ELL-U students who participate in learning activities have the option to sustain their learning over time by participating in related and ongoing online or face-to-face PD. Each learning priority area has a foundational online course on the topic and corresponding activities to allow for continued and sustained learning on that topic. For example, participants may enroll in a course on second language acquisition and follow this experience with participation in related study circles. Additionally, they may apply what they learn in these experiences to their teaching context by implementing a new teaching strategy and reflecting on the outcome as a member of a club. To promote targeted and individualized PD, ELL-U users can also engage in a learning plan that is tailored to their experience, goals, and interests and allows them to self-select learning activities appropriate to their needs.</p>

High Quality PD	Implementation in ELL-U
<p>2. Collegial environments for learning support PD. Collaborative tasks, sharing of information, networking, and overall building morale support educators as they expand their professional repertoire (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2004, 2011).</p>	<p>Participants have the opportunity to meet other educators and develop professional relationships that support their learning through multiple collaborative spaces available on the website. All ELL-U activities invite educators to engage in networking activities beyond the face-to-face or online learning events. Faculty facilitators engage users and encourage collaboration during and after activities through faculty-led forum discussions. Participants can find colleagues with similar experiences, teaching contexts, or goals in ELL-U discussion forums, direct messaging, and social media outlets. Clubs are also available to provide multiple collaborative opportunities for shared learning around a specific topic (i.e., book groups, field trips, shared teaching ideas wall, and topical discussions). Additionally, participants registered for a particular learning activity can engage with other registered participants and the faculty facilitator through closed discussion walls.</p>
<p>3. Relevant content is crucial for PD. Content relevancy crosses subject matter and pedagogical domains (Desimone, 2004, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005).</p>	<p>The content for all ELL-U PD is relevant to adult ESOL educators because it is based on a review of the literature, grounded around the five critical learning priorities, and is tailored to participants' learning needs identified by partner states. Relevant content in ELL-U PD is related to essential background knowledge in the field (e.g., SLA, language teaching pedagogy), areas in which educators commonly need additional training (e.g., assessment), and areas in which they are likely to never have been trained (e.g., working with adult learners without print literacy). Participants are encouraged to apply their learning in their practice and reflect on the implementation with peers through various mechanisms (i.e., action plans via study circles, reflection based questions in online courses and learning plans, and through guided discussions in open online community spaces).</p>
<p>4. PD activities challenge educators' assumptions about learning and are designed to encourage reflection on practice to deepen understanding (Borg, 2006, 2011; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Drago-Severson, 2004; Ferrell, 2007; Freeman 1998; Murray, 2010; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Schon, 1983).</p>	<p>PD at ELL-U includes information about how languages are learned, as well as how individual differences among adult ELLs can guide instructional decisions. Much of this content challenges the conventional wisdom of educators without training in second language learning and teaching. For example, differences between first language and second language learning are highlighted as well as how individual differences (e.g., literacy level in first language, goals or investments in L2 learning) can guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Reflection on practice is integral to the learning process and is embedded in all ELL-U activities.</p>

High Quality PD	Implementation in ELL-U
<p>5. Learning is supported by a range of instructional materials, some of which can be used in the classroom (Desimone, 2004, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005).</p>	<p>PD at ELL-U maximizes multimedia approaches to engage teachers. It incorporates lesson ideas which may be useful in many of the participants' classrooms. Participants benefit from the research-based teaching materials gathered by ELL-U trainers and video clips that illustrate instructional strategies. Instructional materials and resources are compiled and accessible to users in the ELL-U Library. In addition, participants have the opportunity to share their teaching ideas with other educators working in similar contexts.</p>
<p>6. Delivery of PD is constructivist and includes modeling, hands-on activities, and problem solving. Educators are invited to engage in participatory, collaborative, and interactive ways which are supported by adult learning theory (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2004, 2011).</p>	<p>ELL-U PD addresses common challenges in adult ELL instruction and learning through active learning opportunities. This approach, along with teaching approaches that are highly interactive, guarantee a constructivist approach to adult learning. Shorter PD experiences at ELL-U, such as training events, include these qualities to maximize learning (Yoon et al., 2007).</p>
<p>7. Expert facilitators are necessary for facilitating sound PD (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Kepp & Mike, 2009).</p>	<p>ELL-U PD is led by professionals who are strong teachers in their own right and strong teacher educators. SMEs in the topics outlined in the plan are recruited as faculty members to facilitate learning events, moderate online discussions, and host office hours. Faculty members are approved by OVAE and are trained by the ELL-U project team before engaging in learning events with ELL-U participants.</p>
<p>8. PD is supported through synergy with other initiatives in the state locally, regionally, or statewide (Desimone, 2004, 2011; McDougall, Saunders & Goldenberg, 2007).</p>	<p>When possible, ELL-U offers PD that works in conjunction with other initiatives being promoted at the state, regional, or programmatic levels. One way this occurs is by combining ELL-U learning events with state events or work with state leadership to identify how ELL-U PD can fulfill or supplement their state PD requirements.</p>
<p>9. Technology is used to support PD activities. Technology may be used to offer better materials as well as better and sustained ways to interact with instructors and other participants (Baram & Cagiltay, 2010; Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Jung Won & Brush, 2009; Kepp & Mike, 2009).</p>	<p>ELL-U offers PD that maximizes the benefits of technology and is based on technology integration that not only enhances instruction, but also allows for sustained engagement of participants. Participants use technologies such as: online courseware, webinar platforms and tools, direct and instant messaging, social media outlets, LearnerWeb,¹⁵ and various collaborative online discussion spaces.</p>

¹⁵ LearnerWeb is a free website (after registering) maintained by Portland State University. Under a subcontract to ELL-U, several materials were developed and housed on the site. It can be accessed at: <http://www.learnerweb.org/infosite/index.html>.

High Quality PD	Implementation in ELL-U
<p>10. PD structural design allows for a range of teacher experience and background knowledge. PD encourages ongoing learning. Participants can use online resources, create materials, do research, and interact with others in ways that extend their learning (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2004, 2011).</p>	<p>The architecture for ELL-U is created to support differentiated learning. ELL-U addresses educators' needs for professional collaboration and self-driven, independent learning. Registered users have access to self-paced online learning opportunities (through online courses and learning plans), synchronous and facilitated activities with other participants (through study circles and training events), and asynchronous collaborative discussion spaces (through discussion forums, book groups, field trips, and closed discussion walls). These different mediums allow users of all experience levels to interact in ways that are suitable for their individual needs. Activities are also designed to benefit teachers of all experience levels by providing reflection-based activities, resources, and opportunities to interact and share with colleagues. For example, ELL-U's online courses provide foundational and research-based content paired with practical resources, reflection-based questions designed to impact practice, and optional extended learning activities. All of ELL-U's experiences help sustain engagement and learning through ongoing collegial interaction with other educators and online access to all materials used and created for ELL-U. Club activities and discussion boards also encourage ongoing learning and sharing of ideas/resources among educators with varied backgrounds and experience.</p>

Differentiated Learning through Professional Development

Differentiated learning places the learner at the center of the instruction. Differentiated instruction is the architecture which allows learners with different skills, knowledge, learning preferences, and goals to all benefit from the learning opportunity. Differentiated learning and instruction in adult learning contexts is supported by research (e.g., Gusky & Yoon, 2009). There are a number of ways participants in ELL-U receive individualized and differentiated learning opportunities and paths to and through the variety of learning modes (i.e., online courses, study circles, face-to-face events). Differentiated learning ensures that all educators who participate in ELL-U PD benefit, regardless of their prior training or experience. There is a range of materials available to them as they learn. Some the examples of how differentiation occurs are:

- Participants have multiple opportunities to connect the content of the learning activities to their professional contexts and professional learning goals. This occurs through structured reflection and application activities.
- Participants receive support from “faculty” during face-to-face facilitation, online discussion forums, and office hours about how to choose among the various learning activities at ELL-U and what supplemental resources or corresponding activities are available to them.
- Participants are directed to use the descriptions of the learning events and designated target audiences to gauge whether or not the events are within their areas of professional

interests. For example, the course catalog offers information on the target audiences and suggested aligned activities that are also available on that topic.

- Once participants have elected a learning event, they are offered guidance about how to use the learning activities for a range of goals and purposes. In this way, participants of different backgrounds and training benefit from the learning activities.
 - In all learning environments, on-line or face-to-face, participants are given suggestions on how to use materials or activities in ways that coincide with their needs and interests.
 - Participants are afforded optional readings, online references, and ideas for professional activities which help them prepare for a learning event or deepen their learning as they proceed through the learning activity. Some participants wish to use more or less of these materials/options than other participants.
- There are different modes of delivery of the PD which affords differentiated instruction across learning styles. For example, instruction employs a range of techniques which differentiate across learning preferences. For example, there are opportunities for hands-on application, use of video to facilitate understanding, text which elaborates on ideas, cooperative learning among peers with similar interests, goals, teaching context, etc.
- In many of the online learning contexts, participants are able to participate in a range of discussion tools, some asynchronous and archived, and some synchronous.
- Learning tools such as FAQs, user manuals, and orientations are offered to users to help them better understand how to use ELL-U for their professional needs.

Types of Learning Activities and Delivery Mediums

Learning activities offered through ELL-U combine face-to-face with virtual learning opportunities to expand participant knowledge, understanding, and practical application in the classroom. A blended delivery approach to the learning activities allows flexibility in student learning, increased student participation, and allows 24-hour self-paced access to ELL-U online offerings.

Using the research base, activities maximize student learning and participation. The research indicates that interaction is central to both learning and learning online. Specifically, three kinds of interactivity have been identified as effecting learning: interaction with content, instructors, and among peers (Swan, 2003 and Moore, 1989). Each of these modes of interaction is reflected in the learning activities designed for ELL-U users. For example, all learning activities support interaction with instructors by granting students access to SME faculty members through facilitated activities, faculty-led forums, office hours, and online discussion boards. Interaction among peers is the predominant role of the *Campus Life* section the ELL-U website where users can view and contribute to discussion forums, join clubs, and network with peers.

In developing the structure and content of the online activities available through ELL-U, we draw upon the research of effective online learning and design as well as the experiences of our project team. For example, Jack and Liegle (2001) synthesized the work of a range of instructional design experts to create a list of key concepts that support the effective design of web-based instruction. They include:

- Instructors acting as facilitators
- Use of a variety of presentation styles
- Multiple exercises
- Hands-on problems
- Learner control of pacing
- Frequent assessment
- Clear feedback
- Consistent layout
- Clear navigation
- Available help screens

Several of these concepts have been integrated into the basic design of each type of learning activity offered through ELL-U. The following sections outline the types of learning activities that are available through ELL-U and the foundational components that make each delivery method unique and critical to the ELL-U student experience.

Online Courses

ELL-U online courses offer participants opportunities to engage in self-paced learning designed to support key learning priorities. Online courses use multiple technologies to deliver instruction that is interactive, dynamic, and tailored to the levels and interests of the participants. Six online courses are offered to ELL-U users. Each course involves approximately one to two hours of courseware.¹⁶ All courses have clear and explicit learning objectives. To assist participants in achieving those learning objectives, courses utilize various instructional methods, assessments, activities, and faculty support. Courses are divided into multiple sessions allowing for practice and reflection to take place in between each session through extended learning activities. Assignments and challenge questions are given to participants in each session to further enhance their learning experience and measure student learning.

As an implementation measure as well as a way to collect student feedback on courses, registered students are emailed a voluntary “End of Course Evaluation” upon completion of each course. This evaluation gauges participant satisfaction with the course content and format, the application of new skills acquired through the course, and changes to classroom practice.

To allow for a completely self-paced learning experience, online courses are not facilitated by faculty members. However, one or more faculty members hosts a faculty-led forum to provide users with assistance and feedback on course-related questions and comments. The forum is accessible to ELL-U users at all times after the launch of the course. An approved faculty member responds as needed to user posts and comments. This allows participants an opportunity to interact with SMEs and ask follow-up questions during their online course experience.

Study Circles

ELL-U study circles are designed to take participants more deeply into topics of interest and to focus on specific aspects of their teaching. Teachers engage with the study circle content through

¹⁶ The ELL-U Orientation Tutorial is the exception, offering users 30 minutes of courseware interaction.

reading, writing, and sharing with one another. The study circle activities are designed so that participants readily connect the content of the reading assignments to their practice as teachers. Study circles generally span across three scheduled sessions. As part of the first session, participants choose an area of their practice, related to the topic of study, to focus on in an action plan. This inquiry process (See Kepp & Mike, 2009) involves participants in a cycle of planning, implementing, and reflecting to explore an issue in their classroom. In a following session, participants talk with one another about what happened when they implemented their action plans and explore possible next step with peers. Participants are encouraged to share artifacts from their classroom such as student work and even video. Each participant indicates what their next steps will be in another round of action planning.

Study circles are offered in both a hybrid format, which include face-to-face and online sessions, and in an exclusively online format. From a review of a variety of materials on conducting study circles, including those from the Study Circle Resource Center, the STAR project, NCSALL, and CAELA, much similarity was found. It was determined that the CAELA materials offer useful step-by-step guidelines for designing and conducting study circles and these research-based approaches were used to compile the ELL-U Study Circle Framework.

The ELL-U face-to-face study circles involve a maximum of 20 participants and meet at two to four-week intervals for three 1.5 to 2-hour sessions. The sequence of activities follows the CAELA model:

- Opening activities (welcome, introductions, purpose, agenda, expectations)
- Thinking about participants' own experiences, interests, or questions related to the topic
- Understanding and interpreting theory and research
- Identifying theory and research-based strategies that participants would like to apply
- Applying strategies in practice (between sessions)
- Sharing, reflecting on and evaluating the application
- Planning next steps
- Closing activities

For the online study circles, the sessions are 1.5 hours, meeting at two-week intervals for three sessions. Sessions include both synchronous and asynchronous elements. The following components for high quality online PD, which were adapted by the Southern Regional Education Board (as cited in Kepp & Mike, 2009, p. 4), guide the online study circles. The study circles: (a) involve active learning, (b) include content knowledge, (c) include pedagogical knowledge, (d) require collaboration and reflection, (e) build in follow up activities to sustain learning, and (f) respond to participants' needs.

Both the online and the face-to-face study circles integrate "Dilemmas" and/or "Inquiries" as outlined in Kepp and Mike (2009, p. 6). In a "Dilemma," the facilitator poses a question about a particular teaching issue and participants discuss possible solutions. "Inquiries" involve in depth discussions about issues participants choose to focus on in their practice.

During the study circle, participants are encouraged to use the closed discussion wall space to ask questions, discuss strategies, and share their action plans. At the conclusion of a study circle,

participants are encouraged to join a related online club or contribute to a discussion forum to continue reflecting with peers about their practice. Participants are also provided with suggested learning activities to continue their learning on this topic.

Ensuring that study circle facilitators are highly qualified and well trained is essential. Kepp and Mike (2009), describe a three-week training model for online facilitators and mentors in K-12, the key features of which can be adapted for ELL-U's purposes. Research by Collison, Elbaum, Haavind, and Tinker (2000) and Salmon (2000) provide guidance on how to train facilitators to successfully build a community online as well as develop important questioning skills to foster meaningful and rich online conversations between and among participants (as cited in Kepp & Mike, 2009). The ELL-U project team utilizes these strategies to prepare new facilitators and have compiled a Facilitator's Guide to assist them in understanding the processes and features of ELL-U. New faculty members are also asked to review the ELL-U Study Circle Framework to ensure they understand the approach. Additionally, new faculty members have an introductory call with the project team in which they are (1) provided with tips for facilitating online study circles and other ELL-U events effectively, (2) receive a thorough review of ELL-U's services and connected resources available to the field, (3) briefed on the event specifics and target audience, and (4) informed as to what next steps they should share with participants. They are also offered, as needed, access to ELL-U's experienced project team SMEs to further discuss strategies and ask questions to help them in their delivery.

Once a Study Circle is identified, learning activity proposals are submitted to OVAE for approval. Study circles are posted on the course catalog and opened to a set number of registrants. General ELL-U users or state identified participants are able to register for a study circle through the website. Once a study circle is completed, the training plan and corresponding materials utilized are archived and available to all users in the ELL-U Library.

Training Events

ELL-U training events can include the following: conference plenary and concurrent sessions and state-sponsored workshops. Training events range in length from one to eight hours and vary in terms of content and purpose. Events are held across the country at local, state, and regional professional meetings and in conjunction with state activities. They serve as opportunities for registered and new ELL-U students to learn about techniques for teaching adult ELLs and plan for adaption to their teaching contexts.

All training events are delivered and facilitated by an approved SME. The appropriate trainer/facilitator is determined as events are developed. The ELL-U project team creates a conference and event calendar to track pertinent national and regional conferences to identify potential learning events and associated submission deadlines and works directly with states to identify possible training opportunities.

Once a training event is identified, learning activity proposals are submitted to OVAE for approval. Approved trainings are posted on the course catalog and opened to a set number of registrants. ELL-U users identified as the target audience can register for events through the website. If a training event is held at a professional conference, other conference participants

interested in attending can register onsite. Once a training event is completed, the training plan and corresponding materials are archived and available to all users in the ELL-U Library.

Clubs

ELL-U clubs are social networking spaces where members form a community to facilitate professional learning and development around a specific topic. Clubs provide a bridge between ELL-U learning activities and support sustained PD by offering several activities on a topic. Clubs also enhance user networking and provide collegial collaboration through community spaces. Club topics are based on two driving forces: (1) to complement learning activities offered through ELL-U, and (2) interest. Clubs are promoted as further discussion opportunities and forums to continue conversations started at learning activities, such as face-to-face events and study circles. Kratos provides general oversight for clubs, particularly in their early stages and throughout the duration of the clubs.

Registered ELL-U users elect to join a club. Club descriptions define the purpose and goals of the club, and are posted for users to make informed decisions about joining. Students interested in becoming a member of a club formally join via the secure log-in on the website; club membership will become active upon joining and is added to the user's "My Portal." Once in a club, users decide what types of activities they would like to participate in. Activities include a book group, field trip, a Learning Plan, and a shared teaching ideas wall. Book groups and field trips are designed to be scheduled activities to promote active participation among users at the same time. A Learning Plan is a self-selected, goal-oriented plan that provides customized activities for participants to engage in at their own pace. The shared teaching ideas wall is an ongoing repository for teaching strategies. Users can request ideas or share their own. Also available through the club are organically grown discussion spaces. The Water Cooler and Topical Discussions are two areas where users can speak freely on topics relevant to the club. Two clubs will be available to users through the contract period. They include Teaching Vocabulary and Working with Emergent Readers.

Utilizing Project Resources

To maximize access to project resources, ELL-U uses a blended approach by offering both virtual and face-to-face learning opportunities. Utilizing Web 2.0 technologies, such as webinar platforms, discussion forums, wikis, and chat rooms, allows ELL-U students access to learning beyond the walls of a traditional learning environment. These features also enhance the ability to reach a diverse geographic audience while offering cost-effective solutions for creating a far-reaching network of learners. These tools are utilized to enhance online courses, study circles, and community of practice activities.

Additionally, the ELL-U project team collaborates with existing organizations to maximize resources for face-to-face event participation by hosting training events at national, regional, and state conferences and meetings; sharing resources and events sponsored by these leading organizations to the field; and by following them on social media. These organizations include, but are not limited to, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the

Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE), the National Association for Bilingual Educators (NABE), the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), LINCS Regional Resource Centers, and other state-based bilingual associations.

Partner Organizations

Collaboration with recognized federal, state, and regional organizations serving the needs of ELLs supports all areas of the PD plan. This includes aligning our face-to-face events with regularly scheduled conferences, conventions, and institutes as pre-conference or conference workshops; identifying future trainers and SMEs for both face-to-face and virtual professional learning opportunities; and gathering existing high quality research-based materials to help meet the learning priorities and PD events.

To provide a high quality and comprehensive PD network and attract ELL educators to use ELL-U's resources, we reach out to a variety of organizations, associations, and thought leaders in the field. We tap into national, state, and regional organizations and initiatives such as: the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC), Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN), National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), International Reading Association (IRA), the Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC), TESOL, and COABE. ELL-U disseminates information and resources from these entities to the network to further connect and share opportunities with ELL-U's user base. ELL-U also identifies free resources to incorporate into learning activities, share through ELL-U's information dissemination channels, and showcase through the discussion areas.

Course Catalog

An online course catalog presents information on all courses, training events, study circles, and club activities offered through ELL-U. The catalog provides ELL-U users with the name, learning activity number, a summary of the learning objectives, target audience(s), the SME faculty instructor, the activity location (e.g., face-to-face or virtual), and the estimated contact hours or time frame for completing the learning activity. Also provided is the learning priority area that the learning activity addresses.

To register for a learning activity, a user must become a registered ELL-U user by creating a personal account (a user profile) with a unique login. Online registration provides the project team with a database of user enrollment and a roster for SME faculty to use when facilitating workshops and study circles. Registration for all activities outlined in the course catalog is available online on the ELL-U website.

The course catalog is organized and archived by quarter. Quarters follow a traditional college schedule of fall, winter, spring, and summer. Each catalog is accessible to all ELL-U users. Additionally, all related materials (to include the training plan, resources, and reading lists) are archived and accessible by users in the ELL-U Library. This enables greater dissemination of information and allows users who are unable to participate in an activity to access materials from any offering. The course catalog is updated quarterly and a summary of course additions and changes are submitted to OVAE for approval.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps for ELL-U

Over the course of the first two years of the initiative, the Project Team has learned several lessons from the development and implementation of ELL-U's PD activities. Throughout the course of the initiative, the Project Team has identified these lessons and embedded them into the delivery of ELL-U, continuously adjusting approaches to the extent possible under the current contract. Based on these lessons, the following areas have been identified as potential next steps for moving ELL-U forward that are beyond the purview of the current statement of work.

- **Increase sustainability efforts to further embed ELL-U's resources into state PD systems.** Throughout the course of the contract, the ELL-U Project Team has documented that working directly with states to embed ELL-U activities in their PD systems and offerings is an effective approach in meeting the project's goals of engaging teachers in sustained PD opportunities. Based on this finding, the project shifted focus from casting a wide net to the entire field, with the target audience being the individual teacher, to targeting state leadership to engage the end user. To further expand this effort, we recommend expanding the end user to also include state leadership and their professional developers. Possible next step activities include:
 - Develop trainings and supporting activities targeted to state PD providers.¹⁷ This will ensure sustainability within the state as PD providers acquire the skills and training necessary to effectively utilize ELL-U's resources.
 - Create a documented approach and standardized resources (e.g., state checklists, guides, fact sheets, state profiles) to further streamline the process of working with states to embed ELL-U in their state PD systems.
 - Provide continuous and dedicated technical assistance to interested states to work with them in creating an approach for embedding ELL-U in their state PD systems.
- **Develop a process for continuously reviewing and updating ELL-U resources to ensure that the most current research is reflected in the resources available.** To guarantee that ELL-U developed content is research-based and current, we suggest the following activities:
 - Develop and engage in an ongoing review process to monitor the latest research and update ELL-U content as necessary.
 - Add additional research-based learning priority areas and develop corresponding online courses, trainings, study circles, and community activities to support these new topic areas. In working with states and engaging with users, interest has been expressed about including other priority topics valuable to ELL-U instruction. Some suggestions gathered from the Project Team and the field include:
 - Supporting Transition in Adult ESL
 - Coaching and Mentoring in Adult ESL
 - Focusing on Communication Skills
 - Teaching Reading and Writing: Research and Practice
 - Managing Multilevel Classrooms

¹⁷ Kepp and Mike (2009) provide an excellent model for this that can be adapted for ELL-U's purposes and context.

- Balancing Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing (Integrating Skills in Adult ESL)
 - Increasing Learner Engagement
 - Exploring Civics beyond the Citizenship Tests
 - Math in Adult ESL
 - Issues in Workplace ESL
 - Addressing needs of program planners and administrators (e.g., Supervising ESL Teachers)

- **Continue to identify and engage experts in the field to develop, deliver, and participate in ELL-U learning activities.** As the Project Team has involved new SMEs in the project as active ELL-U faculty, a key lesson learned is that this process requires an increased level of effort to orient SMEs to the goals and processes of the project, prepare them for developing and facilitating activities, and train them to use the technology-based features of the site. It is also necessary to provide them with the appropriate compensation for the hours required to engage in these orientation activities, to properly prepare and customize a learning activities that they are facilitating, and provide them with hours to engage in follow up with participants. The Project Team has developed some overarching processes and a Facilitator’s Guide for delivering study circles to assist faculty in this transition, as well as a PowerPoint slide deck that provides an overview of ELL-U. To enhance this effort and grow ELL-U faculty further, we suggest the following activities:
 - Dedicate additional resources to training new faculty members and creating support materials to assist them in effectively developing and delivering ELL-U activities.
 - Dedicate more funding for SMEs to have increased preparation time to engage in training as well as learning activity preparation.

- **Further enhance the website’s information architecture to increase usability by streamlining the design to increase access to key features and allow for customization of features for state use.** As the website and network continuously expands, user traffic patterns show areas in which the website’s architecture can be enhanced and simplified. Additionally, as new features are developed and disseminated to the states, the infrastructure should allow states to own and control closed areas that are dedicated for their use.
 - A usability assessment should be conducted to gauge possible changes to the architecture that will increase access and use of the site’s resources.
 - Develop an infrastructure that allows states to control their own community areas to include book groups, field trips, and customized learning plans.

- **Expand targeted outreach efforts both nationally and at the state and regional levels to increase awareness and understanding of ELL-U.** Through the Project Team’s current dissemination efforts, it is clear that outreach needs to be both targeted towards state systems and national PD efforts. Large scale dissemination efforts, such as exhibiting and delivering informational sessions, have resulted in an increase of users as well as continued awareness of what ELL-U can offer teachers. However, there is still a large

untapped market to pursue and many states with the potential to partner with ELL-U. Continuous outreach is also crucial as teacher turnover poses a large problem for continued and sustained use of ELL-U. The following activities are suggested to ensure that ELL-U is properly disseminated:

- Develop and disseminate customized state and regional outreach approaches and materials.
 - Provide ongoing information dissemination to PD organizations/providers (e.g., CALPRO, LINCSPDCs, CREC, ALRC) to have them assist in dissemination.
 - Conduct more exhibits at conferences (e.g., TESOL and COABE) to showcase the site's features and how states and individuals can use ELL-U.
- **Document, compile, and share state PD requirements.** Understanding the unique state requirements across all U.S. states and territories requires an expansive information gathering effort. An environmental scan should be conducted to gather this information and use it to make strategic outreach decisions. Also, compiling this information for public accessibility will allow ELL-U users to better understand how ELL-U activities tie into their state's PD requirements.
 - Gather information for each state through an environmental scan to identify state requirements and standards.
 - Compile a state directory of requirements to inform users of their state's PD requirements.
 - Identify which states are accepting ELL-U activities as part of meeting these requirements, and continuously update this information.
- **Offering additional incentives for participating in the communities of practice.** Advancing active use of the community spaces has been an ongoing effort for the Project Team. Several strategies have been implemented and continue to be explored as a priority goal of the project. The most active and consistent use of the online community has been seen when tied to an organized and moderated learning activity. Additionally, state-affiliated events, where state leadership is actively engaged in pushing teachers to participate (through requirements or incentives), has yielded the highest participation rates to date. To further incentivize users to start new and contribute to existing conversations and community based activities, incentives beyond certificates may need to be added to the ELL-U infrastructure. Possible incentives include:
 - Create a programmed badge or point system to increase recognition and motivation to participate.
 - Identify cohorts of teachers from states and large programs to start their own ELL-U community groups. Official community roles and titles can be established to increase provide moderation, self-governance, and promote voluntary leadership.
 - Continue to showcase tangible incentives, such as classroom resources, to increase participation in discussion spaces.

Appendix A: ELL-U Professional Development Plan References

(by category)

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