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Need for Advocacy for English Learners

Ms. Ritter, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at a mid-western elementary school, has been a teacher for seven years. She has noticed the population of her ELs rise dramatically during her tenure, and she has also become keenly aware of her shifting role within her classroom as well as within the larger context of her school. She has gone from being “only” a language teacher to taking on responsibilities beyond teaching that include helping her students’ families acquire affordable housing, translating documents for parents, providing professional development to grade-level general education teachers on using EL strategies, and trying to persuade her principal to devote more resources to the school’s ESL program.

Frankly, Ms. Ritter is starting to feel burned out this year, as she senses she is fighting an uphill battle. In her eyes, her principal is not fully on board that the school culture needs to become more accepting of its EL population and take the extra steps necessary to ensure their academic success as well as their emotional well-being. Ms. Ritter absolutely loves working with her ELs, who bring rich linguistic and cultural diversity to her school. However, she is not sure where she should turn for some additional support to help her school draw upon and realize her students’ full potential. She has just learned that another school with a large EL population is going to be hiring an ESL teacher and is considering applying for the position, as she knows the other school’s principal has embraced its EL population. She is not sure what to do.

CONTENT OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter will outline the areas that provide the theoretical framework for the book, drawing on EL demographics, research, and recent events that support the argument that educators must consider approaching the education of ELs from an advocacy perspective in addition to focusing on EL education solely from an instructional stance. In order to effectively teach ELs, all educators who work with these students must realize that they share the responsibility to teach these students who have so much to offer. This chapter contains multiple references to theory and research, so please keep in mind that subsequent chapters are more focused on the application of information you will read in this chapter.

After providing a definition of EL advocacy that will be used in this book, I will present theory and research in such areas as the achievement gap, teacher preparation to work with ELs, the EL deficit paradigm, and applicable social justice theory that will situate this advocacy perspective and allow for you to apply it throughout the book. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the new focus on advocacy for ELs highlighted in the influential TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) P–12 Professional Standards and in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) English as a New Language (ENL) Standards.

CALL FOR AN ADVOCACY PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHING ELs

Given the challenges of teaching ELs as well as the often unpublicized multiple joys and rewards that come from supporting ELs to achieve in school and beyond, there is a need to focus on EL education from a new perspective. There is a growing number of methods and resources available for teaching ELs (e.g., sheltered instruction observation protocol or SIOP, specially designed academic instruction in English or SDAIE, and various software products), but none of these resources focuses on providing an equitable education for them from an advocacy perspective.

Specifically, the often unexplored concept of advocacy for ELs lies at the heart of teachers' expectations for ELs, their interactions with these students, and their ability to support their students' success through collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and the community as a whole. In short, a content area or general education teacher can be trained on many of the academic strategies necessary for ELs to achieve (e.g., scaffolding content instruction, creating appropriate formative assessments,

teaching language and content simultaneously). However, if that teacher does not first buy in to the idea that ELs are capable of achieving with some extra support, and if that teacher doesn't share a sense of responsibility for teaching ELs so that they can achieve, that teacher will be less likely to successfully implement the instructional strategies that are known to be effective.

In order to be effective advocates for ELs, educators¹ must be aware of the areas in which ELs require advocacy efforts and the reasons these efforts are needed. Educators will also benefit from explicit instruction, ideally at both the preservice and inservice levels, in advocacy tools in order to serve as a voice for their EL students who might not yet be able to advocate for themselves.

Defining Advocacy

The majority of teacher education courses that prepare general education and content area teachers do not include instruction on teaching ELs (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008), much less on how to advocate for ELs' equitable education. We can extrapolate from that research base that there is not one common definition of what it means to advocate for ELs so that they can receive an education that is equitable when compared to their non-EL peers². This book will begin by providing a working definition of advocacy for ELs that will ground the rest of the book's contents and applications.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines an advocate as "a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy" or "a person who puts a case on someone else's behalf." The dictionary further describes *advocate* as the Scottish and South American term used in place of the terms *barrister* or *attorney*. The term *advocate* echoes its cognates in Romance languages—*abogado* (Spanish), *advogado* (Portuguese), *avocet* (French)—meaning *attorney*, or representative of others who cannot effectively represent themselves. The notion of serving as someone's attorney involves taking actions on that person's behalf (Athanases & de Oliveria, 2008). Similarly, Dubetz and de Jong (2011) note that advocacy emphasizes acting on behalf of others.

The definition of advocacy for ELs I will use in this book draws upon both definitions and is based on acting on behalf of ELs both inside and

1. I will refer to teachers and administrators collectively as educators.

2. The term *non-EL peers* refers to those students who are either native English speakers or who do not qualify for ESL services due to their high level of English language proficiency. However, non-EL students may still speak or be exposed to a language in addition to English in their homes.

outside the classroom. I define advocacy for ELs as working for ELs' equitable and excellent education by taking appropriate actions on their behalf. To me, advocacy for ELs means stepping in and providing a voice for those students—and their families—who have not yet developed their own strong voice in their education. Advocacy for ELs also means knowing about each of my EL students' and families' backgrounds to be able to know which appropriate action I need to take on each person's behalf. It is not a one-size-fits-all approach, as each EL and his or her family differs from the next in terms of which kinds of advocacy are needed for them.

Scaffolded Advocacy

The concept of advocacy that will be used in this book is further influenced by the concept of *scaffolding*. Scaffolding is an instructional strategy that provides ELs an appropriate level of support as they access content material in a language in which they are developing proficiency. One of the basic principles of scaffolding instruction for ELs is that the teacher must know his or her ELs' backgrounds, including their linguistic, cultural, and socioemotional strengths as well as areas of need in order to determine which scaffolds to use and also when to remove the scaffolds. Because no two ELs are exactly the same, the types and amounts of scaffolding used for one EL (e.g., visuals, graphic organizers, first language support) will be different from the types and amounts of scaffolding used for another EL with a different background. In addition, teachers who are familiar with scaffolding for ELs also know that scaffolding is not meant to be a permanent support to ELs. By their very nature, scaffolds should be gradually removed as ELs' levels of English language proficiency (ELP) increase. In this way, the students eventually do not require scaffolded instruction, as they have developed enough ELP to access content and achieve without scaffolding alongside their non-EL peers. It is our goal as teachers of ELs to help get our students to a place where they no longer require our scaffolding.

Much like scaffolded instruction, the concept of advocacy for ELs that will be used in this book is one of *scaffolded advocacy*. Educators tend to advocate more actively for ELs who fit into one or more of the categories below, although the list is by no means exhaustive:

- Are at lower levels of ELP
- Are newly arrived to the United States
- Are from lower socioeconomic groups in the United States
- Attend schools in which there are low rates of EL achievement and/or graduation

- Are from families who are most unfamiliar with their children's educational rights and community resources in the United States
- Come from families whose levels of ELP are at the lower end
- Belong to families who have limited or interrupted educational backgrounds
- Have undergone trauma

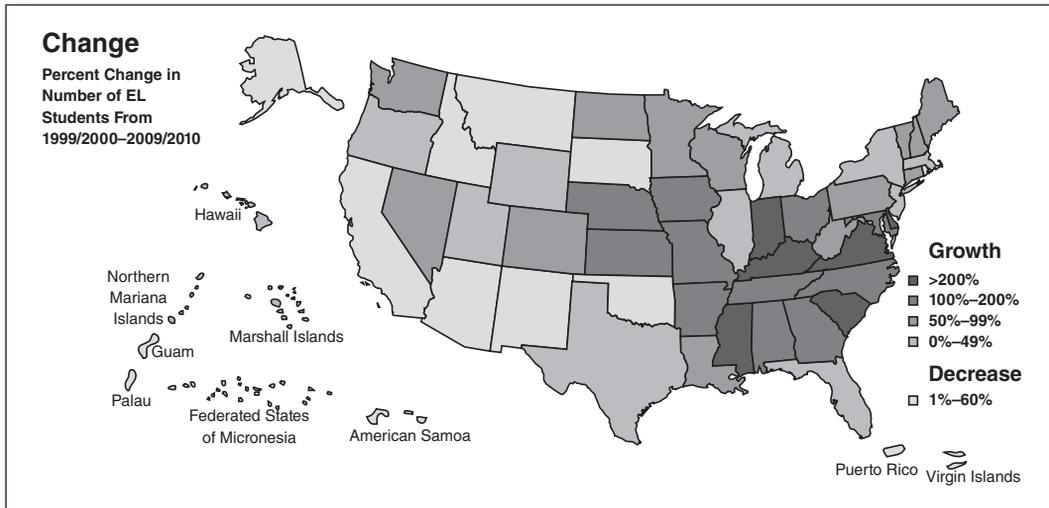
It is known that ELs will require fewer instructional scaffolds to access challenging content as their ELP levels increase. Similarly, educators anticipate that ELs will require fewer advocacy scaffolds in order to obtain an education that is equitable with that of their non-EL peers as they and/or their families acquire more English, become more familiar with the U.S. educational system, and develop their own voices as advocates for themselves. It is educators' task to help connect them with available resources and help them use these resources in order to achieve in the U.S. context. In short, educators' goal is for ELs and their families to be able to advocate for themselves. Educators therefore need to share the responsibility for teaching ELs as their voices grow stronger by providing temporary advocacy scaffolds to help ELs and their families become their own advocates in the U.S. educational arena.

How do you define advocacy for ELs? Are your advocacy efforts static or are they dynamic? Why is this so?

EL DEMOGRAPHICS

Now that the concept of advocacy has been established as it will be used in this book, attention will shift to several key changes that have created the need for educators to develop their advocacy efforts around ELs. First, the number of ELs in P–12 classrooms who are learning English continues to grow. More than 10% of the P–12 population across the United States is composed of English learners (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, 2011). ELs constitute a growing presence across the United States. Six states experienced more than 200% growth in their preK–12 EL populations between the 1999–2000 and 2009–2010 school years. See Figure 1.1 for a representation of this growth. In addition, the EL school-age population has grown more than 63% since the 1994–1995 school year, while the non-EL school-age population has only increased slightly more than 4% (NCELA, 2011).

What are your school, district, and state EL demographics? What is your EL rate of growth? Which languages do your ELs speak? Which countries do they come from? Why do they move to your area?

Figure 1.1. PreK–12 EL Population Growth From 1994–1995 to 2009–2010

Source: NCELA, 2011.

EL ACHIEVEMENT GAP AND UNDERLYING REASONS

In addition to the sheer numbers of ELs that cannot be ignored, another area that points to the need for advocacy for ELs is the achievement gap between ELs and students who are considered to be non-ELs. Non-ELs are either native English speakers or former ELs who have exited from language support programs or placed out of them upon initial assessment of their English language proficiency.

Researchers acknowledge that EL students' achievement scores are lower than those of non-EL students (Abedi, 2002; Fry, 2008). There is also a gap between high school completion rates as well as attainment of post-secondary degrees by ELs versus non-ELs (Kao & Thompson, 2003; National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2005; Reardon & Galindo, 2009). While many theories exist to explain this achievement gap, five will be highlighted in this chapter: socioeconomic status, teacher preparation to work with ELs, administrator preparation to work with ELs, ELs' access to academic English, and EL families' involvement in

How does your school's EL achievement rate compare to your school's non-EL achievement rate? How does the achievement rate vary by ELP level?

their children's education. There is some overlap of categories, and knowing where the categories overlap is important when considering how to improve ELs' achievement through the lens of advocacy.

Socioeconomic Status

One reason that has bearing on the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs is socioeconomic; that is, ELs frequently live in poverty. ELs often attend schools that serve students living in poverty, as defined by eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch (Fry, 2008). They tend to attend public schools that have low standardized test scores, high student/teacher ratios, and high student enrollments. Other researchers have determined that nearly 60% of adolescent ELs qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Wilde (2010) found that ELs who live in poverty score worse in math skills and reading achievement than non-ELs. When ELs are not isolated in low-performing schools, their gap in test score results is considerably narrower (Fry, 2008; Wilde, 2010). While there is a difference in achievement among ELs living in poverty and those who do not live in poverty, educators cannot view poverty as an excuse not to educate ELs.

What percentage of your school's ELs receive free or reduced-price lunch? How does that percentage compare to the percentage of your school's non-ELs?

Access to Academic English

Another reason to explain the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs is the role academic language plays. ELs' ability to access the content they must learn in order to be successful in school and beyond is predicated upon their ability to acquire and use complex academic language. All teachers of ELs, including content area teachers and ESL teachers, face the challenge of teaching academic language and challenging content simultaneously to ELs—quite often without sufficient resources to do so. While several definitions of academic language exist today, many have defined academic language as being distinguished from nonacademic language on several cross-cutting levels: lexical/vocabulary, grammatical/syntactical, and discourse/organizational (Bailey, 2010; Gottlieb, Katz, & Ernst-Slavit, 2009; Scarcella, 2003, 2008).

Teacher Preparation to Work With ELs

With the large number of ELs enrolled in schools across the nation coupled with the increase in the number of ELs far outpacing the growth in numbers of non-ELs, one might expect that all teachers would be fully trained in working with ELs. However, only 20 states require that all teachers have training in working with ELs. Furthermore, the breadth, depth, and quality of this training varies widely (Ballantyne et al., 2008). In addition, certification requirements for ESL

teachers vary by state (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Education Week, 2009). The growing, linguistically and culturally diverse student population in K–12 U.S. schools is taught by a mostly monolingual English-speaking teaching staff (de Jong & Harper, 2008). In sum, the majority of teachers have not been fully prepared to effectively teach English learners.

To begin to address the need to prepare teachers for diverse learners, in recent years, multicultural education and diversity issues have been added to the curriculum of preservice and inservice teacher education programs in many U.S. universities (O’Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008). Even if teacher education programs include a focus on multicultural education, de Jong and Harper (2008) posit that changes in individuals’ attitudes and values will not be sufficient to prepare all teachers for the growing linguistically and culturally diverse student population.

Due to this unevenness in teacher education policies, it cannot be assumed that content area teachers³ and ESL teachers share a uniform degree of knowledge about how to effectively teach ELs. In general, due to their differing levels of teacher preparation, many content area teachers as well as some ESL teachers are not fully equipped with the skills to be able to effectively educate ELs with multifaceted backgrounds, strengths, and challenges (Staehr Fenner & Kuhlman, 2012). This lack of uniformity in the preparation of teachers has created a national patchwork approach to teacher credentialing that does not serve the best interests of the growing population of ELs, nor the field of ESL and bilingual education.

Despite the necessity for teachers to teach content and language simultaneously so that ELs can achieve, most ELs spend the majority of their days with content area teachers who are likely not trained in working with them (Ballantyne et al., 2008). This lack of training can affect the learning of ELs. Most teachers, both ESL and content area, who work with ELs typically receive a low percentage of inservice professional development time devoted to how to instruct these students (Zehler et al., 2003). With

the growing numbers of ELs in U.S. schools today coupled with the ever-persistent achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs, effective professional development of teachers who work with ELs should be a top priority for schools, districts, and states.

What are your state’s requirements for ESL teacher certification? What are your state’s requirements for training content or general education teachers to work with ELs?

3. Content area teachers are defined as teachers who teach subjects other than ESL (e.g., science, mathematics, music, English language arts, etc.).

Administrator Preparation to Work With ELs

In addition, school administrators also often find themselves unprepared to lead their teachers to teach ELs. The principal's role is critical in strengthening a positive school culture, which includes the values, beliefs, and norms that characterize the school (Deal & Peterson, 2009). In strengthening a school culture that supports high achievement for all ELs, shared beliefs at the school level include the benefits of multilingualism, an appreciation of ELs' culture, and the need to overcome stereotypes and a deficit paradigm. The principal influences this culture in serving as a key spokesperson for the school, as an evaluator of practices, and as a model of commitment to student success (Alford & Niño, 2011).

Lack of EL Parents' Voice in Their Children's Education

Another frequently cited reason to explain ELs' tendency to achieve at levels lower than those of non-ELs is the general lack of EL parental involvement in their children's education. Research shows that parental involvement positively affects student achievement (Ferguson, 2008). However, parents of ELs tend to participate in their children's education less than parents of non-ELs.⁴

Some barriers that tend to inhibit EL parental and familial involvement include English language proficiency of families, parents' educational level, differences between school culture and parents' home culture, and logistical challenges such as securing childcare, finding transportation, and taking time off from work (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Tinkler, 2002). In fact, although EL parents may place a high value on education, they might find it very difficult to relate to their children's U.S. school experience or understand how to help their children succeed in the U.S. school environment and continue on to post-secondary education (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Doucet, 2004).

What role do EL families play in their children's education at your school?

UNRAVELING THE DEFICIT PARADIGM OF ELS

These factors that explain the EL/non-EL achievement gap point to a deficit paradigm in which ELs are viewed primarily for their insufficient level of English proficiency and lack of familiarity with U.S. culture. How-

4. The terms *families* and *parents* are used here interchangeably, as ELs may live with parents, they may live with extended families, or they may live with both parents and extended families. Chapter 6 explores family involvement in their children's education.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (Florida) was recognized in 2012 with the Broad Prize for showing a great level of academic performance and improvement while reducing achievement gaps among poor and minority students. Miami-Dade is the fourth largest school district in the United States, and its student population is 65.9% Latino. Twenty-one percent of the district's students are ELs, and 74% of the total student population is eligible for free and reduced-priced school lunch. One effort that led to the district making such gains among achievement results is that district leaders have worked to create a districtwide culture focused on achieving results. Alberto Carvalho, the district superintendent and an English learner himself, is widely regarded as being an advocate for the district's English learners.

ever, dedicated educators of ELs know that ELs bring often-untapped strengths and have much to offer the educational system in the United States. If their educators and administrators provide them an equitable education based on a culturally and linguistically appropriate framework with high but attainable expectations and collaboration among various stakeholders, ELs can achieve. Below, two overarching examples of strengths that ELs bring to the educational arena are provided to question the idea that ELs merely present challenges to educators.

Language Diversity as a Resource

Nieto (2001) believes there is a strong need to view language diversity as a resource rather than a deficit, recognize the role that language discrimination has played in U.S. history, recognize the benefits of linguistic diversity for all students, understand the role that native language development plays in school achievement, and make the education of language minority students the responsibility of all teachers. She conceptualizes students as culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse (CLAD) when they speak a language other than English but don't necessarily qualify for ESL programs. Further, CLAD learning can be positively impacted by school policies and practices that value students' identities and are part of systemic educational reform (Nieto, 2007). While certain practices—such as first language instruction, eliminating tracking, or a culturally responsive pedagogy—can significantly improve CLAD student learning, in isolation these practices do not reflect the complexity of student learning. School policies and practices may perpetuate the structural inequalities that exist in society.

Cultural Differences as a Strength

Some see cultural differences as a root cause of the EL/non-EL achievement gap. A discontinuity exists between the culture of the schools and the home culture of culturally and linguistically diverse students, yet these students possess distinct, often unrecognized funds of knowledge

(or historically accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills) that many teachers do not know exist (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Vélez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Moll et al. (1992) argue that in order to successfully educate diverse populations, including ELs, teachers' consciousness first needs to be raised so that they recognize that students come to school in possession of funds of knowledge. In addition, teachers must also incorporate students' funds of knowledge into classroom instruction in order to build on the strengths and knowledge diverse students bring with them.

Recently, researchers and educators have challenged this deficit view of culturally and linguistically diverse families and discovered diverse families possess a vast range of cognitive resources, skills, and knowledge and provide their children with a variety of learning opportunities and experiences. They argue that using students' funds of knowledge as a base for classroom discussions bridges the school and household learning and ultimately helps students make sense of abstract, theoretical concepts taught in schools (Dwordin, 2006; Hensley, 2005; Moje et al., 2004).

The polar opposite of the EL deficit model is recognizing and honoring the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that each student brings to the classroom. The term *cultural capital* was made popular by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973) and is understood to be the cultural background, knowledge, dispositions, and skills that are passed down from one generation to another.

For example, consider Amadou, a recently arrived sixth grade Haitian student who enters a classroom with very limited English language skills. It would be quite easy to view him in terms of what he doesn't appear to possess, such as English reading skills, mathematics skills, appropriate classroom behavior, and so on. What Amadou does bring to his education is most likely an incredible sense of self-reliance, survival skills, a strong work ethic, and a strong sense of community. Acknowledging Amadou's strengths and building from them is a huge step toward supporting his achievement, whereas "to deny students their own knowledge is to disempower them," (Delpit, 1995, p. 33).

What funds of knowledge and rich resources do your ELs and their families bring to your school's classrooms? How do you know?

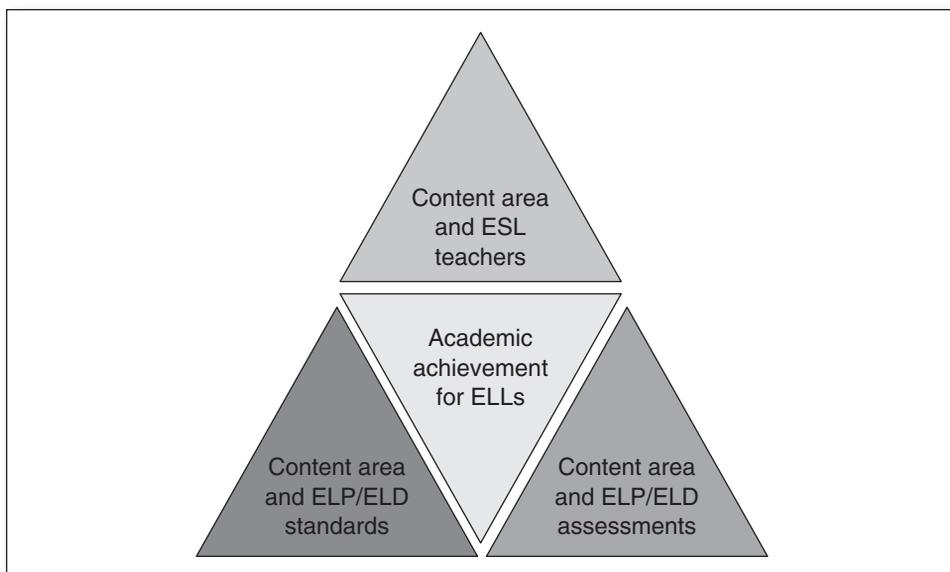
SHARING RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH ENGLISH LEARNERS

Fortunately, the field of ESL education is now better positioned to be able to accurately articulate some research-based criteria that influence teachers' ability to effectively teach ELs. For instance, a synthesis of studies

(Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005) reports that the most successful teachers of ELs have pedagogical and cultural knowledge and skills, including the ability to communicate effectively with ELs and include their families in their children’s education. In short, the greater a teacher’s preparation for working with ELs, the more professionally competent that teacher feels to teach them and the more responsibility that teacher takes on for ELs’ achievement.

In order to provide effective professional development for those who teach ELs, teacher educators must first have an understanding of the role that content area and ESL/bilingual teachers have in teaching ELs within a systems approach. In this approach, three components (teachers, standards, and assessment) constantly interact and influence each other as parts of an inseparable system, forming a triangle of interaction. For ELs to learn content and language simultaneously, all three components must be equally developed—as educators, we have to share the responsibility to make sure that all three components are developed when it comes to ELs. If one component is neglected, the other two will not fully develop (Staehr Fenner & Kuhlman, 2012). Figure 1.2 represents the multifaceted, triangulated approach to teaching ELs that highlights the relationship between content standards, English language proficiency (ELP)/English language development (ELD) standards,

Figure 1.2. Triangulated Approach to Teaching ELs



Source: Staehr Fenner & Segota, 2012.

content assessments, and ELP/ELD assessments. Educators first need to recognize that it is everyone's responsibility to equitably educate ELs, and all types of teachers need to collaborate so they can capitalize on each other's strengths in terms of supporting ELs' achievement.

For ELs to be instructed effectively, content area and ESL teachers must have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with these students. They must have a solid base of knowledge of the content but they must also be able to apply that knowledge in the classroom. Furthermore, all teachers must have a disposition that embodies their desire to work with ELs to support them as they achieve, or a sense of responsibility to ensure their ELs' academic success. Teachers must also design their instruction for ELs around high-quality content as well as ELP/ELD standards that outline the content students are responsible for. In addition, teachers must determine the academic language students need to acquire at each stage of English language proficiency/development so that students can access that content. Teachers' needs and levels of preparation must form the central piece of this relationship so that ELs can achieve in school and beyond.

How do your school's content area and ESL teachers collaborate to support your ELs' success? What kind of disposition do they have toward working with ELs?

Advocacy for ELs as Social Justice

In order to increase awareness of advocacy for ELs, it is also beneficial to take a look at how social justice can inform advocacy for ELs. Social justice education grew out of social reconstructionism, which speaks to the need to ask social questions in an effort to create a more just and democratic society. Similar to social reconstructionists, critical theorists such as Paulo Freire (1985, 1993) conceptualized education as a means for structural and social change and a way in which the oppressed could overcome oppression. There are currently a variety of names for a model of education that seeks to transform society and instill in students greater appreciation for difference and a sense of agency to work against injustice and inequity. While there are some differences in what educators using various methods advocate, the basic assumptions and desired outcomes are fundamentally similar in scope. Social justice education views two components as taking place simultaneously—individuals changing and working to change society, which in turn fosters greater individual change (Sleeter & Grant, 2009). Social justice can inform educators' dialogues about the need to advocate for ELs by raising awareness of how educators can help change the school climate for the better for ELs and support ELs and their families to be able to advocate for themselves.

Components of Social Justice as They Relate to Advocacy for ELs

This first stage in the social justice transformation is signified by individuals thinking critically about themselves in relation to their political circumstances. Freire (1985) refers to this process as *conscientizaco* or *conscientization*, stating, “It is as conscious beings that men are not only *in* the world but *with* the world, together with other men” (p. 68). Freire explains that only once individuals become open in this way, able to view the events of the world more objectively, can they begin to make change. With these new eyes, individuals are more open to hearing what members of oppressed groups have to share, are more reflective about oppressive practices and structures, and are more motivated to work for change. It is at this point that such educators are ripe for discussions concerning the political nature of education and how knowledge is constructed. This book will attempt to help raise educators’ awareness about current inequities in ELs’ education and how these inequities can be overcome.

Nieto (2006) argues that teaching is political work. She describes social justice education as fundamentally about power, including who has the power to make decisions and who benefits from those decisions. She also describes social justice as being a democratic project, because it aims to promote inclusiveness and fairness. Nieto also identifies key characteristics of teachers who are making a positive difference in the lives of marginalized students. She describes these qualities as a sense of mission; solidarity with and empathy for their students; courage to challenge mainstream knowledge; improvisation; and a passion for social justice. Darling-Hammond (2002) believes that supporting all students, including ELs, to be readers and writers in the context of general education classrooms is a matter of social justice. These tenets of social justice certainly apply to the definition of EL advocacy proposed and operationalized throughout this book.

Equally important to consider is what Giroux (1983, 1988) refers to as the language of possibility. Just as schools have the potential to perpetuate structural inequity, they also have the potential to empower students and support personal transformation. Such a vision includes an educational process by which learning is relevant, critical, and transformative. hooks (1994) describes the classroom as “the most radical space of possibility” (p. 12). Typical reasons ELs’ families immigrate to the United States include wanting a better education for their children. It is educators’ responsibility to ensure that our

schools serve to empower our ELs to fulfill their families’ desires and make their families’ sacrifices in the United States worth it in terms of their children’s education.

How do you describe your stance on social justice for ELs?

CULTURE AS SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY COMPONENT

Culture is a key component in social justice education as well as in advocating for ELs in terms of recognizing the role of culture in teaching and learning, using culture as a basis for student learning, viewing students through a lens of cultural capital, and connecting classrooms and schools to families and the community. The critical first step toward including culture in a social justice education and advocacy framework is the recognition of not only the importance of culture but also the understanding that everyone has a culture, and that culture shapes who we are as educators. Often, White teachers must first begin to see themselves as cultural beings and recognize the role that culture plays in their own lives before they can develop recognition of their ELs' cultures. It can be quite a journey to the point in which educators view cultural diversity as a strength and an academic resource for all students (Gay, 2000).

One final tension is the contradiction between the seriousness of social justice and beneficial nature that creativity and humor can have in advocating for ELs. When challenged by the weight of injustice and charged with the task of societal transformation, it is easy for educators to feel overwhelmed, just like Ms. Ritter. However, some of the most inspirational teachers radiate a sense of possibility and a positive outlook. Many ESL teachers share that their ELs describe the ESL classroom as the first place in which their strengths seem appreciated and they sense that they are safe to share their feelings, lowering their affective filter. Cummins (2000) writes that the classroom needs to be hopeful, joyful, kind, and visionary. "The ways we organize classroom life should seek to make children feel significant and cared about—by the teacher and by each other. Unless students feel emotionally and physically safe, they won't share real thoughts and feelings" (p. 262).

To what degree do your school's ELs feel significant and cared about? How do you know?

Current EL Advocacy Efforts Underway

There are some movements that have begun to address educators' awareness of advocacy as well as their ability to advocate for ELs as important elements teachers must possess to effectively teach them. This section of the chapter will focus on recent efforts by TESOL International Association and the NBPTS to prominently place advocacy for ELs on the educational landscape. Since these influential professional bodies have

built advocacy into their professional standards, these organizations' endorsement of advocacy supports the importance of advocacy for ELs.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The TESOL International Association's P–12 Professional Teaching Standards and the NBPTS English as New Language Standards were revised in 2009 and 2010, respectively. Given recent changes in the context of education for ELs that has been heavily influenced by assessment and accountability, advocacy is a theme that permeates both sets of the newly revised sets of professional standards for teachers.

The TESOL P–12 Professional Standards

The TESOL standards represent what preservice ESL teaching candidates earning their initial licensure in ESL should know and be able to do in order to effectively teach ELs. The TESOL standards are used for recognition by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)—formerly known as National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)—as well as by institutions of higher education as they create and revise ESL teacher preparation programs. They are also used to form a framework for schools' and districts' professional development for general education as well as for ESL/bilingual inservice teachers (Staehr Fenner & Kuhlman, 2012).

TESOL's eleven professional standards are organized around five overlapping domains: Language, Culture, Instruction, Assessment, and Professionalism. The domains of Language and Culture form the content knowledge that ESL teachers need to know in order to apply them to Instruction and Assessment. The fifth domain, Professionalism, is at the core of the standards; it drives who effective ESL teachers are and what they can do. It is in this fifth domain, Professionalism, where advocacy plays an important role through Standard 5b: Professional Development, Partnership, and Advocacy.

The NBPTS ENL Standards

More than 1,300 teachers are currently nationally board certified in English as a New Language using the NBPTS ENL Standards as a framework for national board certification. The NBPTS standards contain the following nine standards: Knowledge of Students; Knowledge of Culture and Diversity; Home, School, and Community Connections; Knowledge

of the English Language; Knowledge of English Language Acquisition; Instructional Practice; Assessment; Teacher as Learner; and Professional Leadership and Advocacy.

Focus on Advocacy in the TESOL and NBPTS Professional Standards

Both the TESOL and the NBPTS professional standards contain a heightened focus on teachers' responsibilities to advocate for their ELs. Although these standards are intended for specialists who work with ELs such as ESL teachers, the content of the standards can extend to all educators, including content area teachers as well as administrators. Below, the focus turns to examining how advocacy plays a role in each of these sets of standards.

Advocacy in the TESOL Professional Standards

TESOL's Professional Development, Partnership, and Advocacy standard reads, "Candidates take advantage of professional growth opportunities and demonstrate the ability to build partnerships with colleagues and students' families, serve as community resources, and advocate for ELLs"⁵ (TESOL, 2010, p. 71). Some performance indicators TESOL has defined to measure the degree to which preservice ESL licensure candidates meet this standard include the following (TESOL, 2010):

- Advocate for ELLs and their families, including full access to school resources and technology and appropriate instruction for students with special needs or giftedness. (p. 73)
- Serve as advocates and ESOL resources to support ELLs and their families as families make decisions in the schools and community. (p. 73)
- Provide ELLs and their families with information, support, and assistance as they advocate together for the students and their families. (p. 74)
- Take leadership roles on instructional teams advocating for appropriate instructional services for ELLs who may have special needs or giftedness. (p. 74)
- Help create empowering circumstances and environments for ELLs and their families. (p. 74)
- Take leadership roles with community members and policymakers with respect to issues affecting ELLs. (p. 74)

5. TESOL uses the term *English language learner (ELL)* in its P-12 Professional Teaching Standards. Several other organizations use the term *ELL* as well.

The TESOL P–12 Professional Teaching Standards include the advocacy standard to operationalize some of the most important facets of being an effective teacher of ELs. Staehr Fenner and Kuhlman (2012) recommend one or more teacher preparation courses and inservice professional development should contain a focus on how to access and share advocacy information with educators.

Advocacy in the NBPTS ENL Standards

Advocacy is a theme that plays two roles in the NBPTS ENL standards. It stands alone as NBPTS Standard IX, Professional Leadership and Advocacy, and also serves as a thread that weaves throughout several of the other NBPTS ENL standards. Standard IX states,

Accomplished teachers of English language learners contribute to the professional learning of their colleagues and the advancement of knowledge in their field in order to advocate for their students. (NBPTS, 2010, p. 20)

During the revision process of the NBPTS standards, advocacy became its own standard to draw attention to the changing role of educating ELs during a time of increased collaboration among educators as well as a higher level of accountability surrounding the education of ELs.

The introduction to the NBPTS ENL standards helps define the context for the importance of advocating for ELs, stating,

Accomplished teachers accept their ethical responsibility to advocate for their students' success in order to give both the students and their families a voice they may not have yet acquired themselves. Accomplished teachers' advocacy at the school, district, state, and even national levels extends beyond their students' academic needs to the unique personal needs of their students. Accomplished teachers understand that everyone in the school shares the responsibility for the success of all students, and they collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that success for English language learners. (NBPTS, 2010, p. 14)

Standard IX's pertinent text is provided below:

Accomplished teachers challenge misconceptions about English language learners, arbitrary requirements, inappropriate curricular and assessment assumptions, cultural misunderstandings, and other factors that may limit their students' achievement. Teachers

ensure that valid assessments, placements, and referral procedures occur so that English language learners receive appropriate and equitable services. (NBPTS, 2010, p. 92)

They advocate for their students' admission to special programs, such as those for gifted and talented students, and they argue against inappropriate placements in compensatory or remedial programs. Teachers recommend, and, when possible, help establish, new programs, courses, and curricula to build on the knowledge, skills, and interests that ELs bring to school, addressing students' individual needs and fostering a positive self-image for each one. Teachers also advocate for equal access to extracurricular activities and enrichment programs:

Accomplished teachers advocate for students and their families to ensure that their voices are heard. . . . Teachers engage families in practices that empower them to become advocates for their children. . . . They promote educational opportunities for their students by advocating for local, state, and federal funding of programs that advance instructional programs and services for English language learners. (NBPTS, 2010, p. 93)

One Example of a Promising Practice in EL Advocacy:

One example of including advocacy at the preservice education level is in the English Language Development course at Purdue University. As a part of this course, preservice teacher candidates complete a four-week module on The Role of the Teacher in the English Language Development of ELs. One week focuses solely on teachers learning to advocate for ELs. Candidates read about inequities that warrant advocacy acts in schools and beyond. In this course, teacher candidates discuss their roles as teachers of ELs in the context of advocacy efforts in their classrooms, schools, and communities and what they can do to ensure ELs receive an equitable education. They discuss how they can advocate for ELs and obtain resources for these students.

CONCLUSION

Since all teachers share responsibility for ensuring ELs' achievement, educators must examine EL achievement from the perspective of advocacy. In this chapter, the need to advocate for ELs was framed around such factors as EL demographics, the EL/non-EL achievement gap, and the lack of preparation for teachers to effectively work with ELs. Advocacy for ELs was defined and presented within a scaffolded approach, in which each EL's background variables must be known and addressed

through advocacy in order to truly serve and support each EL student. In addition, the EL deficit paradigm was examined, and ELs' strengths were highlighted. The chapter closed with a description of the TESOL and NBPTS professional teaching standards' new focus on advocacy as necessary for all teachers of ELs. Chapter 2 will focus on creating a sense of shared responsibility for teaching ELs.

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