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Developing Effective Assessment practices through Collaboration with Students, Families, and Colleagues

Tara Van Loo
Northwestern College - Orange City

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Abstract

Developing and implementing effective assessment practices in mainstream classrooms is a thoughtful process. When classroom teachers of English Learners (ELs) seek to design assessments that will yield valuable information to guide whole-group instruction and targeted interventions, the unique needs of ELs must be critically considered. The most effective, appropriate assessments are the result of a collaborative process that invites student, parent, and teacher input, and generates relevant data through authentic, longitudinal learning experiences.

Developing Effective Assessment practices through Collaboration

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Developing and implementing effective assessment practices in mainstream classrooms is a thoughtful process. When classroom teachers of English Learners (ELs) seek to design assessments that will yield valuable information to guide whole-group instruction and targeted interventions, the unique needs of ELs must be critically considered. Davis Lenski, Ehlers-Zavala, Daniel, and Sun-Irminger (2006) state, "Because assessment practices pave the way to making instructional and evaluative decisions, teachers need to consider all educational stakeholders (i.e., the students themselves, parents, administrators, and other teachers) as they plan to assess students from different cultural backgrounds" (p. 25). Hurley and Blake (2000) identified six principles that teachers should consider when assessing ELs:

•Assessment activities should help teachers make instructional decisions.

•Assessment strategies should help teachers find out what students know and can do...not what they cannot do.

•The holistic context for learning should be considered and assessed.

•Assessment activities should grow out of authentic learning activities.

•Best assessments of student learning are longitudinal...they take place over time.

•Each assessment activity should have a specific objective-linked purpose (p. 91–92).

Therefore, the most effective, appropriate assessments are the result of a collaborative process that invites student, parent, and teacher input, and generates relevant data through authentic, longitudinal learning experiences. With this data, teachers make instructional decisions that support ELs in acquisition of both the content and the English language. Knowing this, the researcher determined a focus on deepening knowledge of students and participating in

professional collaboration. The researcher, an Instructional Coach, and the Co-teacher (CT), began by gathering academic, linguistic, and demographic information about a focal group of ELs within a seventh grade Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) elective class. This information was gathered through collaboration with students, families, and colleagues. The researcher worked closely within her professional learning community to deepen the understanding and skills needed to meet the needs of the focal group of students. Using this knowledge, the teachers designed effective and appropriate formative assessments and used the assessment data to make instructional adaptations to meet the presented needs. The teachers designed a summative assessment that gave students an opportunity to authentically demonstrate their new knowledge, skills and understanding. All of these efforts resulted in a positive, productive learning experience for both students and teachers. The learning experiences were effective because they were designed based on the student needs and adjusted in response to the formative assessment.

Method

Developing a holistic understanding of students in order to create effective assessments required gathering information from a variety of sources. These sources included students, parents, the Co-Teacher (CT), state assessment data, and seventh grade English teacher. Students participated in an interest survey and a home language survey through Google Forms. Asking students for input allowed the researcher to draw from the interests and strengths of the students and their families to better engage students in the unit and help them build upon their background knowledge within the context of the lessons, as well as communicate effectively with families in their home language (Fig 1 and 2).

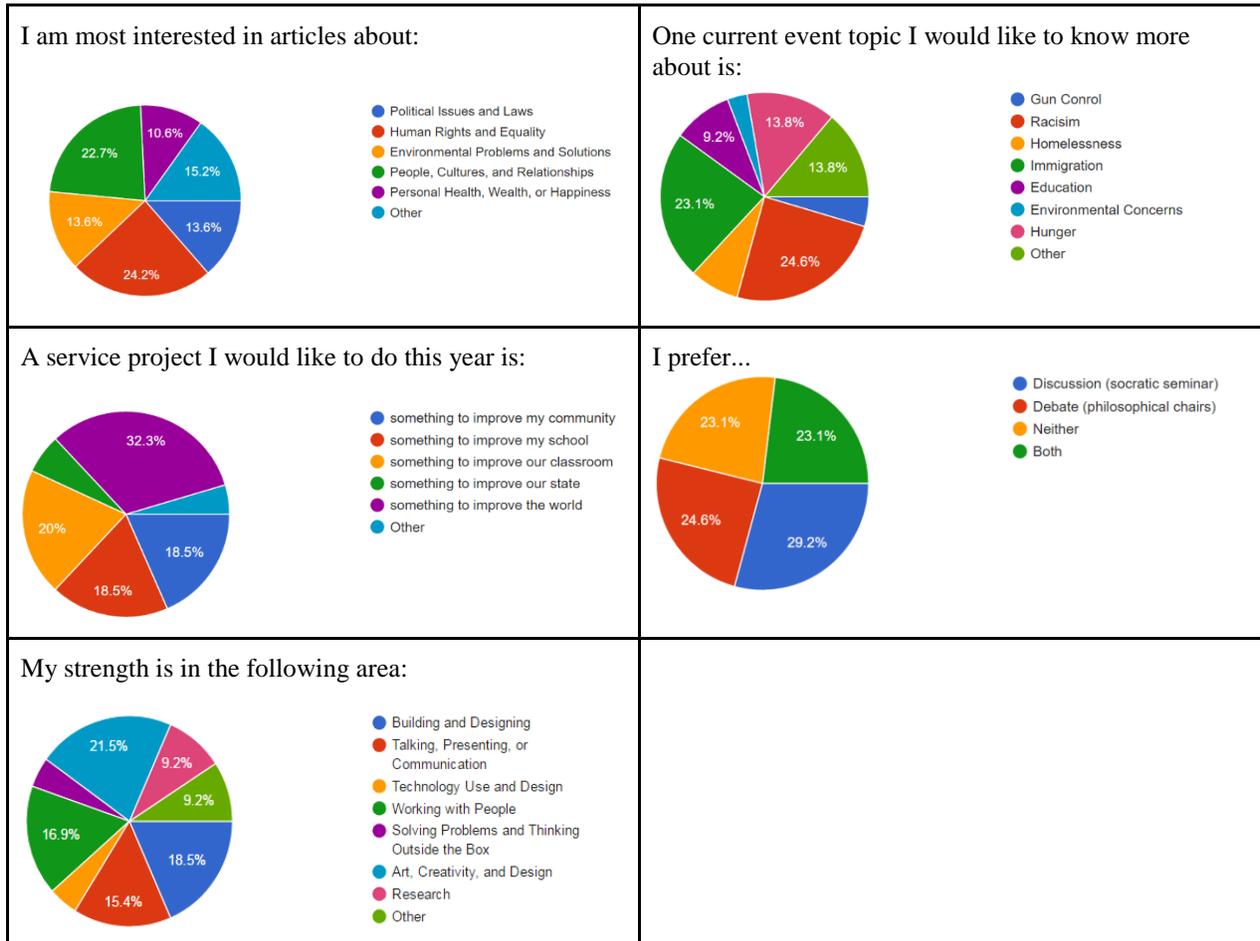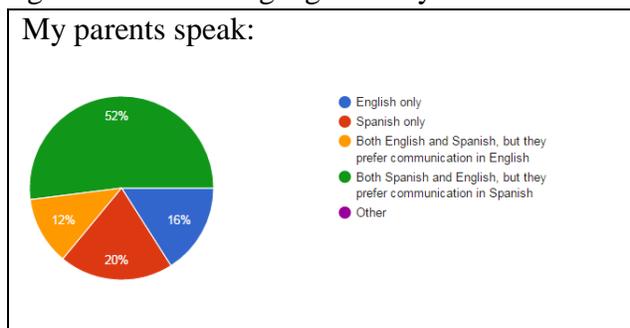Figure 1. Student Interest Survey Questions and Responses

I am most interested in articles about:

- Political Issues and Laws
- Human Rights and Equality
- Environmental Problems and Solutions
- People, Cultures, and Relationships
- Personal Health, Wealth, or Happiness
- Other

10.6% | 15.2% | 22.7% | 13.6% | 13.6% | 24.2%

One current event topic I would like to know more about is:

- Gun Conrol
- Racisim
- Homelessness
- Immigration
- Education
- Environmental Concerns
- Hunger
- Other

13.8% | 9.2% | 13.8% | 23.1% | 24.6%

A service project I would like to do this year is:

- something to improve my community
- something to improve my school
- something to improve our classroom
- something to improve our state
- something to improve the world
- Other

32.3% | 20% | 18.5% | 18.5%

I prefer...

- Discussion (socratic seminar)
- Debate (philosophical chairs)
- Neither
- Both

23.1% | 23.1% | 24.6% | 29.2%

My strength is in the following area:

- Building and Designing
- Talking, Presenting, or Communication
- Technology Use and Design
- Working with People
- Solving Problems and Thinking Outside the Box
- Art, Creativity, and Design
- Research
- Other

21.5% | 9.2% | 9.2% | 16.9% | 18.5% | 15.4%

Figure 2. Home Language Survey

My parents speak:

- English only
- Spanish only
- Both English and Spanish, but they prefer communication in English
- Both Spanish and English, but they prefer communication in Spanish
- Other

52% | 12% | 20% | 16%

Parents answered questions about their children's strengths, interests, and learning styles through

a bilingual survey (Appendix A). It was important to ask parents for their input because they

have insights and experiences that can enhance the learning process for their children, especially

in areas that schools have not traditionally valued in instruction. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and

Gonzalez (1992) describe these funds of knowledge as the skills and qualities families have

developed over time, which contribute to their functioning and well-being. This could include

experience with anything from crop planting to folk medicine, budgets to childcare, or hunting to

vehicle maintenance. Moll et al. (1992) state, "The funds of knowledge have ample cultural and

cognitive resources and contain great potential utility for classroom instruction" (p. 134). The

parent survey was the beginning of uncovering the funds of knowledge of this group of students.

It was an opportunity to begin a positive partnership and let parents know that their participation

and voice in their students' academics is vital to their learning.

Two additional sources of information were state assessment data and fellow teachers.

The annual state English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) provided an overview of the

speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiencies of each of the ELs in the class.

Collaborating with the students' English teacher assisted in better understanding the specific

language needs of this group and the individuals within it. This knowledge built upon the

information provided by the state ELPA (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Notes from Collaboration with English Teacher

State English Language Proficiency Assessment Scores

Student	Overall proficiency	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing	Enrollment Date	Notes
							meeting w/ English Teacher 3/15/17
S1	Progressing	5	4	3	4	2009	*meeting standard on essay – Lit analysis*
S2	Progressing	4	3	5	3	2009	*has trouble getting his thoughts onto paper*
S3	Progressing	4	3	3	3	2009	*met standard on essay*
S4	Progressing	4	3	3	3	2009	*close to standard on essay*
S5	Progressing	4	2	5	3	2009	*thinking happens in Spanish, needs help transferring ideas into English*

*all need extra support to express ideas in academic English

Data, Patterns, and Trends

The student survey results revealed that these students were interested in a wide range of local and global issues, and that they like the lively interaction of debate and discussion. The home language survey confirmed our thinking that it would be critical to communicate with parents in both English and Spanish. The parent survey results affirmed and elaborated on the student survey results. Parents expressed that the kind of learning experience that would engage their children would be an interactive environment that was project based, included teamwork, innovative teaching techniques, and hands-on learning. Parents also suggested talking about things that were happening in our world, as well as talking with students about how to respect different ethnicities. Parents described their children's strengths ranging from athletics, dance, and basketball to math, science, and technology. Parents also described their children as helpful, a good listener, and dedicated to studies.

Analysis of the state ELPA scores of the focal ELs revealed that five of the five students have been enrolled in the ELL program since their Kindergarten year (Figure 4).

Figure 4. State English Language Proficiency Assessment scores for five focal ELs

	Plcmt. Test. 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Spring 2016
	Kinder	Kinder	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Student 1	477 L1	558 L2	589 L3	471 L3	488 L3	523 L3	528 L3	L2
Student 2	460 L1	534 L2	601 L3	478 L3	499 L3	504 L3	519 L3	L2
Student 3	497 L1	494 L1	607 L3	L3	523 L3	493 L3	544 L3	L2
Student 4	503 L1	549 L2	575 L2	434 L2	514 L3	506 L3	530 L3	L2
Student 5	449 L1	507 L2	573 L2	442 L2	491 L3	488 L3	513 L3	L2
Note: Level 4 = Proficient								

This categorized them as Long-term English Learners (LTELs). Echevarria, Frey and Fisher (2015) explain that this means they have been enrolled in US schools, receiving English Language Development (ELD) support for more than six years, but have not yet attained proficiency and/or may be stalled in their English development. Collaborating with the seventh grade English teacher lent perspective to these ELPA scores. Together, the researcher and English teacher noted that these five ELs could communicate proficiently in social English so it appeared they were tracking academically. However, their academic language gaps caused them to have difficulty with inputs, such as reading grade level texts, and with outputs such as speaking articulately without a script in classroom presentation contexts. Additional conversation with the CT confirmed these observations.

Student Needs

All of this information proved critical in developing formative and summative assessments that were responsive and appropriate for this group of students. According to Roskos, Tabors, and Lenhart (2009) in Zwiers and Crawford (2011), oral language is the foundation for reading and writing. Because these students were LTELs and had scored low in overall English proficiency for many years, the best place to start targeted intervention was in oral language (speaking and listening). These students needed specific, individual feedback on their academic language usage, including vocabulary, English syntax and grammar. In order to meet these needs fairly and equitably, the teachers planned to confer with individuals frequently and offer specific feedback and customized supports as they worked towards the unit objectives of speaking, listening, and communication.

Another need was engaging content, instruction, and assessment with real-world application. In order to meet this need fairly and equitably, the teachers planned to use a blended

learning design, integrating best practices for ELs such as graphic organizers, multimedia inputs, and heterogeneous groupings with language models. The teachers designed a unit that offered student choice at multiple points in the unit, such as in, the topic they wanted to focus, to increase engagement and motivation. The researcher and CT decided to summatively assess student growth through a culminating application project.

A clear need for professional and community collaboration emerged from the knowledge gathered. The researcher needed to collaborate with the seventh grade Social Studies teacher who was experienced in integrating best practices for ELs into a blended learning design. Collaboration with members of the school and local community became important, as students would be applying their learning in real-world contexts. For example, a third-grade teacher had experience with worm bins and was willing to support this kind of action project. The director of a local teen shelter could advise students on how to support the organization. Additionally, students had shared that many of their family members had their Food Handler's Permit, which could support students who were hoping to cook a meal in the school kitchen. The researcher needed to reach out to these people during the planning of the unit.

Participation in Learning Communities

In addition to the school and community partnerships that arose, the teachers identified a need for professional learning in how to create innovative, interactive, real-world learning activities and assessments for the students. The teachers needed training and support in order to design a unit that would give voice to student and parent input from the surveys. When asked what kinds of experiences would engage and ignite their son/daughter, parents said, "talk about everyday problems going on", "allow them to express themselves freely", "give more projects" and "create new work techniques where they can participate and feel safe". In considering how

to meet the need, the teachers looked at building and district goals. Knowing that deep learning is

a district goal, they consulted with their Principal who suggested they participate in the Change

Team, which was the first cohort of teachers from their building to attend regional trainings in

the global partnership led by Michael Fullan, New Pedagogies for Deeper Learning (NPDL). The

teachers recognized that in addition to skills and knowledge measured in the state standards, they

wanted to measure (assess) qualitative, transferrable skills such as Communication, Character,

Citizenship, Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Collaboration. NPDL provided these tools. This

professional development took place between September 2016 and March 2017, for a total of six

days. The Change Team met monthly during those months and offered support in developing a

unit that met the students' needs and supported the district in reaching its goal of deep learning

implementation.

Unit Overview and Objectives

Using all of the knowledge gathered about students, and applying their new learning from

NPDL training, the researcher and CT chose the topic for the unit and determined the unit

objectives. The unit was entitled, Meeting Global and Local Community Needs. The teachers

determined how they would share the responsibilities of instruction as co-teachers. Student pairs

selected one of the seventeen United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals to research,

and then debated their peers for attention and action toward their selected goal. Expert groups

researched and taught their peers about how specific global organizations were meeting these

needs. These case studies formed the inspiration for students' own action projects within the

local community. Projects ranged from delivering a motivational speech about reducing

inequalities to sixth graders, to collecting hygiene products for a local teen shelter, to building a

worm bin to repurpose school cafeteria food waste, to planning a pancake breakfast for local

homeless and hungry families.

The first two unit objectives were developed from the Common Core ELA Speaking/Listening standards. The third, fourth, and fifth unit objectives were based on the Deep Learning Competency rubrics developed by NPDL. The Deep Learning Competencies of Character, Citizenship, and Communication were an innovative, pivotal source for gathering both qualitative and quantitative data about social and emotional skills not traditionally assessed within the standards.

To deeply understand what the standards ask of students, small groups collaboratively wrote the five unit objectives in their own words. In the students' words:

Objective 1: (Speaking/Listening) I can present important claims, be a clear/strong speaker.

Objective 2: (Speaking/Listening) I can use visual aids to make my point.

Objective 3: (Communication) I can clearly communicate with different audiences in different ways and be understood.

Objective 4: (Character) I take responsibility to learn and know I can create an impact on the world.

Objective 5: (Citizenship) I can solve complex problems that benefit others even when the problems are complicated.

By interpreting the standards into language that was meaningful to them, students began the unit with a deep understanding of the success criteria.

Formative Assessment

Using their knowledge of their students, the researcher and CT designed an appropriate Formative Assessment (FA) that would measure student progress and performance on each of

the objectives and provide useful information about each student in the targeted language

domains of speaking and listening. The FA was an observation checklist/rubric that the teachers

filled out, adding anecdotal evidence throughout the first half of the unit while students were

working and participating in activities. The checklist/rubric was developed from the unit

objectives (Appendix B). The FA was used in tandem with a student Self-assessment (SfA) that

provided evidence for their stage of development on the rubrics (Appendix C). This SfA was

administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the unit. After the second SfA, the teacher and

student came together for a conference to discuss student progress toward proficiency, personal

goals within the objectives, and action steps to meet those goals.

The FA was intended to guide instructional moves, and to help teachers identify trends

that could best be met through whole-group instruction and individual targeted instruction. After

conferring with students, the researcher and CT met to determine instructional modifications to

the unit based on the formative assessments of the focal ELs (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Formative Assessment Data

	Initial Self-Assessment			Formative Assessment				
	Communication	Character	Citizenship	Communication	Character	Citizenship	Speaking/Listening	Average Student Score
Student 1	2.5	2	2	1	1	2	2	1.5
Student 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student 3	1.5	3	3	2	2	2.5	2.5	2.25
Student 4	2	1	3	2	2	1.5	2	1.875
Student 5	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2.25
Average Component Score	1.8	2	2.4	1.6	1.6	2	1.9	

Results

After the FA, the CT and researcher analyzed the results and observed that the group was

emerging in Communication and Character, and between emerging and developing in

Citizenship. Students self-described repeatedly that sometimes they needed help communicating,

getting started on tasks, and beginning to solve complex problems (Appendix D). A pattern that

emerged from student quotes was that students felt they needed teacher support to get started on

learning tasks, and that they needed support communicating clearly beyond their notes on a page.

On the initial SfA, students self-described themselves mostly in the limited to emerging stages of

development in all four areas. On the second SfA, scores decreased from students' initial SfA. A

key factor for this was that students had less familiarity with the rubric and what constituted

good evidence at the time of the initial assessment and therefore scored themselves higher. An

outlier was student two, who self-assessed limited in all categories of the rubric on both the

initial and second SfA. In the conference the student explained, "I can't figure out what to do

without people helping" and "I relied on 'P'" (partner) because the student finds it difficult to

choose information to include in presentations. After this conversation, the researcher and CT

determined to check in more frequently with student two.

Instructional Implications

The FA was administered mid-way through the unit. This gave the teachers an

opportunity to reflect on adjustments to instruction as well as progress toward giving students

and parents continued voice in the unit. These scores offered two clear directions for the

researcher and CT in adjusting whole group instruction. First, because the FA showed students

needed support communicating clearly beyond their notes on a page, the teachers adjusted the

note sheet students would use to teach their peers about the content in which they became

experts. Students typed their initial notes into a Google Docs graphic organizer. The original

instructional plan was for students to transfer important information to a mind map and use this

mind map to teach their home group. The teachers adjusted this plan to use the Dutro and Moran

(2003) concept of "bricks and mortar" academic language. Dutro and Moran (2003) define

"bricks" as "vocabulary words specific to the content and concepts being taught," while mortar

words are "the basic and general utility vocabulary required for constructing sentences" (p. 13).

The adjustment pushed students to transfer their notes using only three key concept words

(bricks) and sketches to accompany those words. This would ensure students were not reading

directly from their notes, but constructing sentences with mortar words as they taught their group

about the key ideas (bricks). Another adjustment in response to student needs was that before

teaching their expert content to their home group, students stood up and practiced presenting to

their expert group.

The second direction for instructional adjustment was in response to the initial SfA in

which students described themselves mostly in the limited to emerging stages of development in

the Character and Citizenship rubrics. Their comments indicated they needed support from the

teacher in order to start and "get through a task" (Appendix D). To move students to the next

stage of development, the teachers added skill development in getting started on a task by

adjusting the action project's outline. On day two, based on FA learnings, teachers added a

graphic organizer that would guide student project planning. Additionally, the teachers made

adjustments to teach students how to get through a task without relying on the teacher. The

second week of action projects, the researcher and CT were planning to confer with each group

to offer feedback about next steps and challenges. Instead, the teachers adjusted this activity so

that groups intentionally received feedback from peers about how to tackle their challenges and

determine their next steps. In a circle, each group gave and received feedback, which reinforced

the oral language objectives. This whole-group brainstorming led to authentic conversations

during and after class, in which students were asking each other for further feedback.

The teachers also created targeted scaffolds for students based on the FA data. For

example, in the conference, student five expressed discontent with the Communication score

being emerging, so a goal was set for the student to make communication more clear. A targeted

scaffold was developed, and the student used sentence stems to present the mind-map, which

supported communicating the content clearly.

After the FA, the teachers reached out to the Change Team to ask for ideas about how to

more deeply invite families into the process of the action projects. At the leadership meeting, the

Assistant Principal suggested that before beginning action projects, students initiate

conversations with their parents about any input they had regarding what would be a useful way

to take action in the community in order to solve a global goal. This adjustment was intended to

give more voice to parents, and further scaffold the FA need to help students get started on a task

without relying exclusively on the teacher. The goal was for students to see their parents as an

additional, valuable resource to support them in getting started on a task. All of these

adjustments to the unit were responsive to the FA results while keeping in mind the initial

student and parent survey data, as well as the state ELPA data. This led to effective instruction

and increased engagement throughout the rest of the unit.

<div align="center">**Summative Assessment**</div>

The Summative Assessment (SmA) was designed to continue providing the same kind of

quality ELD feedback as the FA, but in a manner that would summatively assess the students'

development and progress toward the unit objectives. The SmA took place after students

participated in a performance task that led them into the school and community in an effort to

meet the global UN goal at the local level. The first part of the SmA was a final SfA using the

four rubrics, each with a scale of 1-5, in the areas of Speaking and Listening, Communication,

Character, and Citizenship, as well as evidence for the stage of development. The teachers

reviewed these student scores and added their own anecdotal evidence to come to a final score.

Additionally, the SmA included five reflection questions in narrative form, which provided evidence of student growth toward the unit objectives.

The SmA was administered through the Google Classroom platform, as was the rest of the unit. Students typed their responses into a Google document using Chromebooks. Students had the option to write in English or Spanish, and to use the Speech-to-text feature in Google Read & Write. These modifications were appropriate in order to help every student successfully communicate their learning, given that the purpose of the SmA was to measure and document growth in each of the four areas after the students' culminating action project.

The SmA scores were intended to be used as baseline information for planning whole-group and targeted instruction for the next unit the CT teaches with this group of students. Trends and outliers from this data will also inform how the same unit is taught next year. Finally, the scores were intended to help students reflect upon their growth toward the unit objectives. Since the three Deep Learning objectives reflected social emotional growth, the SmA gave students a chance to see how they had matured and developed as citizens of the school and community as a result of their research and their action projects.

Results

The results of the SmA revealed that this group of students felt they had developed toward the unit objectives even if they did not reach proficient. This was evidenced by their rubric scores (Figure 5) as well as their written reflections (Appendix E).

Figure 5. Summative Assessment Rubric Scores
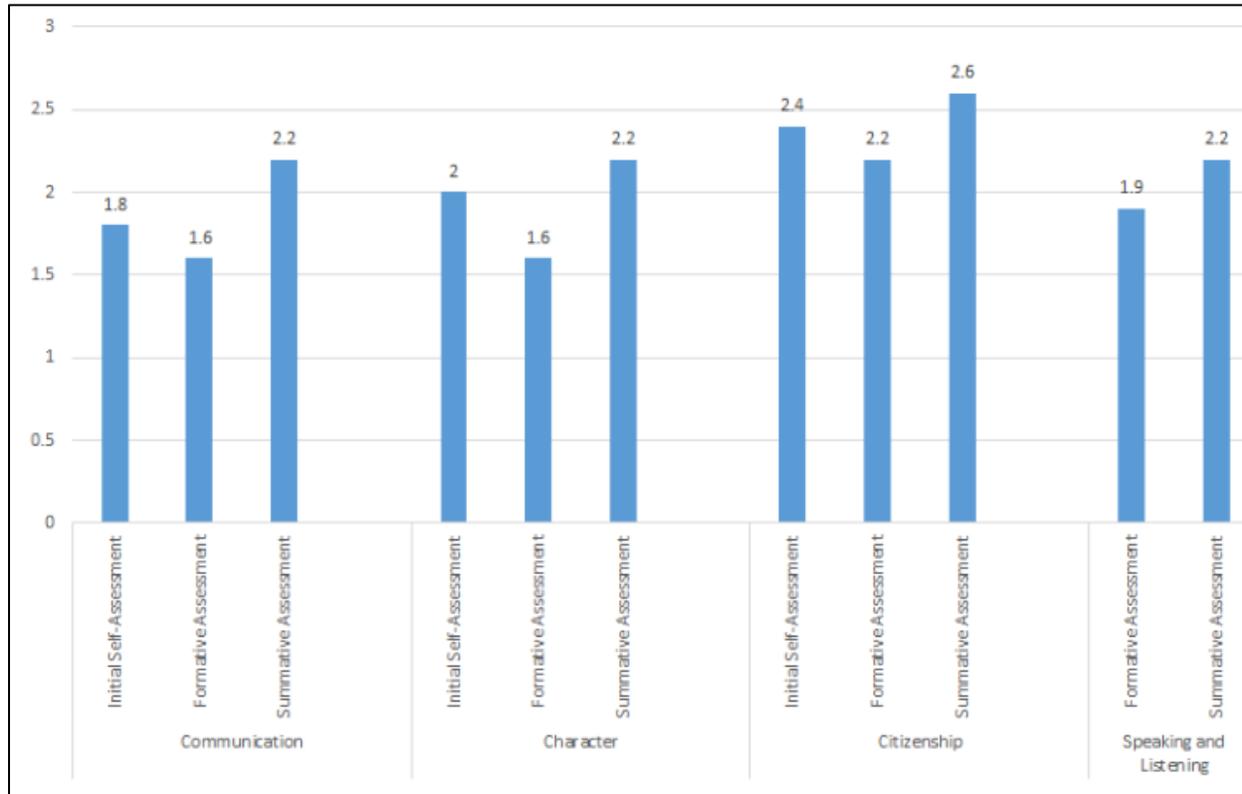
 The average scores in Character and Citizenship improved 0.2 point. The average score in

Speaking and Listening improved 0.3 point, and Communication improved 0.4 point. The written

reflections demonstrated a trend in that most students felt positive and proud about their progress

toward the unit objectives. One student reflected feeling proud of "actually taking action because

what's the whole point of talking about the world's problems and not doing anything about it?"

Another student reflected pride in saying, "I solved all my problems during this project and did

not ignore them." A third student said, "I feel like I have try a lot harder on this project because

this is a real world problem." These responses reflected growth in the Character and Citizenship

unit objectives toward taking responsibility and action in solving complex problems. Even if the

rubric scores improved in small ways, the sense of agency and ownership students voiced in their

written reflections indicated much personal growth.

An outlier was student two, who self-assessed as limited in nine out of eleven rubrics in the FA as well as the SmA. Student two was not effectively engaged early on in the unit. The student seemed distracted and unfocused. In the FA conference, before starting the action project, the student stated, "I find it difficult to focus when it doesn't engage me in the slightest." The student's engagement grew with the action project, but the student had missed developing depth from the case studies so the action project felt like more instruction rather than application. The action project was clearly the most engaging and valuable part of this unit for students. Another student reflected, "I am most proud that I can actually make this a real thing and working to make a change." The example of student two will inform future instruction in that the teachers intend to begin engaging students in the community action component earlier in the unit the next time this is taught, rather than waiting until application at the end of the unit.

Next Steps

The Summative Assessment results provided additional knowledge about students and their needs that guided next steps in instruction, including objectives, learning activities, and professional collaboration. First, supporting LTELs in overcoming their language deficits is a long-term process. Since the FA confirmed that support was needed in oral language skills, and because their SmA showed growth but not proficiency in the oral language unit objectives, the teachers determined that a next step in future instruction would be a continued focus on oral language development. They agreed that continuing with the Speaking and Listening and Communication objectives would be coherent and appropriate, while adding another language objective from the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, which are specifically designed to scaffold ELD for ELs. Based on the SmA results that showed students had not internalized the academic language in the unit essential questions, and because LTELs need

feedback in specific English grammar, vocabulary and usage, the teachers chose standard 6-8.10:

make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade appropriate speech and writing.

The layout of the ELP Standards is very user-friendly for students. The standards are divided into

specific, leveled objectives within each standard. This provides a starting place for each LTEL in

the class, as well as an end goal for proficiency. Adding the ELP standard to the next unit's

objectives will create even more specific dialogue during future student Self-Assessment and

teacher Formative Assessment conferences.

Second, the teachers knew students and parents were looking for learning experiences

that were interactive, hands-on, and engaged real-world problems. The unit had given students a

strong start in growing in relation to the unit objectives, and they now felt empowered to make a

change in the world, as evidenced in the SmA reflections. Because of this, the teachers consulted

with the Change Team to determine their next steps for future instruction within the lens of deep

learning. The team suggested asking students for their voice. Students decided they wanted one

day a week to continue working on their action projects, which had not been completed by the

end of the unit of instruction. The teachers agreed this was a great way to build upon their

success.

Another action step that arose based on knowledge of students and assessment results

was collaboration between the researcher and the 6-8th grade teachers around specific academic

language strategies to support the needs of LTELs. In the focal group, all five of the ELs had

been enrolled in the ELL program since they entered Kindergarten in 2009. It was alarming that

100% of these students had been enrolled since Kindergarten and not yet exited the program.

This trend has been documented in the state of California. In the fall of 2009, a coalition called

Californians Together gathered statewide data to study the extent of the LTEL phenomenon.

Laurie Olsen authored the study's report, Reparable Harm, in 2010. At that time, the responding

districts reported 330,000 LTELs in California alone. The state indicated that students who enroll

in Kindergarten or first grade have a three in four chance of becoming LTELs (2010).

Understanding this context alongside the needs of the focal group caused the researcher to look

deeper into middle school data to see if this need was broadly applicable at the school. Research

revealed that in this school, approximately 94% of 6-8th graders were considered LTELs (Figure

6).

Figure 6. Percent LTELs in 6-8th grade
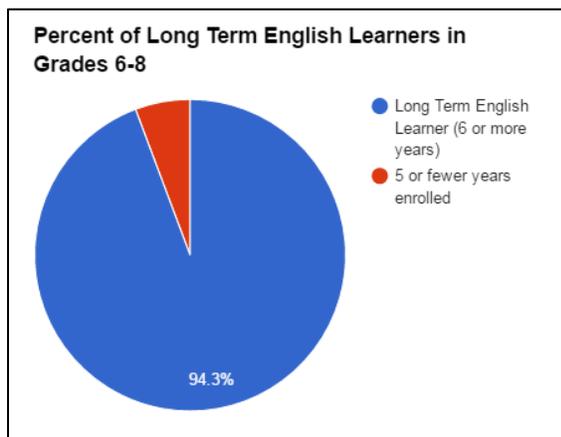
The researcher recognized an opportunity for leadership in order to help 6-8th grade

teachers in the school understand the unique needs of LTELs so they could better support them

in mainstream classrooms. According to Olsen (2010), to effectively meet the needs of LTELs,

"Teachers need to know their students and engage in careful analysis of the language demands of

the content they are teaching, as well as develop skills in implementing appropriate instructional

strategies" (p. 32). A workshop was designed to begin supporting teachers to do this work.

To measure the effectiveness of this workshop, a Kahoot online quiz was administered at

the beginning and end of the workshop. Ten teachers participated. They were asked to rank their

understanding from 1 (limited) to 5 (clear) about the three workshop objectives (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Teacher Growth on LTEL Workshop Objectives
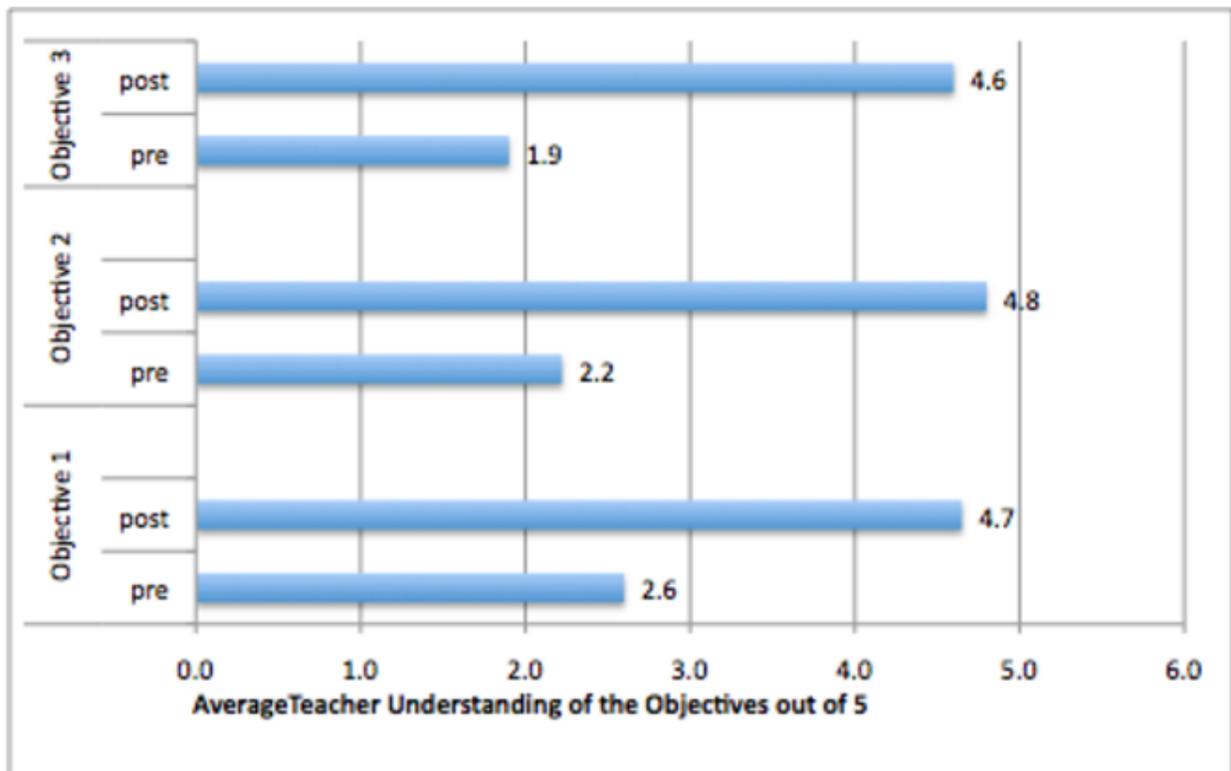
The results indicated much growth. The average score for Objective one, "I understand what it means to be a Long Term English Learner", improved 2.1 points; Objective two: "I know who the LTELs are in my classes" improved 2.6 points; and Objective three: "I have a couple of beginning strategies to support them in my content area" improved 2.7 points. Six of the ten teachers asked for follow-up support implementing best practices to support LTELs. Clearly, this workshop met a learning need for the teachers who attended.

Finally, the professional learning that began as part of the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning will continue into next year. This will be a great opportunity for the researcher to continue building understanding of how to meet student and family needs through engaging learning experiences. Although the Summative Assessment indicated the end of this unit of

instruction, the powerful work begun through student action projects, self-assessments, and teacher collaboration will continue long after the assessment was given.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the school year, the researcher set out to improve assessment methods for ELs by deepening knowledge of students and participating in professional collaboration. This resulted in the creation of linguistically and culturally responsive, engaging formative and summative assessments that provided useful feedback for individual students in their ELD, and important information for the teachers in determining next steps for instruction and collaboration within this unit.

The assessment practice of the researcher evolved as knowledge of students was gained. First, the researcher realized the critical need for LTELs to have opportunities to confer with their teacher regarding evidence of their learning. This assessment experience offered students very specific feedback combined with goal setting, which empowered them to take ownership of their own ELD. Collaboration with colleagues, specifically those on the Change Team, helped the researcher develop more helpful ways to assess students, especially LTELs, than with traditional pencil and paper tests. Giving students a chance to bring evidence and reflect on their learning and growth in relation to the unit objectives was meaningful to them. They were invested in their growth and goals, as evidenced in their proud written reflections. Additionally, interactions between the researcher and the families of students and community members helped the researcher think deeply about authentic assessment as a way to evaluate the unit objectives in a meaningful context, as parents had suggested. These assessments felt integral to the unit, and meaningful to students. There was no way for students to "cram" for these assessments in order to generate an artificially high-test score. Rather, the assessments were a culmination of oral

language practice and application, which were essential in supporting the ELD of the ELs in this focal group. Professional development with New Pedagogies for Deeper Learning emphasized that genuine assessment is part of a conceptual, longitudinal learning experience such as this unit was trying to create. Finally, leading middle school teachers through a workshop to help them support LTELs in mainstream classrooms reiterated the critical need for providing opportunities to scaffold oral language development for LTELs. All of these experiences resulted in the researcher feeling equipped to offer better support as an Instructional Coach in the area of formative assessment and summative assessment for ELs.

At the beginning of the unit, the parents themselves determined the deeper success criteria for this unit. When asked how teachers would know if the learning was successfully igniting and engaging the interest of their child, parents responded, "If they get excited to talk about the problems", "If the kids are explaining it/talking about it amongst themselves", and "their interest level". If these were the measure of the success of this unit, as a result of responsive formative assessment, the unit was a true success for both the students in the focal group as well as the professional learning communities in which the researcher participated. The CT and researcher noted evidence of the parents' success criteria as students were working on their deep learning action projects. After school one day, a girl and two boys remained to discuss their projects, planning, laughing, and offering each other feedback about next steps. The girl was developing a motivational speech to give to sixth graders about the UN Sustainability Goal "decent work and economic growth," and the two boys were planning a pancake feed for local homeless. Another day, the same boys stayed after school 1.5 hours to keep working on their project once 6th period ended. On action project workdays, nearly 100% engagement and time on task demonstrated the students' high interest level. At the end of the project, students

said, "I'm most proud of actually taking action because what's the whole point of talking about

the world's problems and not doing anything about it" and "I am most proud that I can actually

make this a real thing and am working to make a change." Their words demonstrate that the unit

met its ultimate objective: empowering students to take action in the complex work of making

this world a better place.

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Appendix A

Bilingual Parent Survey Responses (*= translated from Spanish)

Survey question	Parent responses
What are your hopes and dreams for your son/daughter?	*That he keeps studying in order to meet his goals. He wants to earn a license in technology and help others.
What are your son/daughter's strengths? What comes naturally to them?	Athletics; helpful; *facing life and the capacity to achieve what he wants to do; *he likes science; technology; she's a good listener; *she's very dedicated to her studies; math; basketball; *he is very noble and likes there to be peace and harmony; *she likes to share with others; *dance; my son is very confident and a good listener. He is really good at absorbing information.
How can we create a learning experience that will engage and ignite them?	A balance of book work and hands on; *allowing them to interact with all of their classmates; *express themselves freely; *perhaps create new work techniques to encourage young people; *create work techniques where they can talk and feel safe; *talk about everyday problems going on; *do more projects; hands on learning is best for my son; trust, communication.
How will we (quickly) know it is working?	His interest level; if the kids are explaining it/talking about it amongst themselves; *communicating with him; if they get excited to talk about the problems; *watching how she gets excited
Is there anything else you would like us to know that would help us support them?	*Give group projects; *find a way to help her participate in the class (she is painfully shy); *not to distinguish between students and talk with them about respect between different ethnicities.

Appendix B

Example of Formative Assessment of Unit Objectives

Success Criteria: Standards addressed in this unit   **Name:** ───────────

ELA Standards:

SPK/LIST 7.4 Presentation of knowledge and ideas: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner, with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SPK/LIST 7.5 Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points

Limited Evidence	Emerging	Developing	Accelerating	Proficient
I find it difficult to choose important information for my presentation. I do not have a clear focus. This makes my presentation unorganized and difficult to follow. I need help choosing visuals. I am unclear of their purpose in my presentation.	I can choose facts, details and examples that will explain my claims and findings. Although my presentation is focused, it may not be presented in the most coherent and organized manner. I can choose visuals that are related to the presentation, but may not be the most convincing.	With occasional support, I can make my claim and findings clear through the use of facts, key details, and examples. More and more, I am able to present my ideas in a focused and clear manner. With support, I can select convincing visuals that clarify my claims and emphasize key points.	I can present important claims and findings that are supported with facts, key details and examples. I know how to make my presentation focused and coherent. I know how to choose visuals that will clarify my claims and emphasize key points.	I understand why a focused, coherent presentation is convincing to its audience. My details, facts, and examples are organized for maximum impact. I understand the power of visuals and can thoroughly articulate why the visuals I chose will have maximum impact for the claims and key points they support.

Evidence: – used sentence stems to support Philosophical Chairs debate (T)
  – ' feels she struggles to be clear (S) – chose a convincing photo for debate (T)
  – shy

Appendix C

Example of Student Self-Assessment

Self- Evaluation   Name: ▬▬▬▬▬▬

Communication: I can clearly communicate with different audiences in different ways and be understood. 03-06-17

Limited___
Emerging√
Developing__
Accelerating__
Proficient__

What evidence shows you are at this stage of development?
I feel like I could explain things but at the same I feel like it wont make sence

Character: I take responsibility to learn and know I can create an impact on the world.

Limited___
Emerging√
Developing__
Accelerating__
Proficient__

What evidence shows you are at this stage of development?
Sometimes I get stuk and don't know where to start but when others help me I could get started in a way that I know

Citizenship: I can solve complex problems that benefit others even when the problems are complicated.

Limited___
Emerging__
Developing√
Accelerating__
Proficient__

What evidence shows you are at this stage of development?
sometimes I can. I can get started one my own but at the sametime I have trouble getting started

Speaking and Listening: I can present important claims, be a clear/strong speaker, and use visual aids to make my point.

Limited___
Emerging√
Developing__
Accelerating__
Proficient__

What evidence shows you are at this stage of development?
Sometimes to me I feel like I choose good facts, details & examples but to other people it may not sound good. For choosing pictures I feel like I can choose them.

After Conferring with your teacher...

What did you learn from Mrs. Stevens'/Mrs. Van Loo's assessment of your work?
Is that if you choose something and a teacher says oh so & so and you relise that would make sence.

How did your self-assessment ratings come together with your teachers' to help you place yourself on the progression?
It help because I thought over it and kind of helpe a me agree on something so that way I can work on it

Based on these two assessments, set a goal with Mrs. Stevens/Mrs. Van Loo for the rest of this unit:
My goal it to ask questions to teachers in stead of a friend.

What action will you take to meet your goal?
By asking questions to Mrs Van Loo tomorrow.

Appendix D

Student Quotes from Self-Assessment Evidence

Character and Citizenship objectives evidence: Student quotes that show students needed teacher support to get started on learning tasks	"I can try to [solve complex problems that will benefit others] but will need help starting." "Help with my teacher I can get through the project or task" "When the teacher gave us work I would need help to start but then would know what to do" "I can work on tasks that I get but need help to understand most things"
Speaking and Listening objectives evidence: Student quotes that show they needed support communicating clearly beyond their notes on a page	"I can't really explain my ideas" "I think I can communicate in different ways but sometimes people won't understand" "To me I find it difficult to express myself" "I am at this stage of development because I can't really present my thoughts that others won't be able to understand and I am not comfortable communicating." "I feel like I could explain things but at the same I feel like it won't make sense" "In the debate it would be hard for me to have evidence to come back; I would just say what I have on my paper." "With the debate I had my evidence on my paper but couldn't have nothing to support with my words too."

Appendix E

Summative Assessment Written Narrative Reflections

Question	Student Responses
How did your project take action to reduce scarcity and increase interdependence? Explain giving at least three examples.	• "I feel like my group isn't the only one helping with no poverty but the whole school because they are also taking action and going to be donating so that way we can help those in need." • "Less people starving in that day [the day of the pancake feed for the community]. And the reduces and feel more interdependence"
In what areas have you grown or improved throughout the course of this project?	• "The areas where I have grown where was when I was nervous to speak in front of so many people but I'm still improving on my speaking." • "I have grown out on sharing some of my ideas with my team and by asking if they need help on anything." • "I feel like I have I have improved in communicating with other people and kind of asking questions."
What have you learned?	• "I learned that the world is not so perfect and people out there are starving and dying from lack of food and water." • "I have learn is that some teenagers don't have all the opportunities as other teenagers do." • "If people give me a funny look I can explain it in a different way!"
What are you most proud of? Why?	• "What I am most proud of myself is I am kind of starting to ask questions to my teacher." • "I'm most proud of actually taking action because what's the whole point of talking about the world's problems and not doing anything about it." • "I am most proud that I can actually make this a real thing and working to make a change and not waste lots of food." • "I feel like I have try a lot harder on this project because this is a real world problem." • "I solved all my problems during this project and did not ignore them." • "During this project I took charge in communicating with people who wanted to help our project work."
What skill do you want to continue to improve? Why?	• "On standing in front of a group of people and don't be shy." • "I would want to improve on talking more and collaboration more with my group because I feel like I struggle with that and would like to be more of a helper in my group than just not do anything."