IDRA Newsletter

IDRA's Community of Learners Approach to Instructional Quality

Three Critical Questions that are Rarely Asked in a Curriculum Audit

by Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., and Bradley Scott, Ph.D.

If you are not satisfied with the success that your campus is having with traditionally underserved students – primarily English language learners, low-income students and minority students – or if you have been cited for the poor academic performance of any or all of these groups of underserved students, you may be wondering if this is the year when you will be on the list of schools that did not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements and face the scrutiny of students, parents and the community as a whole.

Or perhaps your campus is on its second year of warned status because of failure to show improvement in meeting the performance needs of underserved students.

Or maybe you are simply seeking ways to increase your school's responsiveness to ensure that *all* students have the opportunity to an education that reflects quality and excellence. Improvement plans have been developed and implemented, and still the desired academic improvement is not obtained.

Sometimes there are flaws in the questions we ask ourselves when planning school improvement. We argue that such is the case. This article provides school administrators and communities with a brief description of the three most critical questions that are rarely asked in a curriculum audit and suggests a community of learners approach to appraising curriculum and instructional quality of programs and practices and incorporating these questions.

First Rare Question

Are administrators, teachers and other school personnel articulating and showing evidence of high academic expectations for traditionally underserved students?

Recently, in a student-focused group activity, students were asked to name one major reason that students fail in their classes. The response given by many students was that they know some teachers do not care for them. The students felt that teachers do not think highly of them as learners.

Research correlates low ex-

pectations held by teachers to low achievement and performance of students. How he or she is treated, respected and valued by important others, including administrators, teachers and other education personnel, has a domino effect on a student's self concept, self-efficacy and persistence that immensely contributes to the level of success that he or she will attain in school.

For many students, attending a school with a teacher who already has a preconceived disparaging concept of who they are, what their educational aspirations are and how much they will be able to accomplish is a negative reality that cannot be ignored if we, education planners and change agents, are to effectively guide a curriculum audit effort.

Unfortunately, many students are victims of the "low expectations vicious cycle" whereby teachers will change their expectations of students only after seeing them progress. Yet students feel confined and will never show that required progress because

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they recognize the teachers' low expectations of them.

Tragically, in this negative scenario, the opportunity to show progress is never an option. And the self-fulfilling stereotype that these student groups cannot learn prevails. Communicating low expectations has a great propensity to truncate achievement.

As educators, we must always remember the words of Peter Senge: "All human beings are born with unique gifts. The healthy functioning of our community depends on its [schools'] capacity to develop each gift" (Morris and Hammonds, 2004).

Ways to address this issue in a curriculum audit include conducting a self-survey of teachers; conducting a self-survey of students, particularly

middle and high school students; and conducting "reflection and action" sessions to describe what school practices should be implemented.

Second Rare Question

Does the school's vision specifically speak to the academic performance and college preparation of traditionally underserved student groups, and if so, is the school showing evidence that adequate and timely progress is being achieved?

As part of an improvement planning process, schools are asked to collaborate with the community in establishing a vision for the school. This vision should guide the school in setting the right direction or course to follow.

In This Issue...

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Responding to the Need for Bilingual Early Childhood Education Literacy Development
Semillitas de Aprendizaje New Curriculum in Development

by Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D., and Bradley Scott, Ph.D.

A continuing academic achievement gap, low performance and low graduation rates are powerful evidence that many schools continue to shortchange English language learners. Research reports that the achievement gap between English language learners and the general school population begins at an early age and continues through high school and college.

Building a strong academic foundation and a strong sense of self-efficacy from an early age holds the best promise for English language learners to persevere and succeed in slowly changing educational institutions. One of the contributing factors is the lack of bi-literacy and self-efficacy curriculum.

This article provides a brief description of the *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* early childhood curriculum that is currently being developed by IDRA to address this need.

The vision embodies the literacy skills and resiliency inherent in this curriculum: The amazement of being able to read… To be able to put letters and sounds together to make words…

To be able to construct meaning from print…To be able to capture ideas and thoughts. To be able to move print from words to images, and even better, to be able to move images to words for others to see, to hear, to feel, to experience!

At an early age, children love being able to read, they can develop resiliency and perseverance, they begin to think about careers, and they develop a thirst for knowledge and inquiry.

Underlying Premises of the New Curriculum

Language development begins at a very early age. In an interactive manner, children learn by listening to and participating in conversation. Even very young learners begin to experiment with the joy of using language to express feelings, engage, communicate ideas, create and influence others.

Universally, young children learn the language(s) they hear and readily learn to reproduce those sounds, which ultimately supports their process of developing early and emerging literacy skills. As very young children listen to the conversations and stories heard in

their families, powerful connections are made, emotions are explored and memories are created that forge the strong foundation of language as a precursor for literacy.

Children can learn expression in language through the introduction of the skill of recitation or declamation at a very early age. This skill is part of Hispanic cultural traditions that need to be valued and preserved.

Through its success over the years in the area of teacher development in early childhood education, and most recently with IDRA's Reading Early for Academic Development (READ) project, lessons learned in creating preschool centers of excellence at home and at school have helped to inform an exciting new bilingual effort in early childhood education. IDRA collaborated with the Head Start program of Parent Child Incorporated in San Antonio to implement READ, an Early Reading First project funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

IDRA was able to translate these learnings into a wonderful new

curriculum that captures the best of what we learned through research and practice. This has become the curriculum series, titled *Semillitas de Aprendizaje*.

This unique supplemental bilingual (Spanish/English) early childhood curriculum is based on the art of storytelling and listening. Children can listen to, view and then read along with this curriculum's culturally-relevent stories. Children eventually begin to repeat the stories and learn the art of creating their own stories as well as recite poetry.

Semillitas de Aprendizaje focuses on literacy and has activities for 3- and 4-year-old children. The bilingual supplemental curriculum is comprised of: comprehension, phonological awareness and phonics, book knowledge and use, print knowledge and emergent writing, and storytelling/poetry reading and recitation.

This unique supplemental bilingual (Spanish/English) early childhood curriculum is based on the art of storytelling and listening.

The *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* Curriculum Package

The entire *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* series is comprised of three parts: (1) the *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* core curriculum that includes bilingual stories, accompanying original storytelling videos, teacher lesson plans and activities for parents; (2) a set of 10 illustrated storybooks with songs and poems; and (3) a "learning through nature" set of 15 short bilingual picture books for home use that focus on mathematics and other important concepts. A set of videos for the preparation of bilingual preschool teachers will also be available. Each component can be purchased and used separately.

Through the series of 10 original and beautifully illustrated stories, children will listen to their teacher talk about each illustration, listen to the stories that are rich in vocabulary that describes and delights the listener, talk about similar experiences that they have had, follow directions that are geared to take them to the next step in applying and experimenting with the information they have learned, and engage in predicting next happenings and story endings.

The teacher materials that accompany this bilingual curriculum begin with an activity cycle that includes developing a lasting love of reading and lifelong interest in learning. These steps include: *provocar*, provoke an interest in learning; *enseñar*, teach the joy of knowing by challenging the child's imagination; *retar*, challenge the child's imagination and intellect; *transferir*, transfer the new learning to English; and *evaluar*, evaluate your success in presenting the instructional material.

Each story and accompanying lesson integrates vocabulary development into related activities for classroom and home. Throughout the curriculum, knowledge and skills are integrated from other disciplines: mathematics, science, social studies, motor development and emotional

Semillitas de Aprendizaje Expected Outcomes for 3-Year-Old Children

The *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* lessons are designed to support 3-year-old children in achieving the following outcomes.

- The child understands 75 percent of what is said in Spanish and 50 percent of what is said in English.
- 75 percent of the child's speech in Spanish is understandable and 50 percent of what the child says in English is understandable.
- The child speaks in complete sentences of three to five words in Spanish and can use simple commands in English.
- The child matches pictures to objects in the classroom and at the home at a 75 percent performance level.
- The child matches at a 75 percent performance level pictures in Spanish and English (around the vocabulary items introduced during the year) to names called out by the teacher.
- The child demonstrates actions called out by the teacher in English at a 75 percent performance level.
- The child understands concepts of *now*, *tomorrow*, *yesterday*, *soon* and *later* in both Spanish and English.
- The child begins to recognize cause-and-effect relationships in Spanish at a 75 percent performance level.
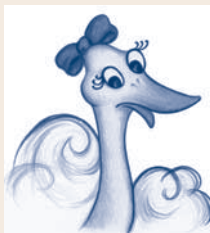
Semillitas is currently in development by IDRA.

development aimed at fostering positive self concept and resiliency.

The teacher guidebooks help to tie activities to each story being read to the children. Comprehension lessons include texts to be read in Spanish and in English followed by other recommended children's books to expand learning. The series is replete with songs, puppets, games, short pieces for recitation and other learning activities associated with play that reinforce the objectives stated for each lesson. The object of *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* is to expand vocabulary and make learning seamless.

The children in the *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* learning journey will integrate and eventually use new vocabulary in both languages. They will experience and hear the new word in a sentence, encounter the word at least three times through song and play, isolate the word and see its representation with a colorful picture that is posted in the classroom, practice and reinforce the use of the word in activities, and have opportunities to use the words in normal conversation, stimulated by encouraging adults. Teachers of 4-year-olds will record the times the new words are used. The rich bilingual vocabulary used in *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* includes nouns; verbs; adjectives and emotion words; and prepositions, conjunctions and relating words.

IDRA looks forward to sharing this exciting new curriculum with teachers, parents and children. *Semillitas* in Spanish means *little seeds or seedlings*. We expect many seedlings of learning will be planted with this curriculum, and with the care and nurturing of loving adults, will sprout reading success for eager young bilingual learners, fully prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Semillitas de Aprendizaje Expected Outcomes for 4-Year-Old Children

The *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* lessons are designed to support 4-year-old children in achieving the following outcomes.

- The child uses a 1,500-word vocabulary and speaks in relatively complex sentences in Spanish, and uses a 750 word vocabulary and speaks in relatively simple sentences in English ("Mommy has a dress").
- The child understands words that relate one idea to another in Spanish with a 75 percent accuracy level, and at a 50 percent accuracy level when presented in English (e.g., if, why, when, where, or, because, instead, on, in, under, over).
- The child can read short storybooks at a 75 percent accuracy level in Spanish and attempts to read short storybooks in English at a 50 percent accuracy level.
- The child can identify the difference between fantasy and reality in Spanish at a 75 percent accuracy level and in English at a 50 percent accuracy level.
- The child can name numbers from 0 to 50 and can use space concepts (more, less, bigger, in, under, behind) with a 75 percent accuracy in Spanish and 50 percent in English.
- The child can demonstrate logical thinking through sequencing events in a story at a 75 percent performance level in Spanish and 50 percent in English.
- The child knows 75 percent of the alphabet letters in Spanish and 50 percent of the letters in English.
- The child recognizes beginning sounds and ending sounds in Spanish at a 75 percent accuracy level and at a 50 percent accuracy level in English.
- The child can read 75 of the 100 words most commonly used in Spanish and can read 50 of the 100 words most commonly used in English.

Semillitas is currently in development by IDRA.

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When working on the school vision, it is common to address all students in the vision, but the planned action often tends to shortchange the spirit and intent of the vision and, in particular, minority, low-income and English language learners. For all practical purposes, in some cases, the school vision has benefited *some* students but not those students who have been traditionally underserved.

The question becomes: What needs to happen in developing a vision that ensures that *all* student groups are covered in that school vision?

A working definition of the vision is one way to address this issue. The working definition describes how the school will be accountable for its own success and impact on the various student subgroups and how it plans to eliminate any achievement gaps among groups, if any exist.

Presently, the most prevalent way we measure a school's success and positive impact on students' lives is through the state-mandated tests of academic performance. While disaggregated student achievement data are critical to school accountability, we have seen an overemphasis on a curriculum that is test-driven and restricted to specific, pre-selected competencies, rather than focusing on creating more widely-focused world-class learning environments.

Therefore, a good vision should include other measures of success that are not captured through academic achievement tests. Some of these measures include evidence of self-efficacy, self-directed learners, resourcefulness and creative power within a school.

Third Rare Question

Do teachers demonstrate a level of confidence, self-efficacy and expertise necessary to successfully address the challenges of traditionally

Tools for

Curriculum Quality

A study by the U.S. Department of Education released in 2006 has received new attention recently. It found, "The academic intensity of the student's high school curriculum still counts more than anything else in precollegiate history in providing momentum toward completing a bachelor's degree." The authors of *The Toolbox Revisited – Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College* (**http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/ toolboxrevisit/toolbox.pdf**) stress the critical need for all students to have access to high quality curriculum.

IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework also identifies curriculum quality and access as a critical school system indicator. It includes the educational programs of study, materials and other learning resources, such as technology, and their accessibility to all students. It also relates to assessment and accountability – the school practices related to fair and unbiased assessment of students and degree that schools take responsibility for the academic success of all students. IDRA is working with school and community leaders to help schools strengthen their curriculum to better engage students and ensure all students have access to high-level courses, particularly in mathematics and science.

A Snapshot of What IDRA is Doing

Developing leaders – The 15th Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute™ recently was held in San Antonio. This year's theme, "Inspiring Children's Creativity and Inquiry in Mathematics and Science," analyzed the critical issues around early literacy that affect the quality of instruction offered by schools. The institute created opportunities for children to develop a love of reading while they are doing mathematics, art, music and science.

Conducting research – IDRA is conducting a study using the IDRA publication, *Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English: A Guide*, to look at the three following dimensions of school success as they pertain to a Texas school district's population of high school English language learners: effective leadership, quality teaching and other student support. This study measures the effectiveness of programs, instructional accommodations and regulatory compliance. You can also use this guide in your own community, visit www.idra.org to order a copy.

Action

Informing policy – Recently, a three-judge panel of a federal appeals court ruled in favor of school districts in several states who claimed that the *No Child Left Behind Act* requires them to pay for testing and other programs without providing sufficient federal money. In an IDRA Classnotes Podcast, "Court Ruling on Compliance with NCLB Mandates," IDRA's policy director, Dr. Albert Cortez that gives an overview of the recent NCLB-focused court ruling and its implications for states, school districts as well as for NCLB reauthorization. Listen to this informative podcast by going to IDRA's web site at http://www.idra.org/Podcasts or through iTunes.

Engaging communities – IDRA's Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) continues to work closely with parents in school districts in Texas to review the academic achievement of its students. Recently, IDRA convened a group of enthusiastic parents to seek ways to support the success of all students, especially in math. Parents are also learning how they can identify when and how they can help their children attend and complete college.

What You Can Do

Get informed. Doing What Works is a new web site sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education dedicated to connecting educators to research and identify effective teaching practices and how to implement them to improve student achievement. For more information, visit **http://dww.ed.gov/**.

Get involved. Parents can check out the things they should know about and expect from their schools and themselves. "12 Things You Should Know and Expect" is a useful guide created by KSA-Plus Communications' Parent Leadership Group and can be downloaded for free and distributed to parents at your school, visit at **http://www.parents.ksaplus.com/framesplpubs. html.**

Get results. The U.S. Department of Education has collected data in "Mapping Educational Progress 2008" about the academic performance of students and schools. See data on student achievement in reading and math, high school graduation rates, schools making adequate yearly progress, highly qualified teachers, and more. Visit **http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/results/ progress/index.html** for information about educational progress in your state. Use this information to identify needed areas of change.

underserved students?

Rick DuFour states: "Humans have a fundamental longing to believe we are successful in what we do – our need to achieve. Educators are typically denied this sense of success. Bombarded with too many state, national and district standards for students to master, teachers are often unclear as to what they are supposed to accomplish" (2004).

Administrators and teachers in schools with traditionally underserved students are not only bombarded with standards, but they also have to demonstrate knowledge and a sense of self-efficacy in working with traditionally underserved students if they are to be successful.

For the most part, school districts provide workshops and work sessions designed to increase the knowledge base on how to effectively teach these student groups.

Research appears to support the belief that self-efficacy is closely associated with good teaching and student outcomes. A high level of self-efficacy is correlated to higher teacher achievement in reaching these students. Developing a level of confidence or self-efficacy is a much more complicated matter that requires: (a) a positive attitude and beliefs about these students as learners, (b) a high level of knowledge and expertise on engaging and teaching them, (c) strong support and beliefs from campus leaders that teachers can make a difference, (d) a feeling of empowerment to become a risk taker, and (e) a strong commitment to make a positive difference in the lives of these students.

Unfortunately, teachers' self-efficacy and confidence are rarely factored into any campus improvement plan. The Teacher Efficacy Scale by Gibson and Dembo developed at Ohio State University is one

instrument that could be used for this purpose (1984). However, adaptation to factor in the educational needs of traditionally underserved students would be required for teachers of these students.

Building a Community of Learners

A *community of learners* approach to re-look at existing and non-successful school improvement plans and particularly to help answer these key questions given the context of your school and community is a useful strategy.

The focus of the community of learners approach is on bringing

A comprehensive approach to designing school reform requires a more intense look at factors that affect the quality of teaching provided to traditionally underserved students.

together crucial stakeholders in the educational process across grade levels, in a campus and/or across campuses within a school district. They create a forum to reflect and act upon best practices that lead to increased academic opportunities for *all* students that ultimately lead to achievement in the basic disciplines of literacy,

mathematics, social studies and science.

In appraising the quality of instruction provided to traditionally underserved students in a school district or campus, it is critical that the community of learners include stakeholders who represent various perspectives of the educational change process. At a minimum, this should include parents and teachers of traditionally underserved students, educators with expertise in effective instruction of these students, district and campus administrators, community leaders representing the private sector, activists, district and campus support

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Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In November and December, IDRA worked with **4,799** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **19** training and technical assistance activities and **71** program sites in **12** states plus Brazil. Topics included:

✦ Acquiring the Appropriate Scientifically-Based Research Strategies to Make Learning Meaningful for English Language Learners
✦ Highly Competent Paraprofessionals: Core Academic Instructional Strategies
✦ Enhancing Reading Instruction

Participating agencies and school districts included:
✧ Corpus Christi Independent School District, Texas
✧ Mesa Public Schools, Arizona
✧ Southeastern Louisiana University

Activity Snapshot

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has made an extraordinary difference in the lives of more than 26,000 students by keeping 98 percent of them in school. The lives of more than 456,000 children, families and educators have been positively impacted by the program in the United States, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom and Brazil. In the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, created by IDRA, secondary students who are considered to be at risk of dropping out are placed as tutors of elementary school students, enabling the older students to make a difference in the younger students' lives. With a growing sense of responsibility and pride, the tutors stay and do better in school. The program supports them with positive recognition, instruction and support.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:
✦ public school teachers
✦ parents
✦ administrators
✦ other decision makers in public education

Services include:
✧ training and technical assistance
✧ evaluation
✧ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
✧ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

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personnel, and students who represent these underserved student groups.

This type of shared leadership is described by Schlechy as being "less like an orchestra, where the conductor is always in charge, and more like a jazz band, where leadership is passed around… depending on what the music demands at the moment and who feels most moved by the spirit to express the music" (Morris and Hammonds, 2004).

The decision to change must come from within an educational institution and cannot be relegated to consultants or external organizations.

Campus improvement plans that fail to pro-actively address the above three questions have failed to address the full spectrum of instructional needs of traditionally underserved students. A comprehensive approach to designing school reform requires a more intense look at factors that affect the quality of teaching provided to traditionally underserved students, and a commitment to create a school vision of success that will ensure and be accountable for equity and access to an excellent education for *all* students. The community of learners must be respected for its objectivity, fairness, optimism and resolve to make a difference.

Resources

DuFour, R. "Leading Edge: Leadership is an Affair of the Heart," *Journal of Staff Development* (2004) Vol. 25, No. 1.

Gibson, S., and M. Dembo. "Teacher Efficacy: A Construct Validation," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (1984) 76, 569-582.

Morris W., and B. Hammonds (Eds). Leading and Learning for the 21st Century (No. 19 - August 2004). http://www.leading-learning.co.nz/newsletters/2004-no19.html

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Families and Curriculum

A key question is: How do curriculum, instruction and standards help our children in receiving and benefiting from an excellent education?

A Case in Point for English Language Learners

Assessing the academic success of students, in this case, very specifically those learning English as a second language, is clearly within the state and federal definitions of parent engagement. The strength and popularity of the phrase "leave no child behind" comes from the pervasive desire in all communities that all children succeed to their highest potential.

IDRA has identified the 25 common characteristics of successful schools that contribute to high academic performance of students learning English. This guide, *Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English*, is a rubric designed for people in schools and communities to evaluate five dimensions that are necessary for success: school indicators, student outcomes, leadership, support and programmatic and instructional practices. Families can use this instrument to examine how effectively the school is teaching the children.

Here are the school indicators
- **Retention rate** – The degree to which students are mastering required skills and therefore are not being held back in grade (e.g, the lower the better).
- **Dropout rate** – The degree to which students are held in school through completion of a high school graduation (e.g, the lower the better).
- **Gifted, talented and advanced placement program participation** – the availability and inclusion of students in rigorous and high quality curriculum and instruction (e.g., the higher the better).
- **Enrollment in special education and remedial programs** – The degree to which students are participating and excelling in the regular and advanced

Key Terms
Curriculum is what is to be learned and therefore to be taught. Most schools have adopted texts and other materials. Curricular materials are intended as tools to meet a certain set of standards. Computer-based materials and online information are an increasing resource. Some predict books will become secondary and the computer will be the central source of information for the student and the teacher.

Instruction is how the curriculum is carried out and taught.

Standards identify what students are expected to know and be able to do. Standards can also support high expectations for all students. For many reasons there has been a strong push for having uniform high standards in education.

programs (e.g., the lower the better).
- **Test exemption rates** – The degree to which all students are included in the standard testing and assessment procedures (e.g., the lower the better).

The five-point scales to measure the status of each indicator is a simple tool that families can use to measure the impact of curriculum and instruction on the children at any given campus. Acquiring the data might need some guidance, and families might need to persist to get an accurate picture of the status of the campus, but the questions are not difficult for families to understand, and the answers will be quite revealing to all concerned.

Families, *exactly as they are* without any more preparation in understanding curriculum, instruction and academic standards, *can assess* how well the school is doing. And this is both the spirit and the letter of the law: meaningful parent engagement in creating schools that work for all children.

Ways IDRA Can Help You

IDRA provides technical assistance to public school and higher education personnel and to parent and community groups through training sessions, onsite meetings, classroom observations, lesson demonstrations, video conferences, evaluation research, conferences, phone consultation, and the IDRA web site, which includes online message boards, online resources, and the *IDRA Newsletter*.

Details of IDRA technical assistance are available on the IDRA web site by topic area. CPE credit is available. Samples are below.

Math Smart! (for Elementary or Secondary) – A process to maximize dynamic student learning in mathematics.

Science Smart! (for Elementary or Secondary) – Elementary student mastery and achievement using authentic relevant teaching.

Engagement-based Sheltered Instruction – Extending teachers' knowledge of ESL strategies and sheltered instruction to ensure that English language learners are engaged in learning the academic content.

Parent Action for School Success – A model for effective parent engagement and taking the next step in meaningful school-home engagement for student success.

Success Using Bilingual Education – Comprehensive, in-depth learning opportunities for instructors that build upon the strengths and knowledge that teachers possess while developing new, scientifically-based research strategies for English language learner success.

Evaluation Research – Document project outcomes using qualitative and quantitative methods and improve future activities by clarifying what works, for which students and under what conditions.

WOW Workshop on Workshops – Challenging, highly participatory training of trainers that gives practical, research-based tools for preparing and leading a superb workshop with minimal stress.

Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal (FLAIR) – Intensive language-across-the-curriculum program created through sustained and intensive campus-based professional development.

Texas High School Allotment – Learn ways the new high school allotment can strengthen your school's holding power.

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Episode 27: "Leading a Diverse Campus to Success" IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Elementary principal, Sandy Dolan, shares how she has transformed her campus to succeed during a time of dramatic population changes.

Episode 26: "Dropout Prevention for Students with Special Needs" IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Lee Ramos talk about the impact of a pilot project that adapted the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program to serve students with special needs.

Episode 25: "Professional Learning Communities in Schools" IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Dr. Juanita García join Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., to describe a successful professional learning community in a middle school in south Texas.

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