



Bilingual Specialists' Work Summary, Fall 2016

Austin Independent School District

In Fall 2016, the Department of English Language Learners (DELL) at Austin Independent School District (AISD) launched a redesigned dual language (DL) program. To facilitate implementation of those changes, 16 bilingual specialists were hired to provide support to the campuses implementing DL. The bilingual specialists received extensive instruction on the changes made to the DL program and intensive training on DL education methods, and were in regular contact with DELL staff. This report summarizes the services provided by these specialists to administrators, campus staff, and teachers in the fall of 2016. The information provided here is based on data entered by the bilingual specialists into a tracking system and covers work performed from September through November 2016.

Activities Reported by Bilingual Specialists

Based on discussions with DELL staff and the bilingual specialists, activity categories were created in the tracking system and the specialists were then asked to aggregate similar or related tasks into these categories. For example, the tasks of observing a classroom, helping with lesson planning, and coaching a teacher were grouped into a “worked with a teacher” category.

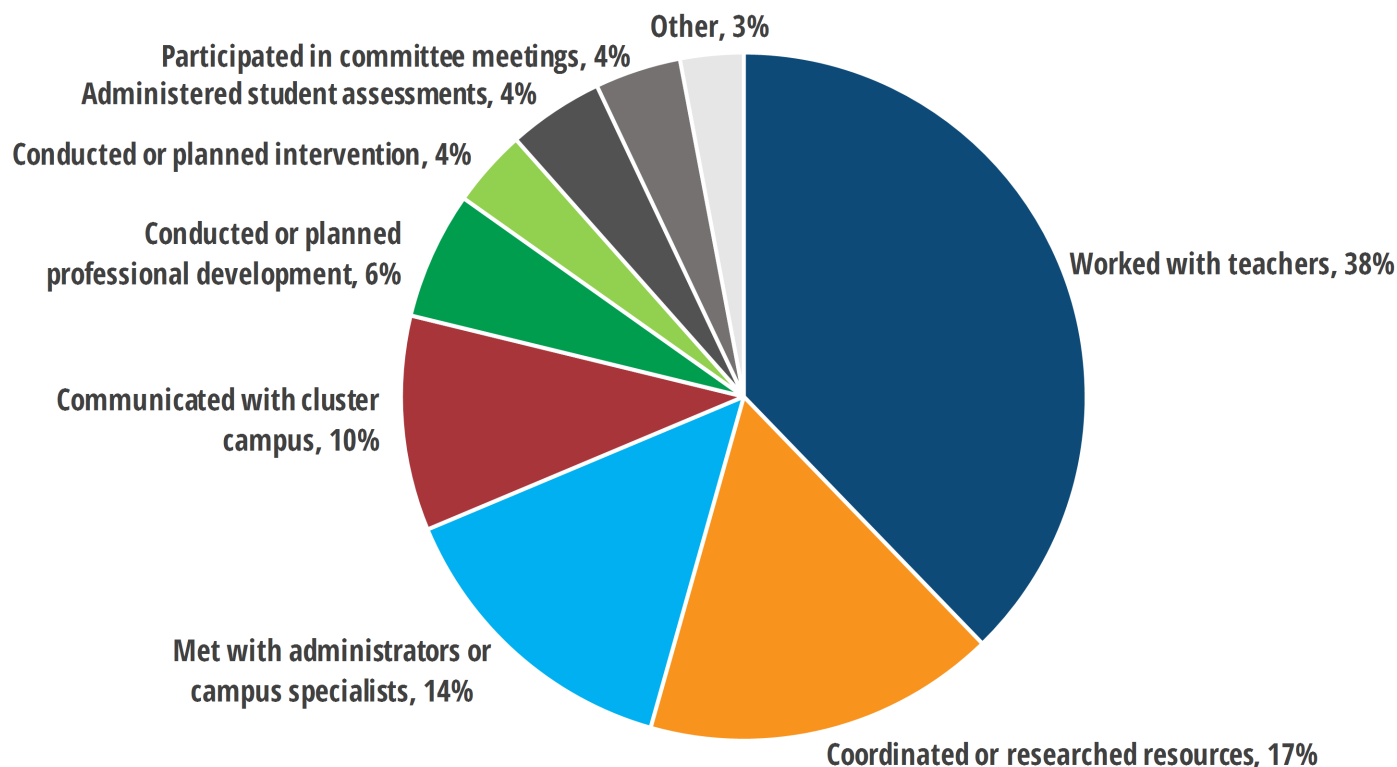
For each day and for each school supported on that day, the bilingual specialists were asked to indicate the categories of work performed, and were given the opportunity to provide examples or details of that work. It is important to note that the data presented in this report reflect frequency of activities and do not reflect time spent on each activity. Consequently, specialists may have met with administrators frequently, but those meetings may have been brief, whereas meeting with teachers and coordinating resources for teachers may have taken considerably more time.

In addition to activities performed, bilingual specialists were asked to report professional development sessions they attended and professional development sessions they provided to teachers or administrators.



Figure 1.

In Fall 2016, a large portion of the activities performed by the bilingual specialists were related to **working with teachers** and to **coordinating resources** for campuses implementing the new dual language program



Of all work logged by the bilingual specialists, **working with teachers** was the most frequent activity reported. This category included modeling or coaching teachers, helping with lesson planning, discussing student data, and observing teachers and their classrooms. When asked to provide examples of these activities, many of the bilingual specialists mentioned sharing ideas and strategies for implementing the DL program, helping teachers with scheduling or planning the English language development (ELD) component of lessons, and modeling several bilingual education techniques (e.g., “dictado,” guided reading, center rotations, and the use of anchor charts during lessons). In addition, bilingual specialists mentioned providing extra support and mentoring to new teachers.

The second most frequently marked category was **coordinating or researching resources**. In general, this category included identifying resources in Spanish for lessons previously taught in English, helping teachers identify software for their lessons, researching assessments currently available, and procuring resources for ELD. Furthermore, bilingual specialists indicated they spent more time helping novice teachers than experienced teachers identify and gather resources for their lessons and classrooms, but also provided similar assistance to experienced teachers when requested. Lastly, bilingual specialists mentioned spending time procuring resources for teachers working with students who were refugees or non-Hispanic English learners.

Specialists spent some of their time meeting with administrators and campus specialists and communicating with staff from cluster campuses. On these occasions, bilingual specialists reported they provided clarification about the new DL program components and DL resources available, shared information about upcoming professional development opportunities, and gave administrators updates on the support they were providing to DL teachers.

Bilingual specialists reported they participated in professional development opportunities. Some of the professional development sessions received by specialists involved biweekly meetings with DELL staff. In these meetings, participants focused on aspects of bilingual education methodology, and the bilingual specialists shared their personal experiences supporting DL teachers and gathered input and suggestions from other participants. Bilingual specialists also attended professional development sessions provided by external partners, such as Literacy Squared, Biliteracy From The Start, Kagan Cooperative Learning, Ruta Gramatical, and Sparkito and Comprendo.

Finally, when asked to give examples of professional development sessions they provided to teachers, bilingual specialists listed similar topics to the professional development sessions they had attended. Thus, they were disseminating the knowledge they built in those professional development opportunities to teachers implementing DL at AISD campuses. In addition to those sessions, bilingual specialists also provided professional development sessions on various topics related to student assessments and how to interpret student data.

In summary, in the fall of 2016, the bilingual specialists spent most of their time mentoring and assisting teachers in implementing the new DL program and coordinating resources needed to support program implementation. In addition, they provided professional development sessions to larger groups of teachers and campus administrators. This is consistent with the goal of simultaneously building capacity across several campuses. Therefore, it would be advantageous to campuses implementing DL if bilingual specialists continued providing direct support to teachers (specially novice teachers) in the spring of 2017.



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