Connecting Research to Advocacy

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Introductions

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Dr. Anaida Colon-Muniz
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What is advocacy?

“Advocacy is not what we do for others but what we do with others to transform our community.” (NEA Advocacy Guide, 2015)

“Sometimes advocacy is loud and demanding. Sometimes it is silent and powerful. It burns deeply in the heart of an educator who sees a child judged by a standard that discounts her very being.” (NEA Advocacy Guide, 2015)
Challenges when Advocating

Researcher:
- Building relationships and networks with allies to move a project forward.
- Knowing how to capitalize on personal strengths for the project

Practitioner:
- Being a mediator between the school and the researchers
- Keeping focused on the students at the center of research

Community Allies and Advocates:
- Connecting with and knowing the community
- Being culturally relevant and respectful
- Being participatory with community agents
How are we Advocates?

Speaking up and confronting injustices against our students.
Reflection – How are we Advocates?

- What is your tree, or critical issue to address?
- How do you begin to move the tree?
- How do you get others to join in moving the tree?
- Can you plant, nourish and harvest a new tree?
- How do you get others to plant, nourish and harvest a new tree?
Reflect & Record

- **Identify Problem**
  - What is your tree, or plant?
- **Determine a Goal**
  - E.g. Develop Two-way immersion program in my school district?
- **Backwards plan a strategy**
  - How do you begin to plant and grow the tree?
  - How do you get others to help you nourish and harvest the tree?
How are we advocates? – Priscilla

- **Case Study**: Southern California School District
- **Goal**: Increase English Learner Proficiency
- **Strategy**: Thinking Map
What is “my tree”?

What are some factors that contribute to the challenge?

What is the goal?

What can be implemented to help reach the goal?
How do we use research to advocate?

Researcher

Teacher

District and/or Site Administrator
How do we use research to advocate?... continued.

- Thinking about your problem, identify key words
- Use research engines (or avenues) to facilitate the collection of information
  - E.g. google scholar, build partnerships with scholars and researchers who can assist in process, research journals, research conferences
- Forms of research
  - Targeted question
  - Action research (cyclical process)
  - Evaluation
District Reclassification rate is significantly lower than County and State percentages.

Teachers/Students/Parents are not aware of reclassification criteria.

Lack of EL monitoring, teachers are not aware of which students are identified ELs.

Teachers are not aware of how to meet EL needs.

Lack of consistent ELD programs, limited knowledge of ELD standards.

Need to develop primary language.

**Challenge: English Language learners are not meeting proficiency standards as measured through reclassification.**

- Align District Reclassification Criteria to State Criteria
- Build awareness and increase implementation of the 2012 ELD Standards
  - Implement EL Monitoring Digital Monitoring System
    - Create an evidence-based monitoring tool for teacher use
- Create student goal setting conferences
- Provide Targeted Intervention Programs
- Create Primary Language Support Programs
- Expand Biliteracy Programs

**Improve English Learner Proficiency**
Discuss & Document

- **Identify Problem**
  - What is your tree?

- **Determine a Goal**
  - E.g. develop Two-way immersion program in my school district?

- **Backwards plan a strategy**
  - How do you begin to move the tree?
  - How do you get others to move the tree?

- **Engaging in research**
  - How do we incorporate research while working towards advocacy?
  - How can research help move our tree?
What is your “tree” (challenge)?

Identify the goal

What can be implemented or changed to reach the goal?

What are some factors that contribute to the challenge?

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How are we advocates?

Reflect & Record

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Share out!
Successes when advocating

What are some indicators of success?

How can we record and celebrate those successes?

i.e.

- Reflect on the process: was it meaningful to those most affected?
- Follow-up once the actions are taken to plant, nurture and harvest the tree.
- Write about it and publish or make public in some way.
- Learn from the past experiences to notice small and big changes and successes.
- Learn from what may appear like failures.
Thank you!
National Education Association (2015). *How educators can advocate for english language learners: all in!.*