



IT WORKED!

The Importance of Collaboration

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Hillcrest Elementary is a school with just over 1,000 students, with 96% receiving free and reduced lunch and with 76% English Language Learners (ELL). With this large population of ELL students, we have at least one ELL interventionist at each grade level.

Hillcrest is a place where teachers are provided an opportunity for weekly professional development with sessions focusing primarily on building capacity in the areas of mathematics and language arts. Last year was the first time our school had an English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher Specialist as part of our staff. Due to having so many ELL interventionists on our staff, there was an unspoken feeling that classroom teachers were not responsible for delivering instruction to help develop the English language proficiency of ELL students.

The ELL specialist, reading specialist, and I each began the year by facilitating separate sessions of professional learning for the teachers. It was not too far into the year until the ELL specialist and I both realized we needed to merge our sessions together to help our classroom teachers in two areas. The first area being that they see themselves as ELL teachers and the second area being the need to develop the skill set in order to do so.

The collaboration between the ELL specialist and me to design professional learning sessions that address developing both quality instruction in mathematics and ELL strategies to build students' language proficiency has been instrumental in guiding classroom teachers to see themselves as ELL teachers and to move the students' learning forward.

Brought to you by the NCSM Coaching Committee (December 2015)

Special thanks to the ems&tl: Elementary Mathematics Specialist & Teacher Leaders Project

