

Teachers HELP

Teachers HELP (Helping English Language Proficiency) is a National Professional Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education awarded to UTC. The grant period was May 1, 2012 through August 31, 2017.

Teachers HELP Team: Anne Gamble, Project Director; Dr. Valerie Rutledge, Dr. Sarah Sandefur, Dr. Kay Cowan, Faculty Advisors; Dr. Amye Warren, Project Evaluator.

Grant Partners: UTC (grantee and fiscal agent), Tennessee Department of Education, Bradley County Schools, Cleveland City Schools, Grundy County Schools, Hamilton County Schools, Marion County Schools, Sequatchie County Schools, Southeastern Equity Center.

Goals:

Goal I: Increase number of ESL licensed teachers (goal 140 over 5 years)

- 138 teachers completed the ESL endorsement through Teachers HELP
 - 57 were pre-service completers
 - 81 were in-service completers

Goal II: Increase placement & retention of teachers serving English Learners(ELs) in six partner LEAs

- A total of 73 teachers were serving ELs in the 2016-17 school year
 - 28 were ESL teachers
 - 45 were content classroom teachers
 - 69 of those were employed in our 6 partner school systems

Goal III: Increase preparation of ALL teachers to serve ELs

- Six ESL modules have been developed for specific courses in four programs (early childhood, middle grades, secondary, special education).
- The School of Education faculty voted to have an elementary education program with a dual licensure program (K-5 and ESL). Information developed during Teachers HELP will be used in this coursework.
- An ESL Concentration for the Advanced Practice M.Ed. has been developed and approved by the Graduate Council.

Evaluation

An extensive evaluation of the project was conducted with a plan developed by Dr. Amye Warren, Project Evaluator. 22 instruments were developed by the grant team to measure outcomes. Annual reports and a final report were submitted to U.S. Department of Education.

In addition to the goals above we reported on outcomes related to:

- Participant learning
 - Overall, over all four Summer Academy cohorts, the pretest average score was 46% and the posttest score was 84%.
 - 140 participants took the ESL Praxis with an average score of 159.85 (143 required score)
 - First-time Praxis pass rate for Teachers HELP completers is 94.29% while the first-time pass rate for all ESL Praxis takers at UTC is 88.4%.
- Participant application of knowledge and skills
 - Preliminary results using a newly developed Practicum Observation Rubric indicate that practicum participants were strong in the areas of planning and strategies.
 - 2015 Summer Academy evaluations of lesson plans and SIOP-based video observations conducted by faculty indicated that students rated highest in the area of Preparation and lowest in Building Background Knowledge.
- Completer effectiveness in instructional setting
 - In Year 5 Professional Learning Community (PLC) participant scores in all areas of the SIOP-based video observation improved; scores in 6 of 8 areas were statistically significant.
 - Over the course of the 5-year award period, teachers ended the project with average final scores over 92% on the SIOP-based protocol.
 - By the final rating on the observation protocol, preservice teachers did not significantly differ from in-service teachers. The support provided through a PLC helped these early career teachers to quickly acclimate to EL teaching and perform at the level of more seasoned teachers.
- Impact on K-12 student achievement
 - Due to state changes in English Language Proficiency screening tools and progress assessments and subject achievement tests meaningful student achievement data were unavailable.
- Organizational change, impact on IHE/K-12 capacity building
 - In the final year of the grant project partners responded to a survey regarding their experience with Teachers HELP. Common themes were: greater selection of highly qualified ESL teachers and greater ability of already employed teachers to address the needs of the EL and non-EL students.
 - UTC has added six EL modules into coursework (for early childhood, middle grades, secondary, and special education programs), a dual licensure program in elementary (K-5) and ESL, and an ESL concentration to the M.Ed. program.