

Partnership helps expand knowledge of ELL instruction

by **Tim Holdsworth - Thursday, August 08, 2013**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/28735/partnership-helps-expand-knowledge-of-ell-instruction/>

A unique partnership formed between Michelina Manzi, professor of literacy and language at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and Judith Menn, ELL Teacher at Webster Stanley Elementary, is combining work of literacy instruction and English language learning (ELL) in the elementary school setting.

Made possible via a grant award from ESTRELLA II, a federal grant project that provides support for those who work with ELL, the partnership enables K-3 students to receive supplemental, one-on-one literacy instruction from UW Oshkosh students. In addition, UWO students are given the opportunity to learn how language ability affects reading and writing development and how language needs and reading instruction are intertwined as part of their curriculum.

The initial focus for the newly-formed partnership was Manzi's spring interim class that placed 23 undergraduate students in seven Webster Stanley classrooms in which ELL instruction occurs.

"The in-classroom placement was of benefit not only because it was authentic and added to the literacy classes, but because it was a perfect melding of the content between literacy and language learning," Manzi said.

Speaking, reading, writing and listening skills are developed in conjunction with each other, however these areas of language can develop at different rates. To determine a child's strength and weakness in each of these language areas helps a teacher to balance instruction.

The first experience was very successful for both the elementary students and the UWO students.

"The UWO students created fun, interactive activities that motivated the children to read and write, as well as build their confidence," said Menn. "The UWO students got to make a difference in the life of a child — who doesn't want that?"

"The teachers involved at Webster Stanley were very supportive and asked that we return," said Manzi. "Many of these teachers graduated from UWO and said the immersion of pre-service students into the school environment to connect language and literacy learning was an excellent learning opportunity."

The placement will be replicated this fall through several literacy classes Manzi will be teaching.

"This is one of many opportunities for COEHS pre-service teachers to engage with children at area schools," Manzi said.

ESTRELLA II (Excellent Schools, Teaching and Research for English Language Learner Achievement) is a \$1.9 million five-year from the United States Department of Education. Professor Kathy Henn-Reinke is

the primary principal investigator and is co-director with professor Don Hones.

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