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The Pracademics Pathway to Support Multilingual Learners

Pracademics, viewed through the lens of a partnership between two worlds that center student success, are practitioners who engage in research practices that contribute to a greater understanding of teaching and learning beyond their classroom. Posner (2009) described pracademics as hybrids, meaning educators who could navigate both academic and professional spaces. Educators who exercise the role of pracademics engage in practices such as reflection, data collection and analysis, student-centered partnerships, and discussions that inform decision-making within their school community, their state, and other scenarios that require the voices and experiences of practitioners to support students. Educators engage in such practices when they network with one another and participate in professional learning and development with the purpose of providing students with high-quality learning experiences that help them succeed.

In pracademia, the dual role as practitioners and researchers helps educators address real-world classroom challenges using evidence-based strategies to support bi/multilingual learning in their context.

Professional learning offerings provide a vital platform for educators to engage in research-driven discussions on educational quality and the opportunities available to students within their school communities. By deepening their understanding of their education context and students' diverse

backgrounds, educators who engage in professional development not only enhance their personal and professional growth but also strengthen their advocacy for student success. Moreover, teacher networks and communities of practice serve as essential support systems fostering a "safe space for educators to exercise their pracademic role and offer them the necessary opportunities and access to resources and time" (Mendoza Chirinos & Salas, 2024). Through these collaborative environments, educators cultivate meaningful learning experiences, advance pedagogical strategies, and contribute to the continuous improvement of educational outcomes.

Connections and Benefits for Educators and Multilingual Learners

Educators of bi/multilingual learners engage in multiple roles within their school communities to advocate for student success. In addition to developing language proficiency and supporting access to the curriculum, educators also play a key role promoting and facilitating opportunities for their students and their families (TESOL, 2018). When educators engage in research practices, they gain a deeper understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds and academic and emotional needs. They also become aware of relevant information about their students that allow for evidence-based decision-making as well as reflection on the implications and impact of those decisions (Mendoza Chirinos & Salama, 2024). Moreover, educators can make informed decisions about the school community's shared responsibility necessary to support students' learning. These efforts create a student-centered environment in which students' interests, experiences, and practices are acknowledged, and that allows them to receive support from several members of their school community, not only from their language teachers.

When educators engage in research and develop their skills as researchers, they gain new perspectives about their classroom dynamics while collaborating with others to share expertise, experiences, and resources. Through this collective knowledge, findings are validated and lead to innovative strategies that enhance student success, often extending beyond the classroom. One notable example is the Strategies and Innovations for Multilingual Learner Success project in North Carolina, a research partnership between the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the Multilingual Learner/Title III Program Quality Team at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Initially, participating educators contributed as language specialists, but their involvement expanded to recommend, design, and implement professional learning beyond their grade levels and base schools. Their work played a vital role in building research capacity across the state, providing research-based practices that schools could learn from and apply within their own contexts (He et al., 2024).

Currently, the ability to access knowledge, information, and tools for implementation in classroom practice can be nearly overwhelming. As professionals, practitioners will always find themselves at various iterations and levels of experience and expertise in their given positions. Two of the most essential developmental needs of any professional practitioner are to feel a sense of purpose and make a meaningful contribution to their field. For professional educators to feel valued by their expertise, they must be given the space, opportunity, and resources to contribute and share the insights, tools, and approaches they have found successful—or not—with the greater professional community.

The teaching profession is currently experiencing a shift that will require practitioners to prepare students for a future that is unprecedented and unpredictable. The skills that will be required in careers and adult lives will compel learners to be flexible and analytical critical thinkers who can continuously adapt to their social networks and impact others. Nieto (2009) emphasizes that such preparation must go beyond technical training to include identity-affirming and culturally grounded learning experiences that center students lived realities. To meet these new demands, educators themselves must be empowered as critical thinkers and decision-makers.

In the realm of professional growth and development, many practitioners often find themselves having to comply with generic district-mandated training and professional development initiatives in order to stay up to date with the latest trends in education. At best, there is compliance—but are school districts truly trusting the knowledge, experience, and expertise of their professionals to recognize patterns in their students' performance and address their challenges from a culturally responsive, community-informed, ground-up approach? Wagner (2021) highlights the value of trusting educators' linguistic and cultural knowledge, showing how bi/multilingual teachers use their own identities and lived experiences to tailor instruction to students' real needs. If districts were to truly examine the periods of deliberate intellectual expansion of their practitioners, would they find that most of it ended with their last terminal degree? How can we continue to stimulate the critical thought process, inquiry mindset, and creative problem-solving skills of our practitioners, especially with the added responsibilities of their roles in schools and their obligations to students, families, and leadership?

Practitioners who use inquiry action research cycles as a learning tool to cultivate mental frameworks embrace opportunities for continuous collaboration that foster cultures of curiosity for innovation and critical adaptability. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2023) remind us that learning communities rooted in shared purpose and mutual engagement can spark personal and professional transformation. To inspire communities of practice and learning environments that meet the needs and challenges of their context, practitioners must not only contribute to the success of their students and staff but also engage in broader dialogues across the professional and academic landscape—acting not just as educators, but as specialists and experts, co-learners, and innovators.

Researchers who engage in ongoing collaboration with teachers gain firsthand knowledge of issues that occur in the classroom

Two notable initiatives designed to facilitate professional discourse and foster collaboration between educators and researchers in support of bi/multilingual learners include the following:

- **WIDA Fellows:** This program serves as a platform for educators to engage in meaningful discussions and shape research agendas to strengthen the connection between scholarly inquiry and practical application.
- **WIDA Educator in Residence:** A newly created program where educators will collaborate with academics and fellow educators, facilitating professional learning activities, sharing resources, and engaging in action research projects.

and the needs of both students and teachers. Researchers learn from practitioners' experiences and their feedback when implementing new strategies or models in their classrooms which, in turn, informs research focus and helps researchers identify appropriate recommendations. While observations and research activities provide insights for researchers, practices such as discussions and collaboration with teachers offer a broader perspective of the classrooms, including students' and teachers' background variables that might be missed without these conversations.

Educators play a crucial role in shaping instructional practices and curriculum development, offering valuable insights based on their firsthand experiences in different educational settings and through their own learning experiences. Although classroom experience spanning over a decade provides a solid foundation, the evolving nature of schools, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum standards—particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic—necessitates ongoing collaboration with teachers. Such engagement is instrumental in ensuring that educational initiatives remain responsive to contemporary needs.

Across the United States, communities of practice bring educators together, fostering collaboration and the exchange of expertise in support of bi/multilingual learners. One notable initiative designed to facilitate such professional discourse is the WIDA Fellows program, which serves as a platform for educators to engage in meaningful discussions, thus contributing to research efforts. These educators play a critical role in reviewing and informing research agendas, thereby strengthening the connection between scholarly inquiry and practical application. This partnership offers a significant opportunity for both teachers and researchers to advance their professional growth and enhance the collective understanding of effective instructional strategies. Another opportunity that benefits educators and creates spaces for them to sharpen their research and leadership skills is the new WIDA Educator in Residence program. Educators in this program collaborate with academics and fellow educators, facilitating professional learning activities, sharing artifacts and instructional resources, and participating in exploratory action research projects within their classrooms.

Engagement and collaboration with academic researchers serve to ground decision-making and instructional practices in what the local context needs and has the resources and capacity to offer, while expanding opportunities for meaningful, context-specific, and continuous professional growth. Practitioners not only become consumers of "research-based practice" but also deepen their expertise

by participating in the exploratory process of applying, contextualizing, and co-creating research. As WIDA (2024) emphasizes, action research cycles empower educators to reflect critically on their work and adapt strategies that are aligned with their learners' realities. Practitioners involved in such inquiry cycles also experience expanded personal development as they engage in reciprocal learning relationships with researchers and colleagues.

A human-centered approach to empathy-driven educational opportunities for and with bi/multilingual learners and their families often requires school communities to challenge and reframe their assumptions and beliefs around the everyday experiences of traditionally undervalued communities. García and Wei (2014) propose translanguaging as a powerful pedagogical framework for supporting the full linguistic repertoire of bi/multilingual learners, reinforcing the need for practices that are rooted in lived experience. In line with this, Yoon (2023) contends that culturally and linguistically responsive teaching must be contextually situated and grounded in both identity affirmation and instructional rigor. These findings support the notion that engagement in pracademia can serve as a catalyst to reframe and substantiate culturally responsive, context-based practices that are adapted to the current needs of learning communities and built on the foundation of their sociocultural dynamics.

At a time when trust in traditional research processes and funding continue to decline, it is incumbent upon the profession to position educational practitioners, especially those working with bi/multilingual learners, as co-designers of adaptive, community-informed solutions. Coady and Ankeny (2020) assert that educator-family partnerships grounded in mutual respect and knowledge exchange offer a powerful avenue for culturally responsive practice. Practitioners must engage in continuous feedback loops with researchers, mirroring the same reflection practices we encourage in our students. The shared ownership and collective insight that can be co-constructed through practitioner-led research cultivates agency, autonomy, and a deepened sense of self-efficacy. This, in turn, fosters learning communities that value perseverance, critical reflection, and continuous improvement—not just for students, but for educators themselves.

WIDA Resources and Pracademia in Action

When considering specific lines of research and drawing our agenda for exploration themes, research within educators' classrooms could be approached through varied angles and lenses. First, exploring the implementation of differentiated instruction, scaffolding techniques, and culturally responsive pedagogy is important to help bi/multilingual learners succeed. Pracademics could explore, learn, and analyze the types of support bi/multilingual learners require in the classroom to enhance all levels of language proficiency and promote productive learning environments. This exploration could lead to understanding the techniques and strategies that foster confidence in learners. Innovative didactics can enhance linguistic versatility, elevating linguistic repertoires and multilingual identities. Furthermore, when engaging in understanding the value of multilingualism through learner-centered practices, balancing the use of all languages could lead to engaging lessons that integrate all languages in the classroom, disrupting language hierarchies and allowing for learners increased expressive potential.

Through pracademia, educators can contribute to an understanding of the specific challenges bi/multilingual learners face when they transition through education levels. Some of these challenges

include meeting language expectations, adapting to changes, and navigating academic rigor. Finally, the exploration of multilingualism fosters foreign competence, emphasizing the role language plays in enhancing cognitive flexibility and cross-cultural communication, which could lead to actionable strategies to develop culturally responsive learning environments, create accessible spaces, and promote language diversity.

The WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition and the Marco de los estándares del desarrollo auténtico del lenguaje español de WIDA (hereafter, Marco DALE) also offer an opportunity for pracademics to explore specific topics in the classroom (e.g., the promotion of fairness in society through the implementation of a culturally responsive pedagogy, translanguaging and transculturalism, insights into the Key Language Uses, and the Big Ideas) as key areas to engage in research. Some concrete actions and examples include making a systematic analysis of student outcomes after developing multilingual portfolios or engaging in step-by-step group discussions that integrate multiple languages. Actions could also include analyzing how accessing information through various multilingual resources (e.g., books, articles, or visuals) encourages students to use a language for first access and then transition to other languages. Allowing discussions to happen in multiple languages could lead to analyzing how peer collaboration influences communication, highlighting where the strengths lie. It can provide insights on how different translanguaging models occur in the classroom and influence communication and comprehension (Reyla, 2022). On the other hand, encouraging multilingual storytelling through writing could center learning on students' backgrounds and strengths and shed light on how they analyze concepts across languages, or how family and community cultural narratives play a role in learning and building their identity.

If educators are interested in exploring the Big Ideas, they could start by conducting an action research study on the implementation of translanguaging and measuring the effect on student comprehension, engagement, and achievement (Clayden et al., 2023). Another topic of interest is how multilingualism contributes to shaping identity and social belonging. Engagement in ethnographic research or case studies could explore how learners navigate their linguistic identities to uncover patterns of language use and self-perception. Moreover, educators can address the role of multilingualism in cognitive development by examining problem-solving skills, memory retention, and executive functioning of multilingual and monolingual students through psychological or educational assessments (Romero et al., 2024). Finally, another angle might be conducting collaborative research to identify contextual systemic barriers that prevent access or smooth transitions between grade levels. No matter what the project is, the classroom educator who is willing to engage in research will be able to follow many pathways with the resources available and fulfill their pracademic journey!

Case Studies and Classroom Experiences

- Ljerka, a teacher trainer in Croatia, sought to engage educators in research through professional development opportunities, emphasizing the benefits of conducting research for classroom teachers. She developed a four-step action research model that included: a) developing a plan to conduct research in her own multilevel classroom, b) implementing strategies as outlined in her study, c) collecting and comparing performance data, and d) conducting analysis and disseminating findings. Throughout the process, she documented challenges, successes, and supporting materials, creating a contextualized model. Her work was organized into a toolkit she shared with the Ministry of Education teachers she trains, offering a ready-to-use framework for classroom implementation. This model was an important milestone in her work as a trainer as it created buy-in among educators regarding the potential to conduct research in their classrooms.

Ljerka Vukić

- Ouafa, an educator in Algeria, conducted exploratory action research to enhance student engagement in her literature classroom. She identified a disconnect between students and the literary texts discussed in class, noting that traditional and contemporary works failed to resonate with students. To address this, she integrated artificial intelligence tools to align literary themes with students' identities, values, and opinions. This innovative approach fostered relevance and engagement, leading to more effective strategies and improvement in learning outcomes.

Ouafa Dehdouh

- Mabel, an educator in the United States, works with middle school newcomers in a program that supports students in their first or second year of U.S. schooling and serves the largest multilingual population in her district (500 students). Using ACCESS scores and district data, classes integrated textbooks into a designated online program, allowing for a more targeted instruction in vocabulary decoding, fluency, and literacy/oracy. When presented with this model, the school administration required daily participation for second year multilingual learners, which enhanced consistency and exposure to the strategies. The district literacy specialist shared these strategies with other educators, leading to improved foundational skills, reading comprehension, and writing proficiency among learners.

Mabel Lamprea

Learn more about case studies and practical applications in this WIDA research brief: Pracademics in Practice: Integrating Research and Teaching in the Classroom

Research Models for Pracademics

As educators seek to develop their identity as pracademics, there are some global models to learn from. For example, pedagogical circles are professional learning communities that support educators interested in research. Pedagogical circles become discussion sessions where educators share their challenges and the ways in which they have explored solutions.

Another model is research as an evolving practice beyond just the collection and analysis of facts. Instead, educators engage in mini-research projects focusing on one issue with one or two data collection tools that they currently use in the classroom. It means developing a research project where the learners participate in understanding the challenges and become part of the implementation to address the issues, thus engaging in participatory action research (Galleta & Torre, 2019).

Reflection through journaling as a tool for research can also be a way to engage in documenting issues and data that contributes to classroom research. Educators write down their reflections and systematize the data (identified issues and solutions) to then conduct an analysis of their trial-and-error approaches and determine which are the best techniques and strategies to achieve learning outcomes.

To take it a step further, educators could engage in communities of pracademics to conduct collaborative research, giving themselves small assignments. This is where the phrase "divide and conquer" becomes alive and creates a safe, less overwhelming space for research, bringing the community's strengths together to contribute and grow their own body of research that informs the field.

While these models offer valuable insights, the possibilities are endless and extend far beyond them. Whether drawn from case studies or from experiences tailored to specific contexts, effective frameworks empower practitioners to drive meaningful change. The true impact lies not in the model itself but in the ability of educators to enhance research, inform decision-making, and transform education outcomes. By embracing this approach, educators can redefine how we understand and navigate classroom challenges, fostering innovation and progress in the learning experience.

Guest Authors

Means, Motive, and Opportunity

by Deborah J. Short, PhD, TESOL President (2020-2021)

Deborah J. Short, PhD

Means, motive, and opportunity are three elements that have been popularized in criminal law. More broadly, though, they are elements of transformation. As we promote the role of teachers as pracademics, we should consider their means, motives, and opportunities to effect change. Under this framework, *means* refers to the ability of teachers to engage in classroom-based research driven by their own questions. *Motive* refers to their reason or goal for doing so. *Opportunity* refers to their setting, supports, and chances to collect, analyze, and interpret the research data.

Despite the commonly used sequence of these terms, I begin with motive because it is the most straightforward. Many teachers are motivated to conduct research to address questions they have about student learning. They are closest to the action and know their bi/multilingual learners well. Their questions may relate to the performance or progress of the whole class or to a subset of students. Pracademics are teachers who reflect on what changes they would like to see happen and then seek out possible actions. They may, for example, test a new technique to improve reading comprehension such as reciprocal teaching; introduce students to a new approach to writing such as peer review; or differentiate performance tasks by learning styles to gain more insight into what students learned in each unit. Pracademics rarely struggle with the motivation element because they are dedicated teachers and desire to transform their classroom into a positive learning environment.

Do teachers have the ability, i.e., the means, to conduct research? Some may have participated in research studies or conducted research as part of a graduate course and therefore understand basic research design principles. Others may need some support in planning an action research study, but that can be accomplished through mentorship, course work, or independent professional learning. Technology is helpful here: teachers can read online about action research to develop some expertise—what type of questions to ask, how to design the study, what data to collect, and how to analyze the data—and read completed studies on topics similar to their own—in specific action research journals, databases like ERIC, or web collections like Google Scholar.

Higher education institutions have a role to play as well in helping preservice teachers develop a pracademic identity. At the undergraduate level, coursework often focuses on instructional methodologies, child development, subject area curricula, and educational policies, but teacher candidates would also benefit from reading and discussing action research and case studies. Further, when teacher candidates observe in real classrooms, they can be encouraged to pose questions about the instruction or the student behaviors they view and discuss the type of research study they might design to explore their questions. When student teachers work with their cooperating teachers, they can have similar conversations.

Although some teachers may need to develop the means to conduct action research, many resources are available to help, so the task is not insurmountable. Even if they want to analyze quantitative data, online programs can help with descriptive and inferential statistics. Professional teaching associations also offer webinars and short-term courses to help teachers develop these skills and/or have mentoring opportunities or virtual communities of like-minded pracademics that teachers can join.

Of the three elements being discussed here, the most challenging for the pracademics may be opportunity. While that may seem surprising, given that teachers are in the classroom every day with their learners, time is the most limiting factor to opportunity. Because of cram-packed school schedules and time needed outside school hours for lesson planning, meetings, and family engagement, teachers rarely have additional time to conduct research. They need to turn to administrators for assistance. Finding ways to carve out time and space within the schedule for teachers to review and analyze data they collected is key. This may mean that duty time is freed for pracademics biweekly or once a month. Our faculty meetings are shortened with important information sent electronically in advance, and a portion of the meeting is devoted to collaboration, data review, or analysis for pracademics, other committee or group work for others. In fact, administrators can further support pracademics among their faculty by helping to create a culture of curiosity and interest in inquiry. A team of teachers might undertake some research projects that could inform the school.

Much of the discussion around pracademics situates the teachers' work in action research. I would suggest that the work of pracademics can be broadened. Teachers can collaborate with other researchers to address empirical questions in our field. In fact, in our initial work developing the SIOP [Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol] Model, middle school teachers of bi/multilingual learners were our partners in building and testing the model.

Think of it as a continuum. Pracademics conduct action research to address questions they have about student learning. What they find out applies to their students, their subject, and their school setting. It is not generalized, but it may be scalable. Their initial work can lead to others conducting related case studies or to design studies for a particular intervention. In turn, these findings could lead to efficacy of research and eventually scale-up studies. The bottom line is that the field of language teaching benefits when teachers embrace a pracademic identity.

Actionable Research and Technology

By Justin Shewell, PhD, TESOL President (2025-2026)

Justin Shewell, PhD

Bridging the gap between practitioners and academics is one of the most pressing challenges in education today. Although both groups share a commitment to improving teaching and learning, they often operate in different spheres with limited interaction. Practitioners are on the front lines, responding daily to the needs of students, while academics are engaged in long-term, often theoretical investigations. To bridge this gap, we need to cultivate relationships based on mutual respect and collaboration. One way to do this is to create more opportunities for dialogue between the two communities at conferences, in joint research projects, and even in professional development settings. When teachers are invited to co-author studies or when researchers embed themselves in classrooms, both parties gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the field. More importantly, these relationships help ensure that research reflects the real-world complexities of teaching.

For research to become more actionable in the classroom, it must be accessible, relevant, and adaptable. Too often, research is locked behind academic paywalls or written in a language that is not practical for busy educators. Translating research findings into concise, practitioner-friendly formats, such as short briefs, visual summaries, or interactive webinars, can help. But even more importantly, the research must be grounded in classroom realities. Educators are more likely to apply findings when they see themselves in the context of the study and when the recommendations can be implemented within the constraints of their day-to-day teaching. Actionable research also needs to offer clear, measurable strategies that support instructional goals and student learning, not just abstract theories.

Administrators play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of research engagement. First and foremost, they must value and model curiosity and learning. When school and district leaders prioritize inquiry-based practice, it sends a message that research is not a luxury but a necessity. Administrators should allocate time and resources for teachers to explore research, attend professional conferences, and participate in study groups or action research projects. Furthermore, they should create safe spaces for experimentation where educators feel empowered to try new strategies informed by research without fear of punitive consequences if results aren't immediate. Celebrating research-informed successes and failures as part of the learning process helps build a community of reflective practitioners.

Higher education institutions have a unique and powerful role to play in engaging more classroom teachers in research. One of the most effective strategies is to reimagine teacher preparation programs so that inquiry and reflection are embedded from the start. If pre-service teachers graduate with the mindset of a researcher, a mindset that is curious, analytical, and open to feedback, they are more likely to continue engaging in research throughout their careers. Beyond initial preparation, universities can support in-service teachers through accessible graduate programs, practitioner-led research initiatives, and ongoing mentorship. Collaborations between university researchers and K–12 educators, such as lab schools, professional development schools, or networked improvement communities, can also help

build a sustainable bridge between theory and practice. When teachers see that their insights are valued by higher education and that their experiences inform academic inquiry, they become more invested in research as a professional tool.

Technology, when used thoughtfully, can be a powerful catalyst for teacher engagement in research. Online platforms can provide access to journals, research databases, and collaborative communities of practice. Webinars, podcasts, and virtual conferences allow teachers to learn from researchers and fellow educators across the globe. More importantly, digital tools can support the process of teacher-led inquiry itself, whether that's through tools for collecting and analyzing data, documenting student learning, or sharing findings with colleagues. Technology also reduces barriers related to time and geography, making it easier for teachers in rural or under-resourced settings to engage in research-based conversations and learning. However, it's not just about having access to the tools. It's about designing systems that are intuitive, supportive, and aligned with teachers' professional goals.

Ultimately, if we want to create a culture where research informs practice and practice informs research, we must move beyond token partnerships and build authentic, sustained collaborations. This requires commitment from all levels: classroom teachers, school leaders, researchers, and policymakers. By creating structures that honor the voices of practitioners, simplify access to research, and leverage the potential of technology, we can move toward a more connected, evidence-informed educational landscape. Research will only become truly impactful when something is not done to teachers, but something done with them, and, ideally, by them.

Focused Section

How to Collaborate and Involve Multilingual Learners

Pracademics may engage their bi/multilingual learners in their studies by helping them reflect on their learning and language development. As educators implement new practices to collect data and analyze the processes in their classroom, they can guide their students on how to interpret the Individual Student Report (ISR) with their ACCESS scores. They can also identify ways to help general education teachers understand what bi/multilingual students can do with language and find ways to demonstrate their language proficiency.

Educators may also work with their bi/multilingual learners reviewing the Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) to identify progress indicators and develop growth goals together. (The following WIDA resources provide in-depth information about PLDs: Understanding the Proficiency Level Descriptors of Marco DALE and WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors: Informing Expectations and Scaffolding)

Another resource that educators may use in their classroom are the student sample and mentor texts available on the Marco DALE webpage. (To access the texts, scroll down to the *Muestra estudiantil y muestra ejemplar* section.) Analyzing these resources would help students understand the language expectations and identify areas of strength and growth in their expressive modes of communication. These conversations would create spaces for students to own their learning process and for teachers to learn more about the students and the teaching process.

Next Steps: What Educators Can Do

For practitioners seeking to engage with academic research projects, some possible next steps include the following:

- Reach out to local academic institutions to express interest in collaborating with researchers and inquire about any researchers who would be interested in long-term partnerships with a practitioner, school, or district.
- Initiate or join Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to engage in collaborative action research cycles to problem-solve and improve outcomes at the grade level, in content areas, or with specific populations of bi/multilingual learners.

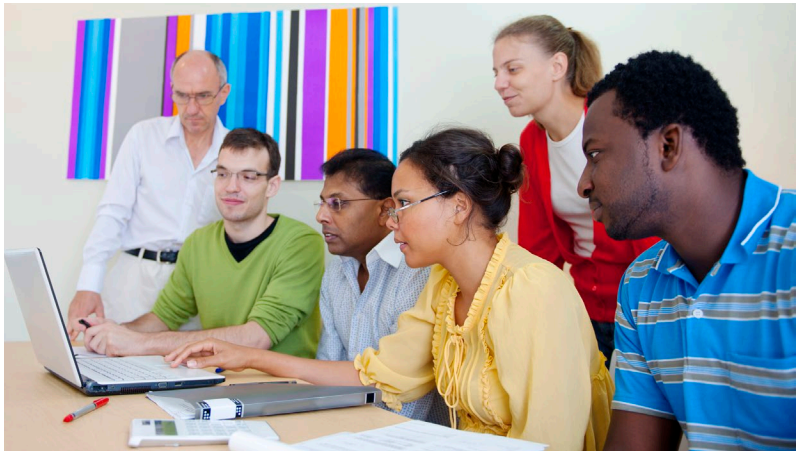
- Initiate or join Communities of Practice based on interests to maintain motivation, foster curiosity, and develop expertise while supporting PLCs and school or district initiatives through mentorship, research, and innovation.
- Develop partnerships with nonprofit community-based organizations and professional educator organizations to help create bridges and participate in third spaces for collaborative conversations that can later be enacted in research projects.
- Attend teacher/practitioner-oriented regional and national conferences to present action research projects/findings and to engage in dialogue with other practitioners and academics.
- Engage with local and regional chapters of professional organizations to share collaborative research projects with broader audiences and connect them to academic researchers and projects.

For researchers working with practitioners, educators, and preservice and in-service teachers, next steps include the following:

- Offer to be a guest speaker for general education, bilingual education, or multilingual education courses.
- Offer to serve on undergraduate and graduate committees to support reciprocal and dual positionality with practitioners.
- Connect with graduate education programs to seek out educators and educational leaders to engage in research projects designed to increase success for bi/multilingual learners.
- Reach out to professors of research courses that may have education majors interested in this work.
- Offer workshops for districts to create opportunities for further collaboration in the interest of bi/multilingual learners and their communities.

For pracademics wishing to contribute to the field and engaging in collegial collaboration with peers, next steps include the following:

- Share results of their research through pedagogical round tables at their schools or districts and turn them into sustainable and permanent professional learning communities.
- Engage in collaborative writing to publish their research in newsletters, language magazines, and local journals.
- Create open educational resources with Creative Common licenses that allow for their research to be shared and disseminated through their networks.
- Connect with experienced pracademics and collaborate to disseminate their work through peer-reviewed journals, panels, or language institutes.



Useful Readings to Create Awareness on Pracademia

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Action Research Suggested Model

Action Research Planning – Suggested Template

Topic

In this section, describe the topic and the intended outcome, including what are the objectives of your research. Make sure the description features details of what the project is about, and the objectives follow the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) model. The topic should be no longer than two sentences.

General Objective
Provide your general objective of the research. Use SMART guidelines and make sure the description includes measurable actions.

Specific Objectives
Provide two to three specific objectives using SMART guidelines

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

The questions and sub-questions correspond with your general and specific objectives.

Justification

Your justification requires a strong rationale that states why this research is relevant and meaningful for your classroom. Provide the needed in-text citations referring to the body of literature that will inform your research. Situate the topic in your context and how this work will be beneficial for your context, community, school, and learners. It can be a maximum of two five-sentence paragraphs.

Methodology

The methodology section should provide a description of the context, describe your population (e.g., their grade level and the community and/or geographic location where the research is taking place). In addition, provide a brief overview of the data collection tools (e.g., observation charts, reflection journals, surveys, rubrics, or checklists). Usually, three tools would be a suitable number for conducting meaningful triangulation of data and observing trends, but it also depends on the objectives of your research. Keep this in mind as you plan. Include what you intend to find with the data collection tools (i.e., a paraphrase of your general objective). The length for this section should be no longer than two paragraphs.

Participants

In this section describe who the participants, or subjects, of your research are. Include their gender, position within your institution, role in the research (e.g., learner or subject of the intervention, interviewee, or other), demographic information (e.g., country of origin, if applicable), language proficiency level, length of time learning the language(s), other languages that they speak, and your connection to them.

Include a second paragraph that describes the background of your institution, purpose of learning languages, and a brief description of the community where the learners come from. Provide any salient characteristics that make the institution unique or that should be highlighted in connection with the research topic. State why learners are learning the language(s). (The information in this section will help you write the background section of a potential report.)

Procedure

Here, state the steps you will need to follow to begin your project such as talking to your principal, informing parents, and preparing and signing consent forms. Provide deadlines for completing these logistics. No more than two to three sentences are needed here.

Data Collection

This section allows you to describe your data collection tools. Name all the tools you will use and include a brief description of each tool. Explain who will use the tool(s), as well as when and how the tool(s) will be used. If applicable, establish deadlines or the timeline for the use of the tool(s). This description can be two to three sentences long. You may also want to consider the language of the tools and any accessibility requirements, depending on the needs of the participants or subjects of the study.

Timeline for Research

Develop a timeline for your research that breaks down the stages of your project by time period (e.g., months, weeks, or days) and activities. A timeline may be a useful way to organize your tasks and set deadlines, as well as track the progress of your research. You may include a table or chart that visually represents the timeline for your project in this section.

Appendices

- Include templates for data collections tools.
- Include the template for the consent forms.

Note: This template is adapted from "Research Proposal for Action Research/Teacher Research," by Kathy Short, 2018. (https://education.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2025-03/research-proposal.pdf). Adapted with permission.

Action Research Suggested Model

Action Research Report – Suggested Template

Note: This report should be no longer than 20 pages (not including appendices).

Introduction (1 page)

Include here your topic, objectives, and research objectives. This will be a summary of the information from your planning document. Specify the focus of the study and the overall goals.

Literature Review (5–7 pages)

For the literature review section, include relevant studies, book chapters, and books that provide the theoretical foundation for your topic. This section explains the theory the topic is based on and how it supports the relevance of the topic to your context and to the field. It supports aligning your own contextual challenges with what others have done. Add any connections to other aspects that contribute to the topic.

Answer the following questions:

- What is the relevance of the theoretical background in connection with my topic?
- What does the research say about this topic?
- What are meaningful connections within the field?
- What informs the challenges and issues of the research?
- What areas of research influence the topic researched?

Description of the Research Context (1 page)

The information for this section comes from your planning document methodology, participants, and procedure sections. Include the following:

- Describe the place where the research was conducted and where the data was collected.
- Give a physical description of the classroom or school, including the curriculum and curricular engagement, if applicable.

Answer the following questions:

Procedure

- What were the actions and steps taken within the study?
- What was done to engage participants in the data collection process?
- What were the engagement activities of participants in the study?

Sample/Participants

- Who were the participants in this research?
- What made participants eligible to take part in this research?
- What is my connection or relationship with the participants?

- Describe your participants (e.g., language spoken; mono-, bi-, multilingual; country of origin; community connections; socioeconomic status).

Informed Consent

- What is necessary to request informed consent?

If it was necessary:

- Who provided informed consent for participation?
- How was consent obtained?

Data Collection and Analysis (3–5 pages)

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How was the approach to this action research design (practical, participatory, exploratory)?
- What model of action research did I select (operational/technical, collaboration, or critical reflection)? How was it selected and why?
- What type of data did I collect? What was the data collection process?
- Which data collection tools did I select and why (e.g., field notes, teaching journal, interviews, audio or video recording, collected student work or other artifacts, surveys, and/or rubrics)?

Describe the actions taken for each data collection tool. Answer the following questions:

- How did you use each data collection tool?
- What data did you look at?
- How and when was the data collected?
- Were there any iterations?
- What channels were used (in-person or online)?

Describe the analysis of the data. Answer the following questions:

- How was the information organized and analyzed (Excel charts, analysis tools, or coding apps)?
- How intensive was the analysis?
- How did you establish the validity and/or reliability of your study?

Findings (2–3 pages)

State what you learned—the major trends and findings—from your data analysis. Provide concrete examples that support your findings. Use the following recommendations to guide your analysis:

- Usually findings are organized by themes, categories, or the trends generated by the data.
- Each theme or trend includes a subheading, and you can discuss it in a five-sentence paragraph per theme.
- Each theme paragraph should contain examples directly from the research. Include direct quotes from participants, journal reflections, and samples that are relevant and meaningful to your findings.
- You may also include visuals, tables, and/or graphs, if they are relevant.
- You could organize the information in chronological order as events happened, telling a story based on your analysis, or through a description of critical events, meaning those aspects or occurrences of the research that were the most relevant.
- You need to demonstrate that you have the data to support the statements that you are making.

Discussion/Implications (1 page)

For this section, answer the following questions:

- Why is this study relevant or meaningful and to whom?
- How are these findings going to be beneficial for your participants, your school, your community, and the field?
- How does this inform changes and/or decision-making in the field? What is the type of influence or contribution?
- Who else might be interested in this study (from the field or from other fields, academics, practitioners, policymakers, states, etc.)?

Reflections (1 page)

In this section, address the following questions:

- What were your assumptions when the study began?
- What were your thoughts and reactions to the results while the study was in progress and at the end of the project?
- How did your original assumptions change?
- What questions remain?
- How do you recommend this inquiry continues?

Conclusion (1 page)

Summarize your study, add your concluding remarks, and leave the audience with the key takeaways in one or two paragraphs.

References (number of pages depends on number of references)

Follow APA Style 7th edition guidelines for the reference list.

Appendices

To support the body of your research, include the following supplementary materials:

- Data collection tools
- Consent forms
- Artifacts
- Rubric
- Any other template or documentation that applies

Note: This template is adapted from "Writing a Report of Action Research/Teacher Research," by Kathy Short, (2018). (https://education.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2025-03/research-report-format.pdf). Adapted with permission.

Links for Downloading the Templates

Action Research Suggested Template - Planning
Action Research Suggested Template - Reporting

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Grazzia Maria Mendoza Chirinos, researcher for WIDA Español, facilitates research processes. In addition, she contributes to the design of professional development resources through innovation, contextualization during implementation, and the promotion of complex, consistent, and quality research. She advocates for actionable research in the classroom, integrating technology and elevating the voices of educators in the field globally.

Xatli Stox is currently serving as a WIDA state relations specialist. In this role, she supports state education agencies in learning about the WIDA portfolio of products and services, helping them maximize their consortium membership benefits. Her research interests include educational policy and educational technology. Her impact plan is centered on building educator voice and leadership capacity through communities of practice.

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Deborah J. Short, PhD, founded Academic Language Research & Training and provides professional development on academic literacy, content-based English, and sheltered content instruction worldwide. She co-developed the SIOP Model and directed many research and evaluation studies regarding multilingual learners and their programs. Publications include the *SIOP Model books* (Pearson); *The 6 Principles* books (TESOL); textbooks like *Lift*, *Inside*, and *Edge* (National Geographic Learning); and professional journal articles. She was the 2020-2021 president of the TESOL International Association.

Justin Shewell, PhD, earned a doctorate in educational technology from Arizona State University and a master's degree in TESOL from Brigham Young University. He writes and presents topics related to technology and artificial intelligence in education, language teaching and learning, and teacher training. He is the 2025-2026 president of the TESOL International Association.

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