

# *Promoting Science among English Language Learners (P-SELL)*

University of Miami – School of Education

## **Social Capital Interview (Focus Group- Post)**

All of you have been working with us for a year or more now and we are grateful that you have been willing to be so open and share so much interesting and valuable information with us. Today we want to talk with you about the ways that teachers work together and support each other in the teaching of science. This interview will also address teachers' perceptions of how FCAT and the accountability policy influence their teaching, particularly science teaching and how you prepare your students for FCAT science.

### **I. Teacher Collaboration**

1. Do the teachers at your grade level or your school have a shared purpose when it comes to the teaching of science?

If yes:

If a stranger walked into your school, what would he/she observe that showed that shared purpose in action? (Probe for specific examples of collective activity or a sense of collective responsibility in the school.)

How does that shared purpose develop?

How does the principal encourage or hinder this shared purpose?

How does turnover among teachers influence this shared purpose?

If not:

Are there any examples of instances in school that you can say discourage the development of a shared purpose?

2. Are there any school policies or practices that influence how science gets taught at your school?

PROBE:

**ability grouping**

**departmentalization**

block scheduling

pullout programs

inclusion

**FCAT prep**

If so, how do the teachers at your grade level or your school address these issues?

3. Have you been involved in collaboration among teachers within your grade level, across grade levels, or between schools with regard to the teaching of science?

If so, what does it look like? How would a stranger walking through your school know that you collaborate?

PROBE:

- Do you share science materials or supplies?
- Do you share ideas about student learning in science (reasoning, inquiry, understanding)?
- Do you discuss ideas about science curriculum?
- Do you discuss ideas about teaching science?
- Do you discuss ideas about how to assess science learning?
- Do you discuss ideas about preparing for FCAT (specifically science)?

4. How does access to resources (time, supplies, money, other teachers) constrain or enhance your ability to teach science?

PROBE:

- Time to teach
- Time to plan
- Time to discuss science teaching with other teachers
- Supplies for experiments, hands-on
- Professional development in science teaching

5. How much do the school administrators' instructional priorities influence your science teaching?

PROBE:

- Are you ever encouraged to skip or shorten the time spent on science to focus on other subject areas?
- What kinds of support do they provide to help you improve your science teaching?
- How do they communicate with you about science teaching?

## **II. FCAT Influence on Science Teaching** (if test scores are out)

6. Have you seen the scores of your students on the FCAT? What are your reactions to these scores?

(Let them have a few minutes to talk about scores.)

7. Given what you know about your students and school scores for this year, how will this influence your science teaching next year?

PROBE:

- What you teach in science?
- How you teach science?
- When (during year) and how often (per week) you teach science?
- How you include ESOL students in science?

### **III. Accountability Policy Influence on Teaching**

8a. Do you feel that you are evaluated individually based on how well your students do on the FCAT?

PROBE:

Do you all find out how everyone's students performed?

Does anyone feel they take the blame or get the credit based on student performance?

Do you as teachers feel pressure to not let the school down?

8b. Do you as individuals have any strategies you use to improve your individual classes FCAT scores.

PROBE:

If YES, what are those strategies?

Are any of these strategies endorsed or encouraged by your principal?

If NO, are there strategies that you take as a group to improve the schools scores?

Are any of these strategies endorsed or encouraged by your principal?

Thank you very much!