

Empathy and Journey Maps

Team Cotermin

[Figma](#)



ELL Instructor Empathy Map



Sandy Wallace is a retired elementary school aid with over 30 years of experience teaching ELL students in socioeconomically diverse schools.

Zahra Surani is a current college student who has been involved in an ELL tutoring program in her hometown community for several years.

SAY

- "We as the aides were not allowed to [use ELL programs] because we weren't certificated. It was ridiculous because we could really use those programs. So most of it was just we'd have meetings a couple times a year. And then it's usually just using workbooks and using our intuition and feeling what we thought the student needed"
- "they're really bad at asking for help. I feel like that's kind of accepting defeat, in a sense. So it's like really hard to follow up and make sure that they're actually understanding it and not just saying they're understanding [the material]."

DO

- Sandy seemed at a loss when describing bureaucracy, inability to access resources, and lack of communication within the school. She described her experience teaching a fourth grade student how to write his name, and her facial expressions and passions for teaching children came through very clearly.
- Zahra was really animated when discussing her relationship with the other tutors and students, demonstrating her care for this community.

NEEDS

- Cultural Competency education for teachers and tutors in diverse schools, as well as facilitation of a community feeling to help adjust students new to the US to the school system
- Ways to check progress of students and prompt comprehension of material without directly asking them

THINK

- Cultural education is key when instructing and engaging with ELL students. Having clear expectations about academic prioritization and family involvement can refocus education and provide the help that student actually needs.
- Sandy thinks the school and testers should do better jobs of recognizing the difference between a student who is not doing well due to language difficulties and a student who struggles with a learning disability

FEEL

- Sandy feels that what truly needs to be tackled is the public health and economic crisis in low income settings - students' environments are not conducive to learning and they get little parental support
- Zahra feels apprehensive when she wants to check in with her student. Sh wants to see their progress on assignments and projects, but doesn't want to bother the student every time an assignment comes out and directly ask about it because she feels as if she is overstepping.

INSIGHTS

- The current testing system has problems differentiating students that have language difficulties and learning disabilities, in **both** directions
- The most important factors for succeeding as an ELL student are not the programs themselves, but the testing, communication between stakeholders, sense of community, cultural learning, and home life support.

ELL Expert Empathy Map



Professor Helen Quinn is an expert in education, specifically in STEM classroom learning. She is a Stanford Emerita Professor in Physics and is affiliated with the Stanford ELL group. She has been actively involved in ELL academic research and organizations supporting ELL students and continuing education for students. Her granddaughters are ELL students.

SAY

- My granddaughters came from Guadmalala and were both tested for ELL. Their proficiency tests tested them on aspects besides English. My granddaughter was asked to read a poster on classroom rules. She was able to understand the poster, but she did not understand what classroom rules actually were. She had never experienced it before.
- If you interrupt a student and correct their grammar, you are disrupting their learning. Teachers should allow the student to continue. They need to create an encouraging environment, where students can learn and fail. Students need to learn that you are not born with ability, but must work for it.

DO

- Discouraging tone towards current ELL proficiency testing system. Professor Quinn describes the system as inadequate and ignorant of the student's background. When talked about her daughter and grandchildren's experience, she had a critical view of their school's process.
- Passion and strong encouragement for reforming teacher belief/mindset towards students. Teachers need to foster an environment that encourages student effort to learn.

NEEDS

- School Districts: To create ELL proficiency tests that need to better understand a student and their background.
- Teachers: To be supportive and understand the diverse needs of ELL students.

THINK

- She may think that the school districts and teachers need to adapt new methods beyond direct language learning to help ELL students. She focuses especially on classroom culture.
- Professor Quinn may think that there are many issues within the ELL education system from various factors. While the issues may seem related, they should be addressed separately with emphasis towards the student's feelings and learning. She may think that it is most impactful to an ELL student to focus on a narrow problem. Since their journeys are so personal, she seems encouraging towards looking at a specific area.

FEEL

- Professor Quinn may feel hopeful but annoyed by STEM education for ELLs. She is passionate about the topic, yet she had critique for current programs and teacher education. She hopes to make STEM education to be inclusive for ELL students.
- She cares deeply about her family and improving education. She may feel that improvements to the system are not broad solutions, but specific.

INSIGHTS

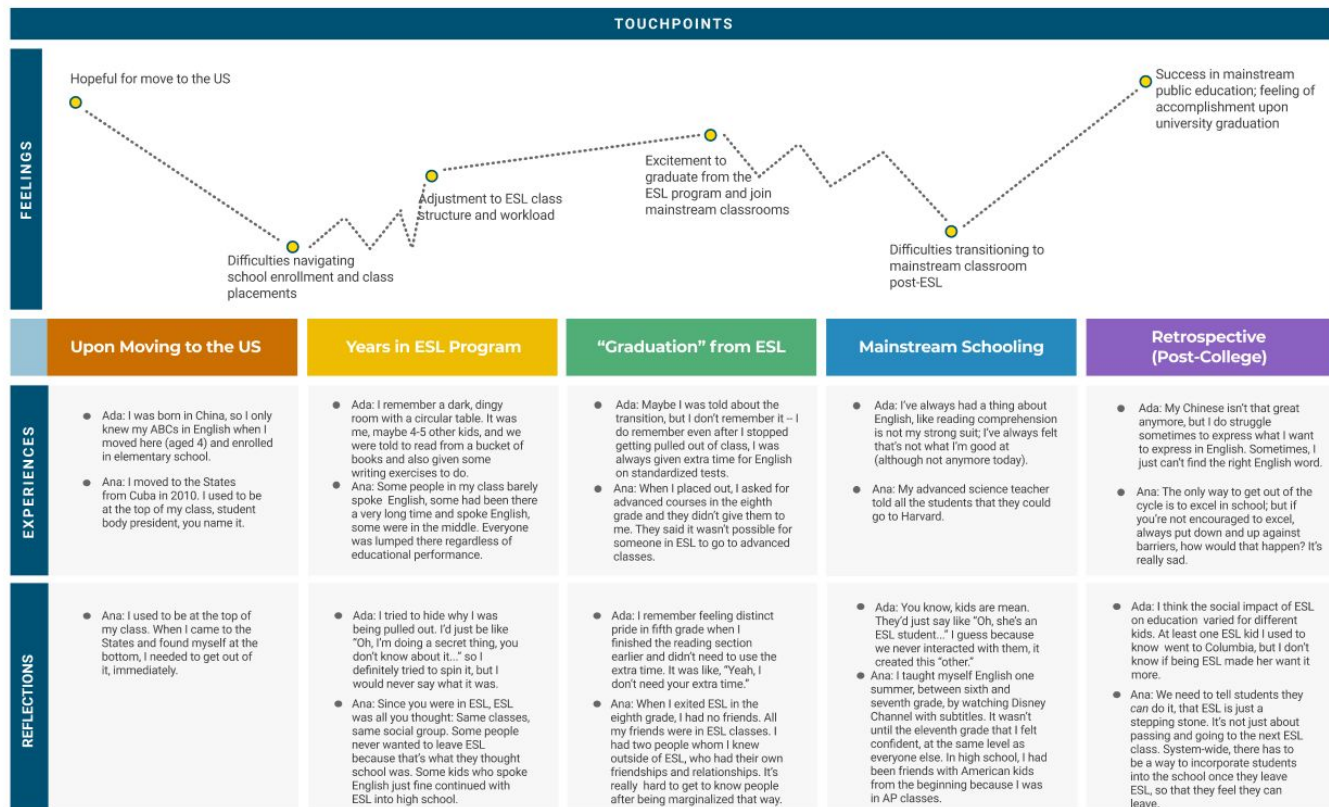
- Why isn't growth mindset more widespread for teachers? Professor Quinn's point on how teachers should create an inclusive environment and connect home culture seem quite relevant. Is it due to a lack of resources for teachers?
- It seems that actual language education is not the largest barrier for ELL students. Their learning environment, support from teachers, and connection to other subjects greatly affect the overall educational experience for ELL students.

Former ESL Students' Journey Map



Ada Zhou ('20) is currently a City Innovation Fellow at City Innovate, Inc. in NYC. She spent her elementary school years in the ESL program at a public school in Chinatown, Manhattan.

Ana Cabrera ('20) is currently living at home in Miami, FL. She spent her middle school years in the ESL program at a public school in Miami.



Current ESL Student's Journey Map



Samia N. is a 12th grade ESL student at Center High School in Sacramento, CA. She moved from Afghanistan to the USA with her family in 2016.

