THRESHOLDS IN EDUCATION

The Immigrant Experience at Home and Abroad:

Teaching and Learning in Different Tongues

Issue Editor
Mayra C. Daniel
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Teaching and Learning in Different Tongues

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Research and Policy

Dear Readers,

Think back to when you were a student in elementary school. Can you remember having classmates who did not speak English? Did your teacher say good morning in different languages as you and your friends entered the classroom? Today many teachers begin their day just this way. Every day more and more teachers work with learners who are in the process of acquiring English and whose first language they often do not speak. This is exciting but challenging. Teachers have many questions. They wonder, "How do I teach math to a student who does not understand what I say? How do I teach biology to a high school student who has no literacy skills in his first language? How do I plan comprehensible instruction? What do I do to eliminate the blank faces that I sometimes see? How do I reassure the student who wants to succeed but doesn't understand this society's language?"

Classrooms are linguistically and culturally diverse in numbers that were unprecedented even a short few years ago, and for teachers this means they must develop new skill sets to teach these populations of students. Many teachers are flocking to Northern to learn new methodologies of instruction. This issue of *Thresholds* is meant to be a conversation that explores ways to assure equity in classrooms and schools for all English language learners (ELLs). Contributors to the journal are teachers, administrators at levels K-12, school counselors, immigrants, and professors. The articles are divided into three sections, but you will find the theme of theory influencing instruction and advocacy across all articles.

First, in the section titled "Factors Beyond Language That Shape the Experience of ELLs," the articles look at students and educational systems from different countries. These pieces consider the ways ELLs' educational backgrounds influence their learning in schools here. There is a touching narrative about an immigrant's experience in the United States, and one candidly written story from two adult English-as-a-second-language students from Germany and Russia. Several articles look at education beyond the United States. Two articles address educational challenges in the multilingual nations of Nepal and Morocco. Another focuses on Guatemalan learners and why education in the home country creates mismatch when these learners begin schooling in the United States. The last article centers around preparing teachers in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas who come to believe it is worthwhile to teach their students that their home language is valuable and prestigious.

In the second section, "Making It Happen in Schools and Communities," you will find articles from a pro-active bilingual teacher, from an elementary school principal in a highly Hispanic district, from two innovative biology teachers, and from a college professor who prepares undergraduate students to deliver exciting vocabulary instruction. There are also articles that detail work that is being done to change communities such as West Chicago's Community Partnership Focused on Wellness, Safety, and Student Achievement. There is one on ways to understand and work with adolescent long-term English language learners based on research conducted in Arizona. Another details the parental education project Navigating the American School System. This is a district-wide effort that culminates in a grand graduation celebration replete with picture taking of the graduates with the district superintendent.

Lastly, there is a section titled "Research and Policy" that includes an article that will interest the individual who is starting out on the path of discovering the needs of ELLs and the ways the U. S. school system is addressing these. There is an informative piece by a secondary school administrator as well as two articles about the type of program that research has identified as the more progressive and long-term effective instructional model, the dual language program.

I am certain that you will enjoy the words and the photos shared with you in this issue of *Thresholds*. For the authors, these represent their lives' work and commitment to multiculturalism, diversity, and human rights. I also harbor the hope that as you look at the photos you will be transported to the places and classrooms that we discuss. Thank you for your interest in creating a promising future for all children. ■

Mayra C. Daniel

Perspectives on Coming to the United States from Russia and Germany

Natalia Kozyakova - Darussafaka Schools, Istanbul, Turkey
and Daniela C. Wagner-Loera - University of Maryland, English Institute

In this article two recent graduates of a master's program, one from Germany and the other from Russia, discuss their experiences in adapting to life in the United States. In this autobiographical piece the authors candidly share personal struggles and observations which are frequently present in the multicultural lives of many immigrants.

"American dreams are strongest in the hearts of those who have seen America only in their dreams." Pico Plyer

Everybody believes that the United States is a country of opportunity. However, not everybody comes to the United States in need of a better life. The authors of this article, Natalia (30), from Russia, and Daniela (26), from Germany, both came to the United States to pursue careers in teaching English. Daniela had to follow the requirements of her university to study abroad for up to three months when pursuing a degree in a foreign language. Therefore, she applied for a winter semester in Hawai'i. "I did not major in surfing, but in methodology aligned to standards from the Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)," she said. Daniela wanted to improve her communication skills in English and become more native-like in her speech. Teachers in Germany have a very strong accent which is copied by the students. Teachers are role models and, therefore, in Daniela's opinion, she needed to perfect her accent so that her English would be as perfect as possible.

Natalia, in contrast, came to the United States as a Fulbright scholar after 13 long months of application, interviews and various tests of English. The motivation for Natalia to study in the United States was to receive her M.A. in TESOL and improve her ability to teach English in Russia. She wanted to widen her teaching horizons and become a fluent, native-like speaker of English. In addition, she was excited and curious about the approaches used in teaching in the United States. With these goals in mind Natalia and Daniela started their trip to the United States. "We weren't really looking for anything in particular." Their expectations of the United States were very similar; both expected a service country, friendly people, and good and demanding education. Both, Natalia and Daniela, were planning on spending only about two years in the United States to complete their studies.

Starting Abroad

Upon arrival in the United States, reality took over their dreams of what life was like in this country. Whereas Natalia found the people to be very friendly and supportive, she noticed soon that discrimination is a big part of life in the United States. In Hawai'i, Daniela perceived that discrimination is a rare circumstance. However, in Virginia, where Daniela lives now, it is a big issue. Neither in Russia nor in Germany had the women been exposed to discrimination. Natalia and Daniela found that in the United States it is very common for people to be asked about their race and nationality, in conversations, in applications and surveys, and

even on a college application. “Sometimes you are asked about your background in four to five different ways in one survey.” Of course, discrimination exists in both Russia and Germany, but since the two are natives of their respective countries, and since both did not grow up in large metropolitan areas cities, it had never been a major focus in their lives. Overall, the experience in the United States, especially the educational experience, has been remarkable for both women. Natalia joined a reputable college in Vermont, while Daniela attended a private university in Hawai’i. Natalia, who refers to herself as a digital immigrant, was stunned by the availability of computers and technology in U.S. classrooms. She marveled at how teachers and students can access online resources and enjoy the world of media. Daniela, who was already familiar with the use of technology in the classroom, enjoyed the small community of her private school and the technology department’s readiness to replace malfunctioning equipment quickly. “Private schools are very expensive, but we saw the money come back through service and excellent equipment.”

Daniela in her adopted country.

The educational system in the United States is quite different from Russia’s and Germany’s. Both countries offer large classrooms with lectures of up to 30 students in Russia and 800 students in Germany. In Germany, attending classes is voluntary, and one big exam or paper assigned towards the end of the semester may be used to grade the student’s performance for the entire semester. Daniela was therefore used to studying on her own and working on an individual schedule. Interestingly, the two women experienced the American school system very differently. Whereas Daniela felt that her schedule was very dictated and organized in the United States, Natalia felt almost too free by only having class for two to three hours a day. “It left me with the whole day to organize my homework. It was almost too much time to stay organized.” However, for Daniela, being in the U.S. school felt like attending high school with attendance, quizzes, frequent tests, and presentations being part of the grade. Although neither woman found the American school system challenging, they confess to learning through the interaction and constant repetition of material. The women were surprised to find that Americans refer to their education as difficult, hard, and challenging. Unlike schooling in Germany and Russia,

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regular attendance may contribute 10% towards a course grade in the United States. Also, a professor in Germany and Russia will not accept a draft from a student nor take the time to talk about the assignment. Students are assigned a topic and given a deadline that must be met. The women agree that the drafting system and the close communication with professors that is so commonplace in the United States was very helpful for them.

Despite the help that students receive in the United States, they still appear to be extremely stressed. Natalia was often surprised to hear statements such as "I am stressed out, it is overwhelming, it is frustrating.". Over the years, the two international women learned the following paradox about the American culture: "Americans tend to start their work with a long speech about what they have to do: "Today I have to . . . and to do . . . and to do . . . and to do . . . ." Consequently, after having taken 20 minutes to address their workload, they notice that there is almost no time left to actually get started on the problem or work. Also, the two women found that Americans like to stress the importance of their work by starting each answer with the words *it is so difficult*. "Americans seem to enjoy presenting their busy schedules and love to emphasize how complicated and time-consuming their work is, even when they find the time to hang out at Starbucks or the tennis court." Time orientation varies across countries. In Germany, people are not just on time, but very straightforward, strict, and focused. Meetings, classes, and focus groups are started on time and kept on track. Drifting off topic and complaining instead of working is uncommon. In contrast, the women have noted that in the United States more than 20% of each meeting may be lost to the talk about the work.

In a world of growing globalization, it is the job of bilingual speakers, travelers, and especially ESL teachers to open the gates of communication linguistically and culturally.

Despite the confusion, differences, and misunderstandings, both Natalia and Daniela describe their cultural experience as wonderful. "Culture cannot be taught, it has to be experienced." They know their exposure to an English speaking culture group will serve them and their future students well because they will teach differently. They are fascinated with the cultural nuances that require people in the United States to behave as they do. They ask questions such as "Why you have to apologize when you pass someone in the United States? Why do Americans say excuse me even though the other person is in the way? Why say words that hold no meaning? Why are people nice when they need you, but turn away when you have a question? Why do people say see you later, but never show or call? Why it is so easy to meet a lot of people in the United States, but it is so hard to make friends? Why do people overly emphasize little blurbs that are posted on networking websites? Why is hugging and kissing friends a big deal? And why do people ask each other how they are but do not really want any more than a perfunctory answer?" Some might think that there are easy answers to these questions; however, these answers do not come easily to immigrants or visitors to the United States. Daniela likes to say, "You can take the German out of Germany, but not Germany out of the German." Natalia remembers how annoyed a roommate was because she compared everything to Russia and to the way it is done in Russia. "Why are you here?" is a question Daniela is sometimes asked. Daniela and Natalia agree that they "do like the United States, but it is hard to get rid of strong values and customs that you have been given and taught for more than 20 years of your life. It is not that we do not like it here; it is that we will always perceive life through our own cultural values and beliefs since we came here as adults."

Why does milk last for four weeks? Why are the fruits and vegetables so big, colorful, and . . . tasteless?

In addition to an emotional and educational cultural shock, the women had to go through culinary shock: the challenge of finding quality food. Not only are students and visitors to the United States lacking the confidence and vocabulary to buy, order, or find healthy and fresh food, they are also affected by the different ingredients of the food they encounter

in the U.S. grocery store. Food is everywhere in the United States. It is so much easier to find junk food rather than good food and junk food is tempting if it is not readily available in a person's country of origin. Both Natalia and Daniela went through a similar process of adjustment to eating new types of food and living a different life style. They both gained weight. Natalia gained about 15 pounds her first three months in the United States. This was a big concern for a Russian woman obsessed with her appearance. Daniela put on 35 pounds her first two years in the United States. "Weight issues, especially for women, are very distracting for your work and study performance." Daniela observes this same phenomenon in her international student population. "Students do not expect to have to deal with this issue at an extreme level; however, they do. I can sometimes see my students put on weight from class to class." Fortunately for both, they managed to return to their previous weight. Daniela now looks back at the time and tries to motivate students to be careful and more attentive to food in the first place. Weight issues are not a very helpful experience while being away from home. Eventual doctor's visits do not make the schedule less stressful or studying easier. This is only one of many examples that are not taught but have to be considered when moving into a different culture. "I still miss Russian food and not even cooking replaces the quality offood I am used to since the water alone tastes different in the United States."

Friendships and Families

Natalia shares that "People say when they first meet Russians that we seem cold and distant. They also share that they also share that this first impression changes as soon as they begin to get to know us. In Russia, family members are your friends and friends are like family members. Russians sacrifice their own comfort if their friends or family need help. We do not turn to a shrink or psychologist but rather consult friends and family. The family is the key to your soul. They form you and build you. They guide you because they love you no matter what." Daniela offers that "It is similar in Germany, where family and friends are the key to success.

Time orientation varies across countries. In Germany, people are not just on time, but very straightforward, strict, and focused.

They provide you with love, affection, and support at all times. They do not turn away from you when you have a personal issue."
In Europe bodies actually touch when people hug. It is possible that this reflects the tight ties that German and Russian families and friends live by. In the United States, on the other hand, people seem to be friendly, open and kind. However, with acquaintances they act distant. It is not that this is difficult to understand. The United States is a huge country with a history of constant mobility. In Russia and Germany it is different. Stability is more valued in Europe. People are born and live their entire lives in the same place where they eventually die. This results in very close and tight relationships. Americans do not seem as intertwined. While holidays are overly valued in the United States, a lot of occasions beyond the holiday season are celebrated in Russia and Germany that contribute to family unity, such as meeting once a day for dinner to reflect upon the day's events. "In Europe we do not think of *we* in terms of a country but in terms of a continent. We have to be open-minded because our countries are much smaller than the United States. Therefore, we have a closer feeling of identity and a more outgoing mind toward our neighbors of different descent." These differences between being European and American do not always make it easy for the two women. Both Natalia and Daniela confirm that the little differences have the bigger impact on everyday life and its quality than the obvious differences. Both women—in appearance—could be easily confused for being born in the United States. If you are different in appearance, people expect you to be different and they may be more tolerant. When you look like them, they expect you to react as they would, which can easily lead to miscommunication and confusion—at least in the beginning.

Culture Shock

The mismatch between cultures or culture

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Natalia (front left) with friends from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Japan.

shock is a phenomenon that both women experienced with a different intensity and emphasis. For Natalia, it was interesting, exciting, but also confusing and sometimes disappointing to see the differences between Russian and American nonverbal conversation. While in the United States, Natalia consistently observed the physical distance between Americans engaged in conversations and the at times aloof gesture of a handshake used to welcome a friend or close coworker. When discussing hot topics or even in simple small talk conversations, up to four feet is maintained between Americans.

In the United States it is very common for people to be asked about their race and nationality.

However, in Russia people tend to talk leaving a very small distance between them. Touching while talking or comforting an unhappy coworker is not unusual in Russia, whereas in the United States, the fear of sexual harassment is high. The women asked themselves questions such as “Why do I have to apologize for walking on the sidewalk when passing someone who is standing in the way? Why is passing through a group of people in the United States considered impolite?” Natalia is surprised by the distant relationships andcoolness of the people. “Whenever I want to talk about ipods, shopping, or the weather, people tend to be super engaged, kind, and helpful, but when I take on more serious issues, Americans tend to say, ‘Oh dear, that’s too bad,’ and they change the subject.” The American culture seems to be overly practical. Someone may offer you a ride home, but not listen if you have a problem. Despite the differences, both women have felt welcome during their time in the United States.

The Real Culture Shock

Natalia has peacefully passed through the three main stages of cultural shock: those of excitement, i rejection and stress, and adaption when they all meant only one moral adjustment to new life. For Daniela, the real

cultural shock and the homesickness did not kick in until after graduation. Once in the work environment, life s different. During her time in Hawai‘i, she met her husband, Juan, and he was the reason she stayed in the United States. When he was transferred to Virginia, she was excited about this big new step and the proximity to Germany. Daniela had never experienced any cultural shock or homesickness in Hawai'i; however, in Virginia it all changed. With only two days to find a job and a place to live, it was hard to evaluate the area. Visitors must follow a very tight protocol. If they are unemployed for more than 90 days it means a loss of visa status. After graduating from university in Hawai‘i, Daniela's visa allowed her to work in the United States for a period of one year. Through the move she was forced to leave her job at a language school in Hawai'i and to start a position in Virginia that was not meeting her needs. However, with the moving expenses and the visa requirements, there was no time to lose. At this time the help that she had received during her schooling was gone. She realized how hard it was to be in a different country with little guidance. Although she is a strong person, she struggled. In her new workplace she was underpaid and forced to work in an unstructured environment which she considered disorganized.

One day in the elevator of her apartment building a neighbor asked her, "Are you new here?" She answered yes, and asked why he wanted to know. The answer was "Because you said good morning." When she and her husband bought furniture, he was given the Spanish-only warranty information, but she was good enough to sign the over $6,000 receipt. She could not believe the attitude she was receiving and the low interest in providing well-deserved customer service. This attitude was new to Daniela; it was not anything she had encountered in Hawai‘i or Germany, and she came to doubt the qualities of living in the United States for a while. However, after a while, Daniela was hired at a university and a community college and soon found her way to better neighborhoods, friendlier staffed stores, and nice neighbors.

Natalia was lucky enough to not to encounter the difficulties of survival in the United States athat Daniela faced. She is anxious to go back to teaching in Russia. She is considering working in Asia or returning to Russia and teaching there. Both women, therefore, were—at one point or another—forced to simply follow the structure of their chosen path. Overall, Natalia was able to mainly get around the issues Daniela has encountered.

The American way might not be the wrong way, but for sure it is not the only way to reach a certain goal.

Teaching Experience

Daniela has now been teaching in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom for more than two years. "My students have never complained that I was not an American; they usually welcome the idea of having someone who fully understands their predicament." Being away from home, being exposed to a new culture, a new way of living and thinking can be challenging at times. The average person in the United States has not traveled a great deal outside the country. They tend to think of their culture as the best, the strongest, and the more successful that everybody admires. Well, this is not exactly true and at times even proves ignorance in one way or another. The American way might not be the wrong way, but for sure it is not the only way to reach a certain goal. "The students might take the back door and they might create their own obstacles, but they usually reach the same goal." Just because someone looks different, sounds different, or dresses differently, does not make this person less valuable. Just because someone cannot perfectly understand English, does not make this person less intelligent. Daniela and Natalia treat their students like adults because that's who they are. Some of the students might even have completed a higher degree than they hold. The only difference is that they are newcomers to the language and culture. Learners of English need to be encouraged and motivated. This is only possible when their teachers consider them their equal and give

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them the benefit of the doubt. Most of the time when an ESL student is impolite, it is a translation issue. Teachers need to understand this problem and respond instead of react. For Daniela and Natalia this is easy because they know how fast one can face an uncomfortable situation simply because you mistranslated. One of Daniela's female Arabic students wrote in her notebook the words *Research sex-related positions* instead of *gender-related*. Little mistakes like these need to be carefully taught and explained in order to avoid confusion. Daniela and Natalia feel perfectly prepared to help their students adjust to and learn about a new culture and encourage them to learn by sharing their own experience.

Overall, Natalia and Daniela have spent a very amazing and memorable time in the United States. Even though some of their expectations have not been met directly, they feel that indirectly their stay has been perfect. Both managed to become near-native speakers of English, and both enjoyed the many opportunities the schools have offered. Professional organizations, personal guidance through professors, smaller classrooms, and the available technology have made this experience invaluable for both women. They are certain that they have "not only enjoyed the chance to grow professionally, but culturally." Living awayfrom home is an experience that no one can ever take from you. Both are certain to have chosen the correct field for themselves and will pursue their career in the field of TESOL. "If we had not come to the United States, who knows, we may not have remained in the field. The experiences mentioned above have confirmed our passion to teach language and culture and spread the importance of sharing. In a world of growing globalization, it is the job of bilingual speakers, travelers, and especially ESL teachers to open the gates of communication linguistically and culturally. This is our task." ■

The two teachers, Natalia and Daniela, met through a professional Development course offered online by TESOL. They had been newcomers to TESOL at this time but wanted to continue their professional development. One of the interesting courses offered was the introduction to a Leadership Development Certificate. "Over time, we noticed how important professional development is in order to stay up to date in the United States, where competition is great."

Natalia Kozyakova was born in a small Siberian village, Kulunda, in Russia. For eight years she worked as a teacher of English and a teacher trainer. In 2008, she received a Fulbright scholarship to the United States and in 2010 graduated from St. Michael's College in Vermont. Her professional interests lie in the field of teaching speaking and especially pragmatics. She is pursuing her dream of teaching in various countries of the world, broadening her cultural understandings, and traveling.

Daniela C. Wagner-Loera is a Lecturer at the University of Maryland and a professor at Prince George's Community College. She currently lives in Virginia and loves to explore nature with her husband and German Shepherd puppy.

Living in the Shadows: One Immigrant's Story

As told to Rocio Fisher - Gary Elementary School, West Chicago, Illinois

In this article a principal in the West Chicago School District shares the touching story of one immigrant's experience.

My name is Patricia and I am living in this country without proper documentation. My life can be described as one lived with many tears over the course of my life. As I share my story, please keep in mind that my experience is not unique; it is one shared by many families who are at first separated by a country or an ocean to be finally reunited after a long and costly struggle.

My husband came to this country first to pave the way for my son and me. He initially settled in the Houston area and then traveled to Illinois to find a job. We lived separately for four long years. He would return to Mexico infrequently to see us, and it was difficult for me to be separated from my husband for long periods of time. I was, for the most part, a single mom, who happened to be married to a man I rarely saw. This was not a good life; it was simply a difficult existence. However, I managed because I knew that sacrifices had to be made in order for my family to survive. I had no home to call my own; circumstances forced me to live with his parents until they and my husband had a falling out and my son and I were forced to leave.

I will continue to work hard and encourage my children to learn English and to do the best that they can in school.

They (his parents) no longer welcomed us into their home and we had to make other arrangements. He sent money for my son and me to leave and make our way to Houston. I was excited over the prospect of finally being reunited after such a long separation. My journey to Illinois was not an easy one. This is my story.

It was extremely difficult to make it across the border illegally. Money had to change hands; the coyotes (guides) knew they were dealing with desperate people and took full advantage of us. My son entered this country with no problems. The coyotes simply walked him across the border and there he waited with strangers until I was finally able to join him. It took me one month of trying to cross the desert to succeed. Each failed attempt brought new tears and agonizing thoughts of never seeing my young son again. My guide would hide me in canals, in ditches, in a pickup truck, in his every attempt to lead me to the U. S. side of the border. We traveled in darkness and every little noise scared me. I had no idea if it was the border patrol barreling down on me and looking to deport me once again. Every failed attempt increased my frustration and anxiety over making it to the United States. But I knew I could not give up: My young son and husband were here waiting for me. I have never in my life encountered such fear and anguish over

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my lack of control over my own life.

I had no control over the situation, which only added to my stress level. All I knew was that I had to get across no matter what. I finally managed not to get caught and amid tears and kisses was reunited with my two year old son. I can only image how scared he was, living with strangers and not understanding why his mother was not at his side. Together we finally made our way to Houston where my husband and extended family were waiting for us.

And even then, I couldn't relax for fear that immigration might stop me and ask for documents. Raids and deportation were a common occurrence in the Houston area. Anyone who was caught without proper papers was immediately deported. My husband and I knew that it would be safer to us to live in Illinois where anti-immigration sentiments were not as high. We left Houston after four months and traveled north and settled in the Warrenville area.

My life in the United States is no easier than before, but at least my family is together and enjoying a higher standard of living. We have our own apartment, we have food on the table, and we have jobs to help pay for our expenses. Life is still difficult, but at least we are together now. The stress we have in our lives can now be shared between us and the loneliness is now gone. We have each other and have seen our family grow by one. Yes! I now have a young daughter who is an American citizen.

My husband and I both work in low paying jobs. Better paying jobs are hard to come by when you are undocumented. There is always someone willing to take advantage of the less fortunate. We work in fast food restaurants, earn minimum wage and have no health benefits. My husband's family was able to get me a job working where papers were not necessary. I work long hours just to make ends meet. I can't complain . . . at least I have a job. I'm afraid of the police stopping me and asking to see the driver's license I do not have. I have learned to drive very carefully so as not to draw attention to myself.

My life in the United States is no easier than before, but at least my family is together and enjoying a higher standard of living.

My family has no medical insurance, and we can't get it through work because of our lack of papers. Thanks be to God that my children and husband are healthy and have no major medical problems. I, on the other hand, have had surgeries to remove tumors from my body. With no medical insurance, I am always fearful of leaving behind my young children without a mother.

I will continue to work hard and encourage my children to learn English and to do the best that they can in school. Without this, life is not easy. I know from firsthand experience, and I want my children to have more than I had. I have learned that having an education opens many doors. ■

Rocio Fisher is currently a principal in West Chicago School District #33. In her work she strives to give a voice to students enrolled in her school and their families.

On the Threshold of Better Understanding: How to Meet the Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

Shelley K. Taylor - The University of Western Ontario, London, Canada

In this article the author introduces the reader to the linguistic diversity of Nepal.

Imagine having to learn a new computer program; then imagine if you needed to learn it quickly to be able to submit your report cards or a report within a tight schedule. Then imagine if you not only needed to learn the program, but also needed to learn it in a language you were weak in. Still, you would have the advantage of already knowing what it means to learn a computer program and, more basically, what using a computer was all about. Next, imagine if you had to learn how to use a new gizmo that you had never seen before, had no idea what it did, and you would lose your job to another teachers (or administrator) if you did not master it. Not having the language to understand the instruction or the background knowledge to understand the gizmo would raise the stakes—and your anxiety level.

While these scenarios do not have the same long-term ramifications as high stakes tests, they do illustrate the sorts of struggles (and stresses) that culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners encounter in English-medium classrooms. In the scenarios described above, you would have benefitted from having access to some basic instructions written in English or someone sitting next to you who could translate key concepts. The same holds true for CLD learners; however, in their case, scaffolding their learning through the use of their home language (L1) tends to be discouraged as their L1 is framed as their main problem (since it is not English). Historically, this tendency has held true. in the United States and around the world though, increasingly, minority languages are being viewed as a useful tool to assist and engage CLD learners in content learning.

The view that CLD learners' L1 and background knowledge are an integral part of who they are and should be used as a starting point for their learning is central to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/(UNESCO)'s (2000) "Education for all" (EFA) initiative. The six goals of the EFA framework are to

- Expand early childhood care and education, especially for the most disadvantaged;
- Ensure that by 2015, children (especially girls and CLD learners) have access to free, mandatory, high quality primary education;
- Meet learners' needs by providing them with equitable access to learning and life-skills programs;
- Achieve a 50% improvement in adult basic literacy (especially for women);
- Eliminate gender inequalities and provide access to elementary and secondary education by 2005, and
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education. (UNESCO, n. d.)

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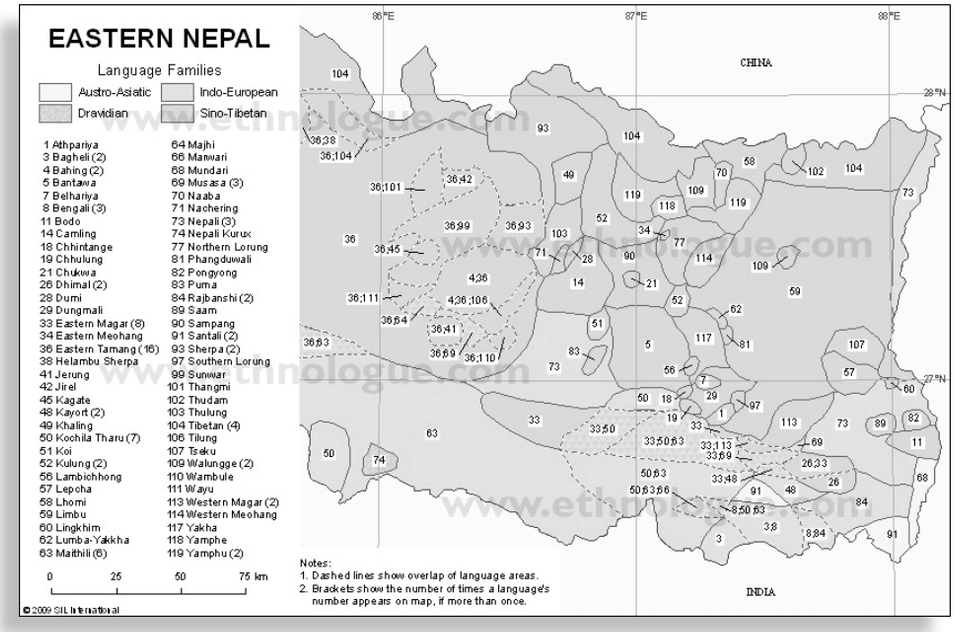

Languages of Nepal

The EFA framework also has a seventh goal, which responds to the needs of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. It emphasizes the use of local languages and mother tongues as the media of instruction (Nurmela, Awasthi & Skutnabb-Kangas, in press). Nepal adopted all seven of UNESCO's (2000 & n. d.) EFA goals in its EFA National plan of action (2001-15) in an overt attempt to respond to CLD learners' needs (Government of Nepal, 2001).

The purpose of this paper is to compare Nepal's approach to meeting its CLD learners' needs and improve their academic achievement to our approach in North America and to see what lessons we can learn from Nepal. The paper is structured as follows: L1-based instruction in over 100 languages, links between language-of-instruction and other factors in CLD learners' academic achievement, and tentative conclusions.

A five-year study into the English language development of minority language children revealed that ELLs who received instruction in their mother tongue outperformed ELL peers enrolled in mainstream English programs.

L1-Based Instruction in over 100 Languages

Taylor (in press) reports that during the 240-year long Nepali monarchy, Nepali was the language of power and the medium of education. Though Nepal was a multilingual country, the monarchy granted primacy to a single language, Nepali, in the name of "national unity" (Awasthi, 2004). CLD learners only received Nepali-medium instruction, whether their L1 was an indigenous (tribal) or a minority language and despite the fact that over 50% of Nepal's school-age population spoke a language other than Nepali as their L1 (Yadava, 2007). In 2007, a Maoist government came into power and introduced an Interim Constitution guaranteeing indigenous and minority children the right to L1-based instruction (Yonjan-Tamang, Hough & Nurmela, 2009). From then on, Nepalis demanded L1-based instruction, which led to the governments of Nepal and Finland jointly developing a pilot multilingual language education (MLE) project. Under the auspices of the project, teacher training manuals were first prepared in 9 languages, with 15 completed by summer 2009. Finland's involvement in the project ended at the end of 2009, but the Nepali government was committed to cascading the program and teacher training so all CLD learners could benefit from L1-based instruction. The goals of the MLE project were to (a) develop indigenous/minority communities' capacity to create L1-based programs in the primary years in local schools and (b) institute culturally relevant pedagogy (i.e., teaching that was culturally familiar and relevant to the local children) (Hough, Magar & Yonjan-Tamang, 2009). An additional project goal was to develop linguistically/culturally responsive teaching materials (see Taylor, in press). The MLE program featured:

- initial literacy and numeracy instruction through indigenous (tribal) and immigrant children's L1;
- the introduction of Nepali (as a second language/L2) and English (as a foreign

Linguistic and cultural diversity in Nepal

language) as subjects in the primary grades;
- a transition to Nepali as the language-of-instruction in the junior grades, and
- instruction in the L1 as subject after the primary grades.

Taylor (in press) outlines program development and delivery "glitches" that emerged in the program development process, but early reports indicated that the project was reaching Nepal EFA goals: more CLD learners were staying in school for the primary years compared to when they received Nepali-medium instruction. Under that system, over 50% of all CLD learners dropped out of school in Grade 1 (Nurmela, personal communication, January 28th, 2009; Nurmela, Awasthi & Skutnabb-Kangas, in press). The national average for Nepali-speaking students staying in school from Grade 1 to Grade 5 increased from 58% to 79% between 1999 and 2004. This is in sharp contrast to CLD learners' 50% drop-out rate from Grade 1 alone. The following example shows what could make children drop out of school so young:

There is no single "path to success" for CLD learners.

> The participant . . . related an incident in which one child was hit by another child on his first day of grade 1. When the injured party tried to tell his teacher about it in the only language the child knew upon entering school—his non-Nepali L1—his teacher slapped him for not speaking Nepali (a language as yet unknown to the child). As a result of that injustice, the first day of grade 1 ended up being the child's first and last day of school. (Taylor, in press, p. 213)

Even though there were glitches with the program (lack of L1 materials, teachers requiring further instruction in MLE teaching, etc.), the L1 and local knowledge of the CLD learners in the MLE pilot schools were used and respected. They were also being introduced to Nepali as a second language (L2), but their teachers

- were aware that Nepali was the CLD learners' L2;
- were aware of the learners' L1 and L2 learning needs, and
- held reasonable expectations for the learners.

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Language of Instruction and Other Factors in CLD Learners' Academic Achievement

Contrary to the 2007 Nepali Constitution (Government of Nepal, 2007), neither the American nor the Canadian Constitutions guarantee indigenous or immigrant children's right to L1-based instruction. There has been resistance to bilingual education programs that foster nonofficial, minority languages in both countries (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996; Taylor, 2009). In the United States, bilingual education was dismantled in several states in the 1990s, beginning with Proposition 227 in California in 1997 and spreading to states such as Arizona and Massachusetts later. Neither has Canada provided widespread bilingual education programs to maintain or enrich indigenous or immigrant children's L1. Nowhere is that truer than in Ontario, the province that receives the lion's share of yearly immigrants to Canada. Ontario was theprovince of choice for more than half (52.3%) of the 1.1 million newcomers to Canada in the 2001-2006 period (Statistics Canada, 2006); however, instruction in languages other than the country's two official languages (English and French) is illegal in Ontario (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Taylor, 2009). Unlike in Nepal, there has not been a groundswell of public support for implementing compensatory bilingual education programs for CLD learners in North America.

The goal of bilingual education is to promote the maintenance and development of indigenous and immigrant children's home languages; however, by and large people concerned with CLD learners' underachievement have great difficulty understanding how it can be beneficial for these learners to spend less time learning through English in order to achieve higher literacy rates in English. However, the research has long shown that, illogical though it may seem, less English instruction does mean more English learning. Researchers such as Cummins and Swain have spent over 30 years of their careers investigating the less is more and more is less phenomenon and explaining how it works. Still, the public, politicians and some teachers and researchers still doubt its veracity, which has resulted in legislation that limits CLD learners' access to bilingual education programs (Cummins, 1981, 2001 & 2009-a; Cummins & Swain, 1986). We can better understand the more is less phenomenon (more instruction through the medium of English may result in less English learning) if we think back to the computer example provided in the introduction. We would have learned less of our L2 (e.g., Nepali) if it was the sole language used to explain how the gizmo worked than we would have if some scaffolding was provided between instruction in Nepali and our L1, English (e.g., instructions translated into the L1, access to a Nepali-English interpreter to explain the lesson, etc.) or if we had learned about a similar gizmo in English already and had visual prompts even though we did not fully understand the explanation in Nepali about how to use a different gizmo. To summarize, the more Nepali was used, the less we would have understood the lesson; hence, more (L2 teaching) may result in less (L2 learning). The inverse would also have been true: The less Nepali that was used (allowing for some L1 explanations), the more we would eventually have learned Nepali as we would have been able to link key vocabulary in our new language, our L2, to what we already knew in our L1, English, rather than be completely lost (and daydreaming); hence, less can equal more. The following are more research-based explanations of how less can equal more.

You can no more follow instructions than learn in a language you do not understand.

First, a five-year study into the English language development of minority language children revealed that ELLs who received instruction in their mother tongue outperformed ELL peers enrolled in mainstream English programs on measures of English language development (Slavin, Madden, Calderón, Chamberlain & Hennessy, 2010). An earlier

five-year study revealed that there is no single "path to success" for CLD learners—despite the public's belief that more is more (Parrish, Merickel, Pérez, Linquanti, Socias, Spain, Speroni, Esra, Brock & Delancey, 2006).

Parrish et al.'s (2006) research highlights characteristics of schools and school boards that greatly contribute to CLD learners succeeding academically:

1. staff capacity to address CLD learners' needs
2. a school-wide focus on developing CLD learners' L2 proficiency,
3. a common vision with regards to priorities and expectations for CLD learners, and
4. systematic assessment that yields data that can be used to guide policy and instruction.

With regard to how (or whether) these characteristics were reflected in the Nepali MLE project, it is premature to measure Characteristics 2 and 4 at this stage as the CLD learners' have not transitioned to their L2 (Nepali) as language-of-instruction yet, and only formative assessments have been completed (Acharya, 2008); however, Characteristics 1 and 3 were very evident in the program.

The district education officers, principals, and teachers were very focused and able to meet the CLD learners' needs as their needs had been guiding forces in program and curriculum materials development; they had been developed locally in a bottom-up manner to reflect the children's linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds and home conditions (Hough, Magar & Yonjan-Tamang, 2009; Taylor, in press). The teachers were mainly able to meet the learners' linguistic needs, but some schools were located in such complex multilingual settings that not all linguistic groupings were optimal (see Taylor, in press). Nonetheless, the educators in all of the schools that participated in the project shared a common vision regarding priorities and expectations for CLD learners. Furthermore, local communities had a strong sense of their "right" to L1-based instruction and were highly invested in their children's educational experiences.

Less English instruction does mean _more_ English learning.

Lessons from Nepal

The stakes were very high in the Nepali case. They were trying to turn around CLD learners' 50% drop-out rate for in Grade 1, and politicians, indigenous federations, researchers, educators, community members, and parents took dramatic steps to find a solution; they implemented a particular model of bilingual education (MLE). This raises the question of whether we North Americans are less willing to develop innovative models of bilingual education or to allow CLD learners to draw more on their L1s because we are more complacent about the academic achievement of CLD learners or because we think the stakes are lower. The answer to that question is outside the bounds of this paper, though I will present an example from Canada to problematize the notion that the stakes are lower in North America.

Watt and Roessingh (2001) conducted a study that involved tracking of Canadian ESL students over eight years. They followed 540 students for whom English was a second language (ESL) in a high school in a western province between 1989 and 1997. About 40% of the school's population spoke a first language other than English, with Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, and Punjabi being the most common mother tongues. Their study found a 74% dropout rate among ESL students—a rate 2.5 times higher than for the general student population. The dropout rate for students who arrived in Canada with no prior knowledge of English was 93%. These figures remained stable over the eight-year period of the study. Half of all grade 1 CLD

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Multilingual educators on the move (author is in the first row, third from right).

learners drop out in Nepal; at least in one part of Canada, 93% of all ESL students who immigrate to Canada at the rank beginner level do not graduate. What percentage of academic underachievement is enough to spark action?

The underachievement of CLD learners is a loss to them personally and to their community. Seen less altruistically, their loss is our loss in our shared economy. The global economic downturn in 2009 illustrated all too clearly how one person's, group of people's, or nation's loss can becomes another's loss. As Cummins (2009-c) wisely observes, language is not the only factor in CLD learners' educational achievement rates, but when respect and support for their L1 is linked to respect and incorporation of their local knowledge in the curriculum, it is more possiblefor teachers and administrators to address CLD learners' needs, develop a comprehensive school-wide plan to develop their English proficiency by incorporating and building on their L1, develop a common vision with regards to priorities and expectations for them, and develop systematic assessment that yields data that can be used to guide policy and instruction. When these goals are met, all benefit. So the next time you buy electronics with instructions that you have to follow at home or buy furniture that you have to build yourself, and the instructions come in Chinese or Danish, may that serve as a reminder of your growing understanding of why L1-based instruction is necessary: You can no more follow instructions than learn in a language you do not understand. ■

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Challenges to Literacy for Guatemalan Learners at Home or in the United States

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This article explores Guatemala's history as a backdrop to understanding the challenges educators in this society must overcome as they educate its children today. This study examines the Guatemalan schoolhouse from teachers' viewpoint. Data from interviews, focus groups, and a survey suggest possibilities for improving education in Guatemala and are used to identify ways to understand the mismatch that immigrants from this country experience with schooling in the United States.

Researchers who have investigated ideologies of literacy for Latin American countries have documented the existence of educational systems that reinforce rigid economic, social, political, and cultural divides across indigenous and non-indigenous in the region (Smith, Jiménez, and Ballesteros, 2005; Rubio & Chesterfield; Ferreiro, 1997; Heath, 1972). Immigrants from Guatemala to the United States have experienced a system of education that is very different from what they encounter here. These differences do not imply that one school system is less or more effective than the other, but the differences do require that teachers here know why the students face cultural mismatch in both social and academic settings and identify ways to help the students and their families to become familiar with the way schooling proceeds here.

Contrasting Guatemalan and U.S. Schools

When Guatemalan immigrants enroll in U.S. schools, there is much that surprises them. They may be placed in a program with the goal of helping them acquire English. Once they start school, their language proficiency in English and in Spanish may be evaluated. What does not typically happen is that these students' proficiency in the home language, which may be one of over 20 dialects spoken in Guatemala (Friedland & Mendez, 2005), is considered. From the start, these students, who do not speak Spanish as their first language, are taught in Spanish or English, which for them is a third language. Clearly, these learners are at a disadvantage whether attending school in Guatemala or the United States.

In my work with the members of the Guatemalan Literacy Council, I have seen very positive changes in many Guatemalan schools brought about by teachers' involvement in workshops with us. These teachers will have students writing letters to the Ugly Duckling, engaging in reader's theatre, and hang clotheslines in their classrooms to showcase their students' work. Unfortunately, the vast majority of schools offer a transmission model of instruction that does not promote this kind of independent thinking. What is more common for teachers in Guatemala is to feel overwhelmed by

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the number of students they have in their classrooms. Many resort to having the students copy from their textbooks or the board. It is not unusual for desks to be placed very close together to accommodate groups of 40-60 students. Illinois teachers are unhappy because the budgetary issues are resulting in some classes being expanded to 35 students. Few U.S. teachers could fathom teaching a kindergarten of 50 students! Teachers in Guatemala also face the challenge of not having textbooks for every child in their classroom and schools with libraries are a rarity. Learners who come to the United States are shocked at how so many of our classrooms have shelves filled with storybooks. Poverty is an issue in funding schools. Unlike the United States, where local property taxes, state taxes, and federal funds subsidize schools, in Guatemala all the money comes from the central office of the Ministry of Education.

Shared classrooms are another interesting phenomenon in Guatemala. To save costs or simply because of shortage of space, a building may be an elementary school from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 pm and a high school in the afternoon. Guatemalan teachers do not like this for many reasons. In such situations everything must be locked up after one school closes and the other opens, walls must stay undecorated, and each teacher is only allowed access to one of the two blackboards in the room. Other problems relate to hygiene; most Guatemalan schools have running water, but flushing toilets is not always possible. Children go to school hungry and there are no subsidized meals. Schools do not have lunchrooms, but some do have picnic tables in courtyards or grassy areas. No one oversees the quality of the food that is sold from kiosks for lunch. Guatemalan immigrants may be surprised that toilets in U.S. schools flush. It helps U.S. teachers to know that many school toilets in Guatemala require the pouring of a bucket of water for any type of flushing action. When students place used toilet paper on the floor if there is no garbage can in sight, it is because that is what they are used to doing since no paper is ever thrown into the toilet water in Guatemalan schools. Table 1 includes a list of questions that teachers may want to ask if they have immigrants in their classrooms that will help them to understand their backgrounds.

Learners who come to the United States are shocked at how so many of our classrooms have shelves filled with storybooks.

Table 1 - Questions to Answer

Ask and answer these questions:

1. Is Spanish the student's second language and is English his/her third language?
2. Is Spanish or an indigenous dialect the language spoken in the student's home?
3. How many languages are spoken in the home? By whom?
4. Does the child have a library card and know how to check out books from a library?
5. What type of schooling has this learner been exposed to before enrolling in a U.S. school?
6. Has this learner ever participated in small group work?
7. Is this classroom a welcoming place for parents?
8. Do this child's parents know about the U.S. custom of making appointments to talk to the teacher? What about Open Houses and Report Card pickup?
9. Has this learner spent much time at school copying from the board?
10. Has this learner had interrupted schooling?
11. Who will help this child with homework assignments at home?
12. Has this learner ever prepared an oral presentation?
13. Has this student been taught to never question a teacher's authority?
14. Has this student learned that to show

respect for an adult means not making eye contact and looking down when spoken to?

15. Does this learner have access to a computer?

Promoting Literacy

Approaches to literacy that may meet with success within the United States and Europe do not work in the central and southern hemispheres of the Americas. It is important to analyze the historical and political environment of a nation before determining the literacy needs of its citizens and the effectiveness of its educational system. This paper presents data gathered in a survey, focus groups, and interviews with Guatemalan educators over a period of five years. A description of the historical context of Guatemalan education precedes an exploration of its current realities. Data gathered reflects that Guatemalan teachers state education in their country has been deficient, offers reasons why the normative conception of bilingualism largely excludes indigenous languages, and suggests advocacy efforts to offer a future of more educational opportunities for students in Guatemala. Lastly, implications for educational reforms in Guatemala are linked to the educational needs of immigrants from this country attending U.S. schools, and are used to highlight ways that can help these learners succeed here.

Marcie Mondshein and progressive school principal.

Historical Undercurrents

Grasping the challenges to literacy in Guatemala requires an awareness of the sociocultural context, the political climate of the region, and the history of this multicultural multilingual nation. There is a climate of socioeconomic oppression in Latin America that quite likely maintains its presence due to the lack of access to education for many of the non-dominant population and the education that has been within the reach of the indigenous. Immigrants from Guatemala have told me that they are surprised at the way elections are held in the United States. They are accustomed to political campaigning but often

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expect some illegitimacy in their electoral process.

As Guatemalans have struggled to create a democracy, the country has had nine constitutions, each one modeled after a European nation (Solares, 1995). Traditional, repetitive, noninquisitive types of paradigms have not validated Guatemala's cultural and linguistic diversity (Hall, Gilbert, & Patrinos, 2005; Rodriguez, 1995). In the 20th century, Guatemalans survived the strife of a civil war that lasted over 30 years. Solares (1995) proposed that issues of equity are rooted in the racist character of the interrelations of Guatemala's cultural groups. In the 1970's the atrocities committed by the military left many widows and orphans alone and poorer than they had been before, and during this time the military reacted against indigenous movements by murdering entire communities and kidnapping *ladinos*/ non-indigenous people who sided with the underdogs (Hong, 2000). In the 1980's the army went as far as setting up model villages and reeducation camps with the objective of having the indigenous adopt the ways of the majority culture. Between 1980 and 1984 the army reported it had destroyed 440 villages, and also in 1984, Guatemala's Supreme Court revealed that some 100,000 children lost at least one parent in the government-led killings (United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

Before a citizen can contribute to a democratic nation, the schoolhouse and the society must join to applaud courageous independent thinking that prepares learners to read the word and use it to read the world.

Beginning of Educational Reforms

Equity has been the issue delineating access to education in Latin America. Literacy is both subjective and objective and serves to maintain the social norms of a culture (Rodriguez, 1995). The work to reform the Guatemalan educational system began when the Peace Agreements on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples under the United Nations were signed in 1995 in Mexico. The Agreements emphasized that Guatemala as a country is multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual due to "its history, conquest, colonization, movements and migrations" (United States Institute of Peace, 2007, p. 1). The Agreements charged the Guatemala government to (1) decentralize and regionalize its educational system so the cultural needs of the indigenous could be addressed, (2) give families and communities a role in choosing curricula, and (3) incorporate the educational contexts of the indigenous in the curriculum.

Although the Agreements were a step to offering culturally responsive pedagogy, substantial educational reforms are not yet visible in 2010. Rigoberta Menchú believes the low self-esteem of the Guatemalan indigenous remains the number one challenge to overcome. She stated, "One of the consequences of the wars is that people begin to think of themselves as the minority rather than the majority" (personal communication, September 22, 2009). However, many Guatemalan parents are active in their children's schools. They advocate for improvements. They will fill in when teachers are ill. Many help to clean schools. I have seen mothers sanding and painting desks and chairs, fathers building shelves in classroom corners to add a library, and even erecting a cement wall funded by donations to prevent mudslides form engulfing a schoolyard.

Educational Context: Current Challenges to Literacy

Factors that delimit the achievement of literacy in Guatemala include societal, curricular, and instructional factors, and extend to issues of privilege, power, ethnicity, and language. The educational experience of Guatemalans is situated within the context of their immediate surroundings and geographical access to educational institutions across *departamentos*/ areas of residence and access to schools. Illiteracy rates range from 9.7 % in Guatemala City to 48.92 % in El Quiché; an additional

10 of the country's *departamentos* have illiteracy rates of 20-30 %, others of 30-40% (Guatemalan Ministry of Education, 2005). Many rural schools are classified as multi-age multi-grade and have less than three teachers. . In rural El Quiché alone, 64% of the schools are of this type. While 60% of the country's school population lives in rural areas, 75% of schools are located in urban areas. Only 58% of municipalities have a secondary school, and 8% do not have a middle school (UNICEF, 2005). In 2005, 71% of school-age children were estimated to attend school, and one third of those in first grade were predicted to complete third grade three years later. Hall, Gilbert, and Patrinos (2005) documented that in the 1990's the non-indigenous children of Guatemala attained on average six years of schooling while the indigenous achieved three.Although education is compulsory up to the sixth grade in Guatemala, in the year 2005, "less than half the adult population had completed a primary education" (Friedland & Méndez, 2005). Vasquez (2005) reported that 43% of Guatemalan children stop their schooling after they fail first grade and over 50% after third grade. In 2008 Vernor Muñoz, representative for the United Nations task force that examined schooling in Guatemala, criticized the system. He highlighted existing racism in indigenous education, that Guatemala spends the least of all Latin American nations on education, that the malnutrition rate is 54%, that schools do not provide snacks to visibly hungry children, and that frequent governmental changes in leadership set education back at every turn. He stated, *"Guatemala debe hacer un gran ezfuerzo para alcanzar acuerdos nacionales que no se desmorronen con cada cambio de gobierno."*/Guatemala should make efforts to reach agreements on a national scale that will not disintegrate with changes in government (Cereser, 2008). He referred to the unrealized promises of the 1995 Peace Agreements such as the establishment of a Mayan university. In discussing teacher preparation he shared, "*La formación docente sigue siendo débil, las escuelas normales están debilitadas, y el sistema universitario ha sido víctima de la escasa inversión"*/Teacher preparation is weak and the university system is the victim of little investment.

Reforms in the teacher preparation curricula need to focus on second language pedagogy.

Hurdles to Schooling for Teachers and Students

In Guatemala students can follow a curriculum that focuses on the theoretical basis of instruction the last year of high school (Kossack, Friedland, & Richards, 2005). After this, new graduates begin their first teaching position. Preservice teachers do not participate in clinical experiences and the Ministry of Education does not set licensure prerequisites (M. Recinos de León, personal communication, February 21, 2005). The Ministry supplies schools with some content area texts but not storybooks. Most schools do not have libraries so the experience of checking books out and taking narrative texts home to read is atypical (M. Recinos de León, personal communication, July 26, 2005). Many parents cannot afford to send their children to school. Five percent of Guatemalan children live in the streets, only 10% have basic needs met, and 85% are at risk (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2002). Figures from 1992 to 2002 indicate 16% of Guatemalans live at a level below one United States dollar a day, only 52% of rural indigenous populations are reported to have adequate sanitation facilities in their homes, and the under five mortality rate is 47% (UNICEF, 2005). In order to help Guatemalan learners to develop into multiliterate individuals and to prevent language shift and loss, issues of language prestige and distribution within the curriculum must be addressed (Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty, & Panda, 2009; Collins & Blot, 2003) whether they are in the United

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Future teachers flanking Jane Sullivan (middle left) and author (middle right).

States or in Guatemala. It is important to acknowledge students' multicultural realities and linguistic riches alongside their literacy challenges in schooling.

The Study

With regard to this investigation, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What philosophy is the foundation of Guatemalan teachers' literacy instruction?
2. What do teachers report constitute challenges to education in Guatemala?
3. What aspects of the Guatemalan educational system might answers to questions 1 and 2 suggest contribute to the mismatch that Guatemalan immigrants experience when they enroll in schools in the United States? What can U.S. educators do with this information?

The work presented serves to begin to paint the landscape of Guatemalans' educational challenges and to share the points of view of the country's teachers. This investigation began with the grass roots effort of a teacher/researcher who has been delivering workshops to teachers in Guatemala during the past six years. I do not seek to paint Guatemalan or U.S. educators from a deficit perspective but rather to share what is factual and identify new directions for the future.

Participants

A total of 515 elementary school teachers from urban and rural areas of Guatemala completed a survey consisting of a four point Likert scale and open ended questions. All received their teacher preparation in Guatemala's normal schools as part of their secondary education program. Participants in ten focus groups were teachers from levels equivalent to K-8th in the

Children ready to learn.

United States. Interviewees were three elementary school teachers, Juanita, Perla, and Lizbeth (pseudonyms), Francisco, an elementary school principal, Marcela, a teacher trainer at a Normal School, Alma, a part-time facilitator at a private school, and Luisa, an employee of the Ministry of Education. Seven one-on-one interviews were conducted after completion of approximately 20 informal interviews with Guatemalan educators.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data were analyzed for how the teachers situate themselves within the context of the Guatemalan educational system and the ways this affects their practice. Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT), an applied communications theory, was used to examine focus group conversations because it allows a researcher to generalize the communicative force of fantasy across human communication and facilitates the interpretive examination of the emotionally charged responses of participants (Cragan & Shields, 1998).The teachers participated in the creation of a social reality (Duffy, 1990) that demonstrated the constraints in their work or motivated them to envision changing the Guatemalan schoolhouse. Analyses examined the data for participants' excitement, frustration, evidence of theoretical base for planning instruction, chaining of themes/recurrence, and outliers.

Surveys

The overarching themes of teachers' answers to Likert scale survey questions were their desire to improve instruction (80%) and an ongoing struggle to describe their pedagogy as aligned or in conflict with practice (85%). Responses (95%) support the belief that bilingualism is defined as learning English. At first glance answers to the questions *I offer my students the opportunity to read independently* and *My students can identify a favorite author* suggest reading is a frequent occurrence in schools. This is surprising given the number of schools

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with libraries. One is left to ask how the teachers define reading and how students read independently and identify favorite authors given the few opportunities that they have to read narrative texts. Mean replies from both rural and urban areas of Guatemala were affirmative to the question *My students learn to compose when they copy word for word from books.* This statistic suggests the teachers define composing as handwriting rather than writing for authentic purposes. Answers indicate that to write is not to compose/ *redactar* and to read is to decode rather than to comprehend and create schemas.

What one observes in Guatemala is not much different from what is taking place in U.S. schools. We face a period in our educational history where the push to learn English is covertly denying the value of multilingualism.

A category that emerged in the quantitative analysis relates to instructing bilingual populations. Mean answers indicate disagreement to the statements *I am confident that I can teach a bilingual child to compose in a second language, I am confident that I can teach a child to read in a second language,* and *The reading process is the same whether it is in the first and second language.* The majority of the teachers report teaching in Spanish (95%). Answers to some of the open-ended questions could be described as interesting simply because there were no answers. It is impossible to understand or justify why select questions were left blank. A recurring teacher response in the open ended questions was "*No tengo estudiantes que estudian inglés./*I have no students who study English." When asked *What topic related to teaching would you like to know more about?* teachers responded that major challenges to be keeping student interest (70%), understanding how to teach effectively (75%), and having access to professional development (75%). Answers to *This is what I usually do when I want to promote the reading process in my classroom* suggest teachers' want books that will interest students and offers evidence of the shortage of books. A sixth grade teacher commented that in her classroom, she and her students read: "*un cuento muchas veces. Como no tenemos libros, leemos la Biblia./* the same story many times. Since we do not have narrative texts, we read the Bible." When asked what aspect of teaching they wanted to explore further, the challenge least mentioned (.5%) was instruction of bilingual populations.

Answers to the question *This is what I usually do to help my students improve their writing* were repeated versions of (1) I do nothing to teach writing (30%), (2) composing is writing letters clearly (45%), (3) writing is spelling (80%), (4) writing is enriching vocabulary (25%), of readers, and (5) I don't teach writing (20%), (6) composing is a focus on punctuation (47%), and, (7) students write when they answer questions (55%). Outlier responses to this question (9 of 515) provide a hint of an instructional paradigm with a different focus. These nine teachers commented their students begin planning for composing through pictures because they ask their students to read a text, and then draw what they understand as a prewriting technique. This question yielded six salient themes; that teachers (1) check spelling and punctuation (80%), have students (2) copy from textbooks (45%), (3) describe pictures (.0017%), (4) look up synonyms for teacher supplied lists of words (.0004%), (5) write as teachers dictate (45%), and, (6) first read and then illustrate their ideas and compose (.0017%).

Focus Groups

As the teachers voiced their thoughts, they often agreed with what their colleagues shared. They added to what others had said as they shook their heads yes and nodded agreement. Recurring themes were chained messages because participants listened and further clarified others' ideas with their own examples. Comments identified the top obstacles to literacy for Guatemalans as (1) too many students in classrooms, (2) a shortage of books, (3) children's hunger, (4) learners' lack of comprehension of text, (5) unmotivated learners, (6) students' lack of interest in reading,

(7) condition of classrooms and bathrooms, (8) that Guatemala is not a nation (9) the Ministry of Education's inefficiency and constant changing of mandates. Teachers' repeated suggestions of ways to improve the system were that they (1) need to know more and do not receive adequate preparation before beginning to teach, (2) want ongoing professional development, (3) need libraries in schools, and (4) do not have access to books donated to schools because they are often kept in the principal's office.

Teachers were overwhelmingly critical of the Ministry of Education. They excitedly interrupted each other to add comments. The following statements (translated to English and using pseudonyms) more than strongly suggest there are problems. From Aida, "The Ministry encourages teachers to have students work in groups so one student distributes papers, another picks them up, and a third student takes attendance. They are working in a group!" From Lorenzo, "If it is going to be the same regardless of what they (the Ministry) say, then why do anything!" From Paco, "Teachers are toyed with by administrations and no real changes ever take place." From Octavio, "Training given to us by the Ministry is poorly planned. It consists of conversations about reforms and little modeling."

Interviews

Luisa (a pseudonym), who works for the Ministry of Education, believes the Normal School curriculum is too difficult and culturally irrelevant and presents an excessive homework load to candidates. She assigns responsibility for teachers' preparation to the system. She does not place any blame on the teachers but instead explains how hard they work and how poorly trained they are. She shared that "Teachers have poor vocabularies, are accustomed to memorization and rote learning, and have no metacognitive skills because they are not taught these at school." She emphasized that many of her colleagues "Stagnate in their knowledge base because they do not attend conferences and think they know everything." She suggests changes begin at the elementary school level.

Marcela (a pseudonym), a teacher trainer at a Normal school, believes teacher trainers and future teachers need remediation. She emphasized that "Teacher candidates do not know how to read for meaning, they do not comprehend what they read, and they are weak in mathematics." Lizbeth (a pseudonym), an elementary teacher, revealed her high frustration level when she raised her hands and agitatedly proclaimed, "Guatemalan teachers cannot accept different points of view. They do not know how to debate an issue and just argue." She explained that in workshops the teachers do not work well in groups, that they have not been taught to collaborate, and therefore cannot model for their students how to work in groups. In contrast, Francisco (a pseudonym), a school principal, exhibited optimism. Many of his teachers seek professional development and share their knowledge base with their colleagues. Although Francisco shook his head when asked if all his teachers were on board, he said "I see a different type of learning taking place in my school because many of my teachers have participated in the *Consejo de Lectura's* /Literacy Council's workshops." Perla (a pseudonym), a third grade teacher, commented that what was a revelation to her was "Discovering that students will generate noise in activities such as cooperative learning."

The immigrant child needs time to grasp the different expectations of schooling in the United States.

Without question, the new curriculum under development by the Ministry of Education is perceived an obstacle to educational progress by teachers. All interviewees except Luisa, who works for the Ministry, criticized the effort. Alma (a pseudonym) joked, "The Ministry is a mystery." Lizbeth shared "The Ministry's workshops are recycled topics with new titles." Luisa, on the other hand, commented the government is making efforts to implement a curriculum based on values. She shared,"The Ministry attributes the high drop out rates of indigenous students to instructional delivery being in Spanish and is exploring how bilingual education may be offered."

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Letter to the Ugly Duckling.

Interviewees seemed surprised when asked to consider assessment; only Juanita and Lizbeth voiced comments. Francisco shook his head and shrugged his shoulders. Juanita said, "Evaluation consists of arbitrary standards set by individual teachers that justify student failure." Lizbeth used the question as an opportunity to discredit the Ministry's efforts. She laughed and said, "The Ministry does not monitor progress and wants each student to receive a grade regardless of what it may or may not represent."

Conclusions

The business of educating in Guatemala has not considered how to free the indigenous from the political forces that have prevented them from freedom of thought. Rather, schooling has served to create new groups of politicians all cut from the same mold. Educators who espouse the goals of critical pedagogy know it is key that learners be taught how to critically examine text (Wink, 2004). I have not seen teachers in Guatemala ask learners to analyze texts for what they reveal about the author, the topic being addressed, and the assumptions and premises of the society living within the text other than in schools where faculty have attended workshops given by the Guatemalan Literacy Council. Yet we know that before a citizen can contribute to a democratic nation, the schoolhouse and the society must join to applaud courageous independent thinking that prepares learners to read the word and use it to read the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Only if the Ministry establishes a focus on delivering education through pedagogically sound models, and learners are taught in languages they understand, can the power structures within Guatemalan society stop the cycle of recolonization of the indigenous at school. What one observes in Guatemala is not much different from what is taking place in U.S. schools. We face a period in our educational history where the push to learn English is covertly denying the value of multilingualism. Teachers in the United States are feeling overwhelmed by the required curriculum. They are under pressure to prepare their students to be good test takers so that their schools can make adequate yearly progress. Teachers have been asked to use scripted reading series. They have been told that the latest band-aid for all learners' challenges, the response to intervention approach, will allow all children to reach the same level of achievement. Because more and more Guatemalans are coming to the United States, it is important that educators here know their backgrounds. Certainly, historical as well as current concerns impact and delimit practice in both Guatemala and the United States. One can see how in both countries literacies as community practices cannot be separated from values, senses of self, and forms of regulation and power (Collins & Blot, 2003).

In Guatemala, Spanish appears to be the language of power while English is considered the elite language. English is not offered in the public schools and therefore is only part of the curriculum accessible to student populations attending private schools. For these students English provides the same additive bilingualism it offered their parents. Societal acknowledgement of the status of the many languages spoken in Guatemala is the first step to begin to promote additive bilingualism and to empower the indigenous to stay in school.

An empowering educational system encourages its teachers to make choices, prepares them to differentiate instruction, and gives them books to use to teach in whatever country they reside. Guatemalan teachers proclaim their helplessness and thus a plan of action

that remedies this situation is warranted. Teachers' voiced frustrations evidence the many ways their self-esteem is not nurtured. It is not surprising the teachers feel as they do if indeed the Ministry of Education reworks its goals every time the balance of power is changed after an election. Teachers need to be included in decision-making so they will experience ownership of the schoolhouse. Most importantly, reforms in the teacher preparation curricula need to focus on second language pedagogy. Teacher training in bilingual methodology that is delivered and practiced in indigenous languages would promote tolerance and cultural pluralism in a multicultural multilingual country that has not effectively considered the cultural capital of the indigenous in the curriculum.

For educational reformers to actively promote literacy in the Guatemalan schoolhouse, several changes must be put into place. First, teachers and students need books for every child and schools need libraries. Secondly, the Ministry of Education must develop and articulate a curriculum with the ongoing input of K-12 teachers. Teachers who are part of the reform movement will know how to implement changes. Thirdly, the teacher preparation curriculum needs to consider the role of culture in learning and validate the lives of indigenous and nonindigenous people. Although currently the Ministry is stating the curriculum focuses on values, there is little to suggest that this is true. In reference to teaching methodology, dialogic exchanges in classrooms would lead students to experience participation in the school's society and to begin to envision freedom from oppressive societal forces. Methods such as the language experience approach could be a way of using the students' experiences to facilitate new forms of expression and thought. In a country where basic school supplies are limited, anything that the schoolhouse can do that will help students reach beyond the limits of socioeconomic borders is a step forward.

Implications for Teachers of Guatemalan Immigrants

In light of what this work substantiates, implications for working with Guatemalan immigrants to the United States need to begin with the awareness that becoming a student in this country can pose many surprises for these learners. Schools here have books, libraries, cafeterias, toilets that flush, and good ventilation. Teachers ask students to work in small groups and give reports. Students do not copy from textbooks and are asked their opinions. ELLs from Guatemala are confused with the U.S. schoolhouse because it is so different from the world of schooling in their country. Although at first glance this mismatch might not promise conflicts, the immigrant child needs time to grasp the different expectations of schooling in the United States. It is my hope that educators who read this article will be better prepared to work with Guatemalan learners. Teachers who understand the implicit and explicit cultures of these two school systems can form the bridge that these learners need to succeed.

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Mediating the Educational Experience for English Language Learners of Moroccan Descent

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In this article, the authors examine cultural and historical aspects of Moroccan identity. They provide information that can answer administrators' and teachers' questions about students of Moroccan descent.

When teachers work with either immigrant children from other countries or heritage speakers of other languages, it is crucial they first develop an awareness of what the cultural norms are for their populations of students (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999; Au, 2009). This knowledge helps learners negotiate the mismatch that often occurs when the home environment espouses one type of behavior as proper and the school another. Differences may be subtle yet they can contribute to challenges in communication and affect the student's motivation. One assumption often made is that individuals from one part of the world are all the same. This occurs with many immigrant groups in the United States and most especially with students from Latin America and Arab nations. In serving the many Spanish speaking immigrant populations, it is important to remember there are also immigrants like those from islands within the Caribbean Sea and from South American countries who speak languages other than Spanish.One type of mismatch occurs for English language learners (ELLs) when they perceive that teachers consider their ethnicity unimportant because they focus on students whose home language is Spanish. Similarly, issues arise for Muslim and Arabic speaking ELLs due to their teachers' lack of familiarity with the nature and variety of religious practices and cultural norms. This article addresses Moroccan attitudes about and experiences with schooling as a vehicle to highlight sources of mismatch for ELLs from Arab and North African nations in U. S. schools. Many of the issues discussed often go unacknowledged yet are at the root of miscommunication (Andriessen, Phalet & Lens, 2006).

The 2000 U. S. Census (2001) classifies Moroccans as part of the Arabic language speaker group. However, Moroccans comprise a small minority, about 39,000, of the 1.2 million Arabic speaker population in the United States. While they do form part of the greater Muslim community, they have a unique worldview because Berber identity has influenced worship, belief, and language use; geography has impacted Moroccan history and the relationship it has to the West; and the legal/political system continues to be largely shaped by the decisions of the monarchy. These aspects of identity act on all Moroccans but a crucial difference is that Moroccans in this country are likely to be better educated than the average person living in Morocco. A little over half of the U. S. Moroccan population (22,368) holds high school diplomas, and over one quarter (8,586) has completed four year degrees or higher (U. S. Census Bureau, 2001). This is in great contrast to the educational background of the overall Moroccan population as will be discussed later. The largest concentration of Moroccans in the United States reside in the Orlando, Florida, area, followed

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by those in Michigan (Detroit) and Chicago, Illinois (U. S. Census Bureau, 2001). However, the population is well dispersed throughout the United States, and Moroccan students may be found in urban centers as well as suburbs and small towns.

In this article we explore general trends in behavior and beliefs and are not providing a recipe for the treatment of all Moroccans. What this sharing should accomplish is to encourage the reader to investigate and seek to understand the type of information and issues that may be important when looking at any diverse student. The interaction of religion, culture, geography, personal experience, and social status all combine to determine an individual's identity. Therefore, each student and his or her family should be seen as unique and as the first and foremost consideration to scaffolding learning experiences whether at K-12 or in college. The information included here will offer teachers and service providers insights about the actions of students and serve to discourage school personnel from dismissing or negatively judging student and family behaviors simply because they may not coincide with the values of the mainstream Caucasian English dominant majority cultures in schools.

Connecting to Moroccans and Understanding Their Cultural Practices

The following sections of this article offer suggestions that will be helpful to teachers in establishing positive relationships with Moroccan students and their parents. They are guidelines to inform those not familiar with populations from this part of the world. The first and most important challenge is to make no generalizations about Moroccans simply because they live in an Arabic speaking country. What is offensive in other Muslim countries may not be questionable behavior in Morocco. For example, Moroccans are not offended when someone sits across the table from them and shows the bottom of the shoe, yet this is a serious offense in other parts of the Arab world.

A simple nod of welcome is sufficient to demonstrate politeness when parents come to school.

There may be a tendency to group Moroccans with students from Pakistan or Iran, yet although ELLs from these countries may also be Muslim (practitioners of Islam, a monotheistic religion that recognizes Jewish and Christian prophets in addition to Mohamed), they are likely to have very different cultural norms as a result of identification with different tribal and cultural groups, unique characteristics of geography and history and differing interpretations of religious texts.

Cultural and Historical Aspects of Moroccan Identity

The specific make-up of cultural groups within a country shapes many behaviors of that region. This is no different in the Muslim world; the vast differences in cultural heritage and in the present day cultural dynamic play a large role in how daily life is lived and in how schooling is approached in each region. Because Muslim majority countries include countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, the negotiation between religion and culture is always in play. No event or belief can be seen as purely cultural or purely religious. In Morocco, this is true because, historically, the country was inhabited by a nonArab tribal group, the Berbers. In North Africa there are several different subgroups within this group and Morocco attributes its Berber population mainly to three of those subgroups. Berbers had a well-established culture long before Islam, including language, religion, and cultural practices. In the late 600s A.D., Arabs came to Morocco to expand their territories and spread the word of Islam, and many Berbers converted to this new religion. Over time, Berbers established their own dynasties and continued the expansion of the Islamic Caliphates into Spain in the late 600s A.D. (Khadra Jayyusi, 1997). The Caliphates remained in Spain for about 800 years, occupying a large part of what is now Spanish territory including Andalucía, Córdoba, and Toledo. Much of this time was a period of enlightenment in the Arab world as opposed to the period of the dark ages being experienced by Europe. Arab culture and Islam flourished, giving way to a rich cultural, linguistic, and scientific

renaissance enriched by the interaction of multiple cultural influences (Khadra Jayyusi, 1997). Over time, Catholic Spaniards began to strengthen and recapture parts of Spain, and by 1492, the last Muslim-held territory was surrendered. Jews were expelled from Spain that same year, and Muslims were increasingly marginalized and forced to convert to Christianity. They were finally expelled in the early 1600s (Pereira-Muro, 2003). Many of the Jews and Muslims who fled Spain were welcomed by Morocco, and sizeable Sephardic Jewish (many of whom have since emigrated to Israel, Europe, and the United States) and Andalusi Muslim communities contributed to the cultural, linguistic, and educational merits of Moroccan life. The Arabs living in Spain spoke a language that fused Arabic with Spanish to an extent, creating a large influence of Spanish in what has become Moroccan Arabic (De Toledo, 1941; Mondejar, 1991; Sayahi, 2005). It is not difficult to speculate that the early contact between North Africans and Europe, even predating Islam, contributes to a particular feeling of openness and equality to the West that is unique. This openness is tempered by subsequent invasions of parts of Morocco by Spain and France in1859. A formal French colonial period in Morocco began in 1912 and lasted until 1956. During this time, schooling was in French. Once control was returned to the Moroccan monarchy, Arabic was aggressively instituted as the national language and language of school (Marley, 2004). This created a problem because most educated people, including teachers, had been educated in French and in some cases, in France. Content teachers were not equipped to teach students content or language in Arabic (Ennaji, 2005). Furthermore, the most common home languages, Berber and Moroccan Arabic, were not used in school for instruction at all (Marley, 2004). At present, Morocco's King Mohamed VI has called for a wide array of educational reforms beginning in 2000 (COSEF, 2000). This complex interaction of East and West in Morocco accounts for the complicated cultural schema in which Moroccans as a group identify strongly with their traditional cultural and religious influences as a matter of pride in their identity yet acknowledge that economic and political progress depend on interaction with the West (Berdouzi, 2000). The need to synthesize any number of values from both East and West to form emerging cultural, professional and financial identities is ever-present in the Moroccan collective consciousness.

Moroccan law is a combination of Islamic law and French and Spanish civil law systems.

Religion in Moroccan Identity

One of the single most important influences on Moroccan identity is that of Islam. The way that it has been integrated into cultural practices is distinct from what has taken place anywhere else. The Moroccan population includes people who range on a scale from fundamentalist to devout to moderate to liberal to secular. Moroccan law is a combination of Islamic law and French and Spanish civil law systems (World Fact Book, 2008). Since many of us are more familiar with European beliefs and practices and thus may feel that the moderate to liberal to secular part of the spectrum applies more to American beliefs, defining this is important. All religiousgroups within the broad generalization of Muslims have this spectrum; in other words, group identification as discussed in the section below is not necessarily an indicator of the importance or depth an individual places on his or her religion. While Westerners may view certain behaviors as conservative, those same behaviors may be seen as moderate behaviors in other areas of the world. Activities like praying five times a day, fasting during Ramadan, and not consuming pork or alcohol, while not always followed, are generally desirable standards of behavior for Muslims. Considering that there is a lot of common ground between Muslims around the world and that there is a spectrum of behavior from conservative to liberal, there are some major group divisions to identify.

Current Religious Practices that Affect Educational Experiences

During the month of Ramadan, a religious

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Mother and children in a country of traditions.

observance that lasts approximately one month, older students will fast all day beginning at sunrise and not eat or drink until evening. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam and is considered obligatory for Muslims who have reached puberty. Ramadan was the month in the Islamic calendar during which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Mohamed. Muslims believe fasting offers an opportunity to practice restraint, good conduct, and gratefulness, as well as to empathize with the poor (Hassaballah & Helminski, 2006). In some cases, even younger students choose to fast with their families, although it is not obligatory for children. There are some conditions under which one is not required to fast such as menstruation, travel, and mental or physical illness. Students may become tired and inattentive towards the end of the day yet feel compelled to celebrate this special time with their religious community. One of the most special foods for Ramadan is dates. Many Muslims use this food to break the fast. The offering of a date to a Muslim during Ramadan is a special touch that shows sensitivity and acceptance.

Many Moroccan women choose not to wear a headscarf or hijab.

At the end of Ramadan is Eid-ul-Fitr, a celebration after the fast ends that is one of the two most important holidays for Muslims. Work and school are usually not attended on those days except in rare circumstances. Because the Islamic calendar consists of 12 months, 29 or 30 days in length, the date is approximately 11 days earlier every year. The announcement of Eid, for some, depends on the moon sighting, and on calculations for others, Eid's date is not fixed ahead of time and is instead announced the night before. This can be confusing for teachers when students say they will be absent and then the date change and the student shows up at school. On the day of Eid, a morning prayer is offered at the mosque and families spend the day visiting, eating and doing special activities and children receive gifts or money.

Diet

Pork is a food forbidden by the religion except in the case of extreme hunger or malnutrition

when other food is not available. In order to comply with this requirement, the majority of Muslims do not knowingly eat pork. Some avoid pork meat only, but many Muslims avoid all products that might contain pork byproducts such as gelatins, lard, and rennet (enzymes from animal intestines) like Jello, pudding, gummy candies, marshmallows, pie crust, and cheeses. In addition, some Muslims eat only meat from animals slaughtered in a special way. Most Muslim children know that they are forbidden to eat pork. Parents should remember to discuss dietary restrictions with their children's teachers when children are very young.

Significance of the Left and Right Hand

In many parts of the Muslim world, use of the the left hand is discouraged for some activities. In the case of Moroccans, the use of the right hand relates to religious beliefs and the left hand does not carry the connotation of being dirty. There is some religious doctrine that when taken literally means that the devil eats with his left hand. Over time, this has become a custom that many do not question. Some believe that using the left hand for anything good is undesirable but eating with the left hand is strongly discouraged and considered rude. Writing with the left hand can be acceptable but is also discouraged. If teachers notice a Moroccan child writing with the left hand, they should discuss this with the parents and come to an agreement about what will be done at home so that teachers and parents can work together on either right or left handed writing development.

Gender in Muslim Society

While many Moroccan women choose not to wear a headscarf or *hijab*, still many other Moroccan young women and women do wear it to show pride in their culture and religion. This is usually a personal choice based on religious beliefs, culture, and personal conviction and does not mean that they are uneducated, unfriendly, abused, or forced to wear the scarf by fathers or husbands. The headscarf is an expression of the highly valued quality of modesty within the Islamic religion and Moroccan culture. In some cases, Muslim women see their use of the scarf as a way to be appreciated for their inner beauty and intelligence rather than their physical attributes (Blake, 2009). Asking young women to remove headscarves can be traumatic because of their belief that the hair and chest are private. (Associated Press, 2007)

Rote memorization in the Muslim world may derive its high value from the Islamic practice of memorizing the Qur'an….If reprimanded by their teachers for their reluctance to question or to express an opinion in class, Moroccan children may not understand why they are not pleasing their teachers.

Similarly, young women who do not wear headscarves may have difficulty wearing swimming suits because of their perception that swimming suits show parts of the body that should be covered. It may be a good idea for teachers to discuss swimming units at school with parents in order to reach a compromise acceptable to everyone. For example, Islamic swimming suits that cover the arms, legs, and hair are available for purchase online, and schools with large Muslim populations might suggest that students purchase these. On the other hand, P.E. teachers might choose to hold swimming classes in a women-only environment before, during or after the school day. Men are also required to cover themselves from the navel to the knee and may feel very uncomfortable if asked to wear certain swimsuit styles. In addition, young men may feel uncomfortable with coed swimming because of their belief that they have the obligation to "avert their gaze" (Qur'an 24:30) from women as a sign of respect (Mattson, 2008).

The Education of Women

It is a common misconception that Islam discourages the education of women. In fact,

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it is written in the Qur'an that all Muslims, male and female, have the obligation to seek knowledge (Qur'an 20: 114, 35: 28, 39: 9). While there are Muslim groups and even governments that attempt to deny women and girls the right to an education, King Mohamed IV recently passed a number of educational and family reforms that promote women and girls' access to education. This was not difficult to accomplish because Moroccan religious beliefs generally support equal access of boys and girls to education (Brush, Heyman, Provasniak, Fanning, Lent, & De Wilde, 2002). However, women of a low socioeconomic status (SES) living in rural areas may not experience the same encouragement as their upper SES counterparts living in cities and suburban areas (Sadiqi, 2003). In rural areas women are expected to marry and have children and the perception is that education is not going to benefit the family. If a family lives a long distance from the school, families worry about safety and propriety on the way or if transportation is limited, for example if the family owns a bicycle or motorbike, they may prefer to send sons to school. The Moroccan government as well as community and international organizations have done much to change the disparity between girls' and boys' education.

Working with Moroccan Parents and Students

In every cultural environment, there are many expectations that parents and teachers have of each other. These expectations are defined by all of the cultural factors discussed above. Many times, these practices are so ingrained they are not done on a conscious level. How parents interact with the teacher can vary from participatory to passive depending on the origin and social class of the parent. In the Moroccan context, it is rare that parents speak with teachers about their children and, even more rare, that they visit the school for an activity, much less participate in those activities. So, an activity as simple as talking with a child's teacher may be intimidating.

General Parent Behavior

Moroccan parent behavior will generally depend on their socioeconomic status (SES), with higher SES parents being more comfortable and active in their child's schooling. Lower SES parents may be intimidated by the school environment and may not have had much schooling experience. The religious practices discussed above will have a great impact on parent behavior. Because of the strong influence of Western values on Morocco as a historical condition, some Moroccan parents already live a very Western lifestyle and, as a consequence, so do their children. Others are deeply traditional, are sensitive to the process of integration their child is going through, and may resist the transformative influences of the U. S. cultural environment. Many parents will be a mixture of both.

Parent Visits and Greetings

When parents visit the school, the teacher should feel free to ask about the family but male teachers should avoid conversations with a mother unless the focus is on her maternal role. Casual touching between men and women is discouraged in most circles, especially if a woman is wearing a headscarf, so shaking the hand of a parent of the opposite sex should be approached with caution and kissing on the cheek is inappropriate between genders. On the other hand, a liberal to moderate Moroccan may be offended if they extend their hand and the teacher does not reciprocate. A simple nod of welcome is sufficient to demonstrate politeness when parents come to school. Women do shake each others' hands and kiss once on each cheek. While not a part of American custom, this may be something a Moroccan mother will do out of habit or politeness when the teacher is female.

Hospitality

Arab and Berber traditional cultures pride themselves on great hospitality. An invitation or a visit to a Moroccan home is usually taken very seriously by the host, regardless of the gender. A drink and sometimes food will be served and the host may feel frustrated if the visitor does not partake. It is advisable to accept at least a drink if offered in an Arab or Moroccan home. If an invitation to visit must be refused, a legitimate reason should be given. Even in

moderate to liberal households, it is inappropriate for a teacher to be alone on a home visit with someone or a group of the opposite sex unless absolutely necessary. Although Islam strongly discourages people being late, many Moroccans are known for being flexible with time.

Impact of Cultural Background on Schooling

Moroccan parents will be more likely to call the school with questions or attend parent teacher conferences if the teacher explicitly requests their inquiry and involvement and is initially assertive in giving feedback and providing invitations to visit the school and discuss their child. Moroccan parents may think their involvement in schooling will be seen as disrespectful and do not want to demonstrate presumptuous behavior. They may never have been asked to engage in a conversation about their child with a teacher. For many Moroccans, passive involvement like attending an open house or bringing food for a class party may be more comfortable until they observe what type of contributions made by parents are welcome.

Religion anchors society.

Manners at the Schoolhouse

Children have their own needs at school that relate to what they were taught is and is not proper behavior at home and school. Typically children do not engage in small group work. Learners often do not work in groups of both genders. Instruction is generally teacher led. Teachers are considered authority figures meriting great respect. Students therefore listen politely and do not question the teacher as this would suggest that the instructor is not a knowledgeable professional. They do not call their teachers by their first name or ask personal questions. Critical thinking type of questions may have to be scaffolded carefully so that students can gain the ability to respond to them (Jan, 2006).

It is a common misconception that Islam discourages the education of women.

Rote Memorization in Instruction

Rote memorization in the Muslim world may derive its high value from the Islamic practice of memorizing the Qur'an as a way to preserve it exactly in its original form and challenge those who would change it for their own benefit. This results in a different perception of the role of memorizing (Henzell-Thomas, 2002). If a child is suspected of copying another student's paper, or of simply answering with the words of the text, it may be necessary to explain your expectations about original work to the student before accusing the child of being dishonest. A respectful departure from the heavy focus on memorization will benefit the student without creating an internal conflict about one of his/her most valued religious customs.

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Moroccan children may experience surprise and not comprehend many of the tasks they are asked to perform in schools that instruct through methodologies differing from what they are used to. If reprimanded by their teachers for their reluctance to question or to express an opinion in class, Moroccan children may not understand why they are not pleasing their teachers. Without question, learners of Moroccan descent along with all ELLs need to be enrolled in the type of critical pedagogy that research has demonstrated leads to higher levels of comprehension and interpretation. However, this pedagogy must be promoted cautiously to avoid confusing ELLs who have experienced a different type of schooling as the norm. The practice of shadowing another student who is successful with the workings of the classroom for a day or two might be especially helpful for the student. The teacher can prepare a checklist of items the shadowed student should be sure and point out.

Dealing with Failures at School

It is imperative to be delicate when discussing negative school performance with parents. Failures at school can be seen as a sign of misbehavior or laziness and reflect poorly on the family honor, a very important aspect of Moroccan culture. Since corporal punishment is acceptable at Moroccan schools, one possible parent response is to physically punish students at home. Parents may feel that there is an expectation of disciplining their children in this way. While it is important not to assume that all or even most Moroccan parents use corporal punishment, teachers can avoid feeding into that chain of events by discussing the school or classroom behavior management strategy with parents. In Morocco, when parents do perceive their children as having learning problems or when they recognize the child as being exceptionally bright, it is possible that students may receive private tutoring from a trusted community member. However, school-based special education supports are few and far between (PIRLS, 2006). In addition, since parents do not necessarily acknowledge that low achievement may come from a legitimate learning problem which must be solved by particular educational measures, it is important to carefully explain suspected learning problems. It may also be a good idea to come to an agreement about what the next step is in solving the problem so that parents are given some tools and know how to proceed. This will reduce parent anxiety about student achievement and offer concrete alternatives to punishment as a means to support their child's success in school. Offering workshops for parents in which strategies are offered and school behavior management norms are explicitly discussed will give parents much needed information about what schools approve of and expect in terms of behavior management.

Each student and his or her family should be seen as unique and as the first and foremost consideration to scaffolding learning experiences.

Language Status

Language can be a significant educational issue for Moroccans. There are different language groups in Morocco and people have a variety of opinions about which languages are valuable. The majority (about 65%) speaks Moroccan Arabic (MA) as a first oral language. Moroccan Arabic is a dialect of Standard Arabic that incorporates vocabulary and sentence structure from French, Spanish, and Berber (the indigenous language of Morocco). Students are taught to read in Standard Arabic. A large minority (about 35%) of the population speaks Berber even though about 60% are ethnically Berber. Berber has not traditionally been a written language in Morocco and in the past was seen as a language of the poor. In addition to knowledge of Moroccan Arabic, Berber, and Standard Arabic, most students begin to learn French around age 8 or 9 (Marley, 2004). It may be helpful to identify your student's language group(s). If students already have familiarity with the French alphabet, this may facilitate their accommodation to the English alphabet since it is the same writing system, whereas students who are only familiar with the Arabic alphabet may struggle more and need different services.

The Arabic Script

There are some key differences between Roman script (used for English) and Arabic script (used for Standard Arabic, its dialects, and for Urdu, the language of Pakistan). First of all, short vowels are not written as letters. Instead, a series of accent-type (*diacritic*) marks noting the a,e,i,o,u uniquely are used above or below the letter preceding the vowel sound. For example, a word like general would be written as *g'n'r^l*. This can have a strong impact on how Arabic speakers develop spelling skills. Special attention should be paid to vowel use with Arabic speakers. Second, most Arabic words consist of only root consonants and short vowels. Roots usually consist of three or four consonants. The Arabic root, or *masdar*, determines the core meaning of a word. For example, the sequence of the three consonants s/f/r in this order carries the meaning of the word travel. A word which includes that sequence of letters is likely to have something to do with travelling. In this example, journey-**s**a**f**a**r** (n), he travels-yu**s**a**f**i**r**, traveller-mu**s**a**f**i**r**, embassy-**s**i**f**a**r**a all are derived from one root when the consonants conserve this order (Abu-Rabia & Seigel, 2002; Abu-Rabia, 1998). Third, fluent readers in Arabic develop automatic word recognition skills that are based on letter-sound correspondences. As a result of this type of vowel notation system, they may be more able to decipher the sentence context (e.g., structure *or syntax* and meaning *or semantics*) information necessary to achieve comprehension. Once students are more skilled, around the 8th grade, readers begin to drop vowel markings and use the root and the sentence context as a way to infer meaning. Taking this into account, there is reason to believe that Arabic readers may have a heightened ability to use context to determine meaning (Fender, 2008). For older ELLs, this skill may be helpful in reading comprehension of nonnative languages.

Make no generalizations about Moroccans simply because they live in an Arabic speaking country.

In short, there are features of the Arabic alphabet that change how Arabic speakers approach reading development. Teachers should keep in mind that Arabic speaking students need scaffolding when it comes to vowel use and spelling and older students may benefit from activities that extend learning through the familiar activity of using context to decode meaning.

Literacy in Morocco

As with all student populations, the literacy level of parents and students may have a great impact on how students perform in school. There are opportunities in Morocco for students to reach very high levels of education and the U. S. population of Moroccan families tends to have a higher level of education than the average in Morocco. In the United States, approximately 85% have high school diplomas and 35% have college degrees (U. S. Census, 2001). Nevertheless, students should be carefully screened in their native language for any literacy problems. Morocco has a 40% illiteracy rate, which tends to be higher in native Berber speakers who come from rural areas. The Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 data shows that in Morocco 76% of 4th graders had fewer than 10 books at home and another 16% had only 11-25. In addition, in Morocco 59% of parents of Moroccan 4th graders did not complete upper secondary, the equivalent of a three-year high school education, and another 20% did not finish lower secondary, the equivalent of 5th-8th grades (PIRLS, 2006). While advances have been made in the education of girls from rural areas, the female, rural, Berber population is most likely to be struggling with literacy (Ezzaki, 2007; Sadiqi, 2003). Indicators of possible literacy problems may be region of origin, native language, and socioeconomic status. On the other hand, students whose parents come from upper socioeconomic status and have a college education are likely to have a good level of education themselves and are also likely to have a higher proficiency in Arabic as well as French and even English, which

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Berber Raiss musicians play in the Ourika Valley near Marrakesh.

should contribute to quicker transfer of reading abilities.

Socioeconomic Status and Schooling

A family's financial position has a great impact on whether Moroccan children have access to school. It can be helpful to teachers to have this information when making informal assessments about the educational background of Moroccan ELLs. Learners from low SES may have had no access or very limited access to schooling. This population of Moroccan immigrants is more concentrated in European countries like France, Netherlands and Spain but can also present itself in the United States. Moroccan ELLS of high SES may have been in bilingual private schools and have high levels of education and background knowledge that contribute to ready success (Marley, 2004).

Conclusions

The complex panorama of Moroccan beliefs, practices and experiences affects schooling uniquely. This article discusses Morocco as a microcosm of unforeseen influences on the educational environment when students come to school as minorities from foreign countries. Striking a proper balance between the U. S. context and the Moroccan and/or Muslimbelief system is important to school children because it provides improved motivation, availability of more adequate learning supports, and integration of parents and teachers as partners to achieve the best possible education for this minority population of students. This article offers some suggestions to increase understanding of the backgrounds of Moroccan students. Although it is not a good idea to generalize this information too broadly, this article is intended to offer answers to questions that teachers and administrators may have about students. ■

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Mayra C. Daniel, guest editor for this issue of Thresholds, was born in the island of Cuba. When she came to the United States with her family at age 10 to escape communism, she felt welcome yet experienced some of the cultural mismatch addressed in this article.

Preparing Bilingual Teachers Along the U. S./Mexican Border: Including the Voices of English Language Learners

Alcione N. Ostorga - The University of Texas Pan–American

This article presents the Curricular Assessment for Successful Student Outcomes (CASSO) research project and discusses some preliminary findings based on data collected thus far. The research examines preliminary findings on the outcomes of a modified version of our university based bilingual teacher preparation program. This program is unique in the national context because its students are overwhelmingly working-class Latinos, many of them former English Language Learners (ELLs), who are products of the local PK-12 school system that they will eventually serve. Nevertheless, although this research is highly context-based, the preliminary findings reveal implications for programs across the United States.

The accountability movement is the result of a series of policies and events beginning with the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, a report written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. More recently, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), currently referred to as the No Child left Behind Act (NCLB), has generally contributed to the standardization of curriculum and educational practices at all levels, closing the space where teaching professionals can As they enter their first teaching job, new teachers enter a space of conflicting messages. exercise their right to academic freedom and the decision making process necessary to implement effective practices (Menken, 2008; Palmer & Lynch, 2008). Professional development has generally focused on ready-made scripted instructional approaches that leave little space for teachers to tailor instruction to their students within the specific context of their classrooms. This lack of professional autonomy is most felt by teachers who work with high needs, low socioeconomic status (SES) populations and most specifically, English language learners (ELLs). Although many university based teacher preparation programs continue to promote teacher professional development based on the current knowledge of learning, as informed by cognitive researchers, the realities of high needs schools, where large populations of students come from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, is in essence, contradictory to the professional knowledge presented at these programs.

As they enter their first teaching job, new teachers enter a space of conflicting messages. Consequently, the gap between theory and practice remains unchanged, and beginning teachers are unprepared to address the learning gaps in their students. Such is the case in the schools at the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), the southernmost region of Texas along the U. S./Mexican border. Amid the contradictory educational environment in the RGV, a group of university based teacher educators began the Curricular Assessment for Successful Student Outcomes (CASSO) project, which was created as the result of a five-year research grant received from the U. S. Department of

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Education. The CASSO project's primary objective is to improve bilingual teacher preparation in the Rio Grande Valley region of South Texas, through curricular modifications that address the specific needs of the region. Although this research is highly context based, we believe that our contribution to the field of bilingual teacher preparation has implications for programs across the United States. In particular, the voices of the preservice teachers in this study bring an important message to those who lead our nation's public schools.

The CASSO research project provides a space where ELLs who are the products of our school practices can enter the dialogue.

Our Context

The Rio Grande Valley (RGV) region comprises four counties along the northern margin of the Rio Grande, bordering Mexico, with a large population of Latinos/as, ranging from 86 to 97% in each county. Our university, one of two state universities in the region, serves over 17,000 students per year, with 89% of them being Latinos/as of Mexican origin or descent.

Like other communities with large populations of Latinos/as, in the RGV people are mostly of lower socioeconomic status, experiencing ethnic segregation and linguistic isolation. However, a major difference in the communities' schools is that their bilingual teachers are mostly teaching in their own communities. They are thoroughly familiar with the issues encountered by the children in their classroom. Though advantageous, this familiarity is also a drawback. A large portion of the area's bilingual teachers are graduates of our university's teacher preparation program, the largest producer of bilingual education in the state of Texas, and the second in the nation. Most of our teacher candidates have graduated from the areas' weak K-12 educational systems. Many were ELLs who experienced the poor quality of bilingual education of the area, namely English immersion or transitional early exit programs.

The local educational districts have been known as areas of low academic achievement. This means that the academic development of the areas' prospective teachers has been affected by these ineffective practices and led them to partial loss of their first language while hampering the development of English as a second language. Most of the students who enter our bilingual teacher preparation program graduated from the local schools and go back to teach in the same communities where they were once students. This self-perpetuating cycle is difficult to break. Though this picture seems bleak, there are many positives. The preservice teachers in the university's bilingual teacher preparation program have demonstrated resilience and a strong commitment to making a difference for the children in the local schools. Going to college takes place while they raise their own children, and many have babies while attending college. Some also work to help support their families. Despite the many obstacles faced by these students, they succeed in graduating from the program and becoming certified to teach in the state of Texas. To become certified as bilingual teachers, these teacher candidates must pass three exams and many of them only accomplish this after two or three attempts.

Theoretical and Situational Factors

While thinking about the best way to address our students' needs, the CASSO project faculty also considered the context of the local schools as the places where our students will practice teaching and apply the concepts learned in the course work. There is a dissonance between the educational ideology of the university's bilingual teacher preparation program and that of the local schools. Our program is founded on a constructivist theoretical framework that values student centered instruction, integrated thematic units, a balanced approach to reading instruction, and additive bilingualism/biliteracy development.

The constructivist theoretical framework we use in our teacher preparation program views learning as the process of making meaning of the world. In this perspective, it is importantnot only to learn basic facts or procedures, out also to develop an

Children engaged in learning.

understanding of how these facts and procedures are organized in the world, how all the parts of knowledge fit together, and how new knowledge can be applied to solve real world problems. To teach in this manner, student centered approaches are used. This means that the teacher takes the students' needs and interests into consideration when planning instruction that will address the mandated curriculum standards. For example, in planning to teach elements of reading comprehension such as the main idea or the understanding of the concept of cause and effect, a student centered approach will consider the students' interests and cultures in the choice of reading material, rather than the story in the basal reading series, which may be totally irrelevant to their lives. A balanced approach to reading instruction not only includes instruction on the decoding of words, but also includes the teaching of all language arts skills within the context of real language activities for real purposes.

In Texas, early exit means that ELLs are in mainstream classrooms as early as third grade.

The illustration presented here typifies an example of student centered, constructivist instructional methods. The preservice teacher discusses with the children in a summer readingprogram and develops a concept map of family traditions. The concept map of family traditions, (in Spanish) leads to the a thematic unit where the students engage in reading various books in both English and Spanish that illustrate the many family traditions, some of which, they are familiar with. This unit evolved from a unit on Chinese culture, a student chosen topic. Eventually the unit culminated in a comparative analysis of family traditions in both China and Mexico. Since the original topic evolved from the children's curiosity, they were highly engaged and learned a great deal about the two cultures. Many books were read thatprovided the material for discussions on the skills of reading comprehension; vocabulary; ways to analyze, compare, and contrast; and analysis of different genres of literature. Students also engaged in research to find information on cultural traditions that led to a culminating project where they presented their findings in a large informational poster. These activities in the summer reading program were in high contrast with activities that normally take place in school during the academic year. The preservice teachers were surprised with the enthusiasm they received from the students, who went beyond the expected outcomes of this unit. One intern commented on how the children did not want to stop writing about what they learned.

In addition to preparing teachers to use instructional approaches that are constructivist, our teacher preparation program prepares bilingual teachers who will facilitate the acquisition of English as a second language in an additive manner. This means that these future teachers will be prepared to facilitate the development of English as second language

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without promoting the loss of the first language because research has shown that for bilingual learners, the first language supports and strengthens the development of the second language.

This ideology of instruction is in dissonance with the skills based instructional approach of most classrooms in our local schools, which are similar to many schools that serve ELLs across the United States (Cummins, as cited in Lange, 2007). Instead of student centered, constructive instructional methods, these schools focus on a teacher centered, behaviorist approach with minimalist skills-based instruction and an emphasis on transition to monolingual English only classrooms. The pressures placed on teachers to follow scripted curricula lead to practices that are detrimental to the students' academic and linguistic development and fail to reduce the achievement gap. According to Ravitch (2010), once an ardent proponentof standardized testing, despite the apparent school improvement based on testing data provided by the different states in the United States, the rise in scores on state assessments is in fact the result of a "dumbing" down of proficiency standards in order to meet the adequate yearly progress mandated by NCLB. A close look at teaching practices, especially in high needs schools; reveals the minimalist approach to instruction and the emphasis on test preparation. Among the many school practices that are detrimental to academicachievement are those practiced in early exit, transitional bilingual programs.

Early exit, transitional bilingual programs aim to prepare ELLs in elementary schools for mainstream classrooms as quickly as possible. In Texas, early exit means that ELLs are in mainstream classrooms as early as third grade, or even sooner, if testing scores are sufficiently high. At first glance this goal seems laudable since early exit from the bilingual classroom may suggest that instruction was efficient enough to promote the development of English as a second language to what is termed the intermediate level. However, the result is that ELLS are placed in monolingual English settings with minimal or no linguistic support in their first language. They may appear to have the necessary skills to survive academically in this setting, but in reality, they exhibit the development of Basic Interpersonal Communication skills (BICS) (Cummins, 1981), while lacking in Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

The pressures placed on teachers to follow scripted curricula lead to practices that are detrimental to the students' academic and linguistic development and fail to reduce the achievement gap.

BICS refers to language used in everyday conversation. These skills develop quickly, normally in about one to three years while immersed in the target language. Young children have the added distinction that they can quickly develop the pronunciation and discourse of a native speaker; they "lose their accent." However, these young children have not yet developed grade appropriate CALP, which are the cognitive and academic language skills necessary to comprehend academic content. Examples of BICS include the ability to follow general directions given by the teacher such as, "Take out your writing notebooks," or "Use a pencil instead of a pen." Other examples of BICS include social conversations where students talk about their favorite games with their peers. In the classroom, they may be able to copy answers to questions or decode text without actually understanding what was read. Their abilities in these simple tasks often translate into the erroneous assumption that they are ready for a monolingual English class. Yet they are not yet ready for academic work in English at their grade level because CALP is still in the developmental process. This means that although they are fluent in social language, they lack the adequate academic vocabulary to comprehend lessons in the second language. Examples of CALP may be the skills necessary to engage in academic discussions at their grade level, to follow directions needed to complete mathematics word problems or other academic tasks, or the ability to write an essay

with supporting evidence for a point of view.

Third grade is the first grade where high stakes testing occurs, and it is also the first grade where reading texts are of a higher cognitive level, with vocabulary that is quite abstract when compared to that of the earlier grades. These texts require age appropriate CALP in the target language, which normally take five to seven years to develop fully. Clearly, an early exit from bilingual programs does not provide the linguistic support necessary in the first language to foster this required level of language proficiency. As result, a great deal of discourse between teacher and ELL students revolves around fostering linguistic understanding of content rather than concept building, leading to instruction that lags behind when compared to instruction of normal grade level content. Under the pressure of high stakes tests, the curriculum is reduced to low level skills and preparation for the standardized test (Palmer & Lynch, 2008), which usually means an endless number of repetitive worksheets that simulate the text used in the required tests, but a lack of the complexities of a rigorous curriculum that prepares the child for success in adulthood. Furthermore, transitional bilingual programs are subtractive in that they promote the loss of the first language (Garcia, 2009). Research has demonstrated that maintaining the first language and promoting biliteracylead to higher levels of academic success and promote superior linguistic development of the second language (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

In addition to promoting academic failureand hindering intellectual growth, early exit transitional programs also affect emotional development since the devaluating of the first language in early exit programs has negative implications to the cultural and linguistic identity formation of ELLs. According to Cummins (2001), when the students' identities are devalued in the classroom, they mentally withdraw from participating in school activities; in essence, they cease to engage in learning because they feel unempowered.

The knowledge base about elements that impact the development of ELLs in our local communities lay at the foundation of the work of CASSO researchers from two perspectives:

1. On the one hand, the project's main purpose is to develop a teacher preparation program that will prepare effective bilingual teachers so their students can be academically successful.
2. While maintaining this primary purpose, as faculty in the program, the project researchers also have to counteract the negative effects of subtractive English immersion and transitional bilingual education on the linguistic and affective development of the teacher candidates that enter our program.

The CASSO Project

With the purpose of modifying the bilingual teacher preparation curriculum based on empirical data, the CASSO faculty research team began an analysis of the existing program for bilingual teachers. A major part of the initial data analysis involved an examination of the intended curriculum (Porter, 2006) by examining the syllabi of three strands of courses in the program: general methods courses, reading instruction methods, and courses in bilingual education. This analysis provided baseline data about the program before modifications. Since state regulations prohibit the modification of course content in a program that has already been accredited, curricular modifications focused on instructional delivery methods and the creation of support mechanisms such asdual language instruction and assignments to promote high academic linguistic proficiency, mentoring of students by project faculty, test preparation workshops, and professional development sessions provided by experts in the various areas of pedagogical content knowledge. Project faulty who would teach the CASSO participants worked as a team to redesign the courses based on the work of Fink (2003). Course design involved the setting of objectives and the development of learning activities that lead to significant learning. This meant that learning activities led students to apply instructional methods, learned through readings, in practical problems normally encountered in the classroom. In addition

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to making use of Fink's instructional design model, the faculty also agreed to use team-based learning developed by Michaelsen (2004), which helped to foster group cohesiveness and complemented Fink's significant learning model. A major innovative component of this research is the collaboration among project faculty who met on a regular basis to discuss coursework with the intention of building on the knowledge of each other's courses and integrating concept formation. Students who experienced the modified curriculum were placed in teams that remained intact for all courses across three semesters.

Teacher candidates must pass three exams and many of them only accomplish this after two or three attempts.

A mixed cohort method is being used to measure the effects of the curricular modifications. The first cohort of students experienced the program without modifications and has just graduated. The second cohort, now in their final year in the program, is currently experiencing the modified curriculum. The data presently being analyzed include syllabi from both current and modified curriculum, videotaped faculty discussions of the enacted curriculum, student online discussions, and videotaped focused group discussions on what and how courses are being taught. An in-depth analysis of the students as learners has been carried out from multiple sets of data which include a demographic survey a Spanish and English language proficiency self-assessment and the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) to assess the CASSO cohorts' postcore mathematics, reading comprehension, language arts, and critical thinking skills. Data yet to be collected include results from the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards TExES certification exams, observations of teachers in their first year of teaching, and results from their students assessment data. This article focuses on preliminary findings from students' online discussions on assigned readings and focused group discussions to illustrate the effects of the program as interpreted through the narratives of the participants.

Preliminary Findings

Analysis of online and focused group discussions with the project's participants reveal that the program has made some impact on the students' development of pedagogical and linguistic ideologies as they integrate their cultural and professional identities. For example, although researchers found that our preservice teachers entered the program devaluing their first language (Murrillo, 2009), instruction on the development of bilingualism and foundations of bilingual education has promoted a transformation in the value of Spanish as their first language and helped to foster a strong cultural identity. This is evident in the following quote from a focused group discussion:

> I think. . . most of us were trapped in a cancerous cycle that has been continuing . . . in the Valley, like we've been neglected as students. You know, as students when we were in elementary and middle school and high school . . we've been trained to think that being monolingual is everything, and I feel like we're starting to understand the concept and the importance for students to understand that speaking two languages is something that is valuable and to be admired.

This point is further illustrated in the following excerpt from an online discussion on an article about parent involvement in schools:

> I think the problem is that once you start school, your instruction is only English and students that come from parents who only speak Spanish tend to feel like it is the "norm" to speak only English, so they start losing the Spanish slowly because they are at school longer and practice it more often than Spanish, which is scary because then it can cause them to not to communicate with their parents.

After pondering on the connections between her personal experiences as a student in an

elementary English immersion classroom and the program's course activities, one student explains her understanding about the value of teacher interactions with ELLs in the classroom:

> The teacher's role is significant in Latino children because it is what develops their success. I think when the teacher can talk to the students in their native language, it only makes their education richer by feeling accepted in their culture.

Another concern brought up by these students is their fear of not being able to apply what they learn in the classroom. The fear comes from the realization that although the principles they are learning can be very successful, since they have tried them out and seen how they work, many of the local schools follow scripted programs where teachers are not allowed to veer away from the prescribed curriculum. This concern is made evident in the following quote from one of the focus group discussions:

> One of the questions that I hear . . . constantly comes up in classes: How are we going to . . . like, they constantly tell us, "This is the way you are supposed to teach reading," what are we going to do?

A response from another student to this comment was:

> That shouldn't keep us from doing what we believe that is right. There are modifications that you can make in your lessons, you don't have to get all, you know, rebellious and radical.

As they enter their first teaching job, new teachers enter a space of conflicting messages.

This concern was also evident in online discussions, as the following quote illustrates:

> Too often teachers are hindered by boundaries put on them such as having to follow a curriculum word for word, being how they should or shouldn't carry out their classes. It is no wonder that some teachers become frustrated and stop teaching all together.

Concluding Remarks

It is too early to determine the effects of the modified curriculum on the program's participants. However, the preliminary analysis makes clear some of the effects of school practices on the cultural and professional identities of ELLs who are bilingual education teacher candidates. Too often the dialogue among educators and policymakers on what constitutes best practices for ELLs fails to include the voices of those they serve. Perhaps this is because few ELLs ever succeed academically to the level where they themselves become professionals in education. It is important for us to consider their perspectives, and the CASSO research project provides a space where ELLs who are the products of our school practices can enter the dialogue. This is a particularly rare opportunity because, in the case of this research, the ELLs are also potential educators. They provide an insider's view of what may be the best practices for the ELL children in our communities' schools.

> Promoting academic success of the world's children, especially those from marginalized groups such as ELLs, is not an easy task. However, despite the many efforts for school reform and the forceful accountability regime currently in place, there has been no significant decrease in the achievement gap between the mainstream school population and those who are learning English as a second language. Cummins (2009) has proposed that the way to succeed in this endeavor is for policymakers, school administrators, and teachers to exercise their choices in the kinds of structures they provide for students for whom English is a second language. These structures should be based on a dialogue that includes the voices of those in the communities served by the local schools, especially those communities of marginalized groups

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of students, such as ELLs. I add that these kinds of structures should include spaces where teachers can make sound pedagogical decisions based on their expert knowledge of their students as learners, and in this case, also based on their experiences as students in a system that was less than effective in promoting their academic and linguistic success. ■

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A Bilingual Teacher Discusses Her Work

Vicky Betz - East Aurora Beaupre Elementary School, East Aurora, Illinois

In this article a bilingual teacher talks about her experiences and challenges.

Why do we read? How do we grow? As educators, we are teaching our students the answer to these questions in many different ways. I love picking up a book and reading to my students then seeing the look on their faces that show that they are identifying with what they hear and see in the text. The smiles and laughs not only show comprehension of what is being read to them, but it also demonstrates that there is a connection from their personal experience to the book. My students relate to books like *Too Many Tamales* (Soto, 1993), *It Takes a Village To Raise a Child* (Cowen-Fletcher, 1993), and others like these because they make links between their lives and the stories of the books.

I consider it a privilege to work with Mexican American children. After every encounter with a child from that culture and any other culture, I leave learning something new. During my 10 years working with Mexican American students, I have worked at levels ranging from K -5th grade. Mostly I have taught younger children in kindergarten and first grade. Sometimes when working with the younger children, I find that I have to plan instruction at square one with some of these students. Some students have not been read to at home, others have not been taught how to treat books. Many are not accustomed to answer questions about text. However, as we read, they learn to ask questions and to form opinions as we fill in their background knowledge where needed. Although some of my students' parents are illiterate, I find most are eager to be involved in their child's schooling. Unfortunately, some feel they are not able to contribute to their education because of illiteracy issues or work schedules. Educators have to talk to these parents because they need to know how important they are to their child's future. Some schools hold reading programs during which a book is given to each family who participates. Parents are invited to demonstrations of how to present or read a book to a child. Even when parents have little to no educational background, I encourage picture walks, making predictions, and reading even if it is only for five minutes a day. I explain to parents what one does during a picture walk and the value of predicting and anticipating what might happen in the storyline of a book. It is also good to encourage parents to share their personal cultural experiences at home with their children. This educates children and helps them to build bicultural identities.

Although some of my students' parents are illiterate, I find most are eager to be involved in their child's schooling.

Revamped Dreams

Family dynamics can enhance or impede a

child's ability to learn. A negative environment can have a lasting effect.Students who experience violence in their home require a different type of attention at school. I always welcome the help of social workers when I find myself struggling to reach a learner. When I first began teaching at East Aurora School District#131, I taught in a gang infested area. My position was one half day Bilingual Extended Day Kindergarten, and during the other half of my day I was a Title 1 push-in and pull-out teacher to second, third, and fifth grade students. I ignorantly decided that I was going to take my half-day Bilingual Kindergarten classroom and make it a haven for my students. I wanted to create a place where students could leave their struggles at the door and indulge in learning and adventure. I wanted my second, third, and fifth grade students to be empowered to be what they wanted to be through education. I had convinced myself that my plan could work. I found out immediately that what I intended to do was not going to work. I had to modify my plan for all my students.

As I was teaching mathematics and the letter of the week to my kindergarten students, I found that I had to address issues of violence as a way of moving a boulder out of the way for there to be an avenue for knowledge to flow.

The Effects and Aftermath of Violence

Some of the events that took place in my students' lives throughout my first year teaching at East Aurora made me realize that changes needed to be made within me as a bilingual educator if I were to become an effective teacher in this community. One of my kindergarten students walked through the door one day, and while taking off her jacket, began to inform me in front of the class that she saw someone who lived across the street from her home lying on the ground with a hole in the forehead. Apparently, this young man was shot and she witnessed the aftermath of a gang war. I stooped down to her level to have close eye-to-eye contact and told her that I was so sorry—not knowing much more what to say. Another student, one who always had a smile on his face, suddenly seemed to be quiet and solemn. He was quiet for a long period of time. He seemed distracted and sad. Later I learned of a shooting that took place where a teen was driving through the midst of gang crossfire. The teen was killed while behind the wheel, driving his car into my student's bedroom. A third kindergarten student walked into the classroom one day and began to stutter. This was something he had never done before. His speech issue resulted from a traumatic experience. This child had older siblings who belonged to gangs, and his house was shot at multiple times. When this happened, the entire family and this child hid under the bed in order to dodge the bullets being fired at their house. During the middle of a lesson, this child would speak out saying, "I don't want to die!" The incidences happened more than once throughout the school year. The student would seem to overcome the stuttering, but then another shooting incident would trigger the stuttering again.

I received support from outside the classroom, from my principal, the social worker, the speech therapist, other teachers, and an aide. Some support came from outside the school community from a newspaper reporter and from a police officer who grew up in the area and had overcome the odds. The police officer who visited our kindergarten classroom explained to the children that they can dial 911 in case of an emergency and take other precautions if in danger. This officer also shared conversations about gang violence with the second grade students. Some of these students seemed fascinated with the whole gang world. The officer shared that she grew up in the Aurora area and was the first in her family to graduate from college. She had the attention of the students; she understood their world. She encouraged them to make the right choices.

Even though my students were young, I wanted them to learn that they did not have to follow in the footsteps of their siblings. I wanted them to have the opportunity to dream dreams. I wanted

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Collaboration between school and community leaders.

my students to be empowered through the education that they received in my classroom.

Selena's Death

On March 31, 1994, my Bilingual Kindergarten, second, third and fifth grade students were impacted by national headline news that the Latino singer *Selena* was shot and killed. My students walked in the classroom talking about her and about how much they loved her music. They were so sad that the life of a rising legend from their culture group was cut short. A reporter from a local paper interviewed my kindergarten students. They shared their feelings regarding the death of Selena. The students also had the opportunity to share their personal experiences with the aftermath of gang activity. The article with the students'words was published in the newspaper. My students began to see the importance of speaking out. They also realized that their voice was being heard and that their opinions did matter. Although the newspaper article highlighted the kindergarten students, my second, third and fifth graders also had an opportunity to voice their thoughts. In addition, the older students enjoyed a tour of the newspaper facility and were able to see how a newspaper article is put together. As I was teaching mathematics and the letter of the week to my kindergarten students, I found that I had to address issues of violence as a way of moving a boulder out of the way for there to be an avenue for knowledge to flow. My students needed to feel safe first, be heard, and only after this could they be empowered with knowledge. The older learners needed vision and hope, to know that the negativity of their community did not have to dictate their lives. They did have power—the power to choose.

Children's Literature, Family, and Culture in the Classroom

I taught my students that in our classroom we were a family. They learned to listen to each other talk and to form opinions. Together we learned about our fears and how to comfort one another. We learned to value the beauty of where we came from and allowed ourselves to share the excitement of a bright future. We knew that we could shape our lives because we had the power to do so through literacy and education. I began to focus instruction on culture and family. These became topics of ongoing discussions. The story *It Takes a Village To Raise A Child* (Cowen-Fletcher, 1993) impacted my second graders because as they read it, they recalled how it was like Mexico. The story reminded them of how a whole community is like a family. Some even had tears in their eyes. Being in the United States and living in the community that they were in made them see that the feeling of family unity was missing from their lives. They missed their experience of their cultural community living. The story allowed them to learn to embrace and value their feelings.

I taught my students that in our classroom we were a family.

In my parental kindergarten classroom group, I had parents who were extremely supportive. These mothers helped bring the Mexican culture alive in my classroom. With their support we celebrated holidays such as el *día de los niños,*

el día de la madre, el día de los maestros, and *el 5 de mayo*.. They would bring food, desserts, and favors to celebrate these occasions. The mothers would share their past experiences and the importance of maintaining customs with the children. The students' identities and cultures were being imparted to them, and they learned and grew.

Conclusion

I find that my philosophy tends to change or expand with time. When taking a course, I not only find that I learn more but that there is so much information I still need. Thinking about my philosophy, I cannot help but think about my personal experience as a Puerto Rican. In the public schools, I remember telling myself that I had to think about what I was going to say and write. I had to think as a Caucasian American. I could not write that we roasted a pig for celebrating Mother's Day. I thought people would think that I was weird. Never did I have the freedom to express my culture or customs in the classroom. Most of my teachers were not interested in the funds of knowledge that I possessed (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

I remember how out of frustration my first grade teacher attempted to teach me subtraction. It finally clicked when she said "take away!" She needed training in introducing students to new words (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2006). As an undergraduate, I recall being told that I needed to assimilate into the American system. We were told that America was a melting pot. But I did not see America as one unit; I saw our country having many units and many cultures. However, this is what I was told: Assimilate! I felt the traditional ideology of educating was what was common, that we all had to fit in or we would not make it. I know now that not all methods work for every child. As a bilingual educator it is important that I find out how my students learn. Educators have been distracted with standards and standardized tests. As a postgraduate student now, I still believe in an eclectic approach and in implementing thematic units. On the other hand, learning about the funds of knowledge has been a revelation. Linking students' culture, values, and so on into the classroom needs to be implemented in the educational process.

I always welcome the help of social workers when I find myself struggling to reach a learner.

Evaluating my philosophy today, I agree with what Freeman and Freeman (2000) suggest. I think what is best for students today is to educate them so they become biliterate and develop biculturally. I find some of my students have lost their first language and it is so sad. I can only wonder what else will be lost. A child who comes from a home where English is not their first language should be allowed to develop bilingually. Observing my life, though I am bicultural and bilingual, I wish that I had been educated in a Dual Language program. Then maybe I would not have lost as much of my language and culture as I did.

So again we start with why we read. We do so to learn and to grow. This past summer I learned to engage my Mexican American students by implementing the funds of knowledge approach (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). I did this by reading books written and illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza. I found this to be such a wonderful icebreaker this past school year, yet a shock. I learned that some of my students who are second and third generation Mexican Americans are losing some of their culture. Some did not understand and have never heard of the *Posadas*. It is a pity, but some of my students are losing their culture. It is imperative that all teachers must help their students embrace their family's culture/s and live their life to the fullest within their bicultural identities. I know that it is my job to do this.

The author wants to thank Aurora Police Officer L. Robinson for going above and beyond the call of a police officer. Her work in the classroom gave students hope and a firsthand view of possibilities. She wants to share with K. Hart, her school principal, that she is one of the best administrators in the field. ■

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Vicky Betz grew up wanting to be a teacher. After receiving her bachelor's degree she volunteered for two years as a teacher aboard a Mercy Hospital ship that traveled from Europe to Africa. This year she returned to work at the first school district where she worked after graduation. She says that in her new position she is "Feeling and believing that I am flourishing and impacting lives again. . . ."

Vicky is completing her Masters in Literacy Education at Northern Illinois University.

Increasing Parental Involvement

Rocio Fisher - Gary Elementary School, West Chicago, Illinois

In this article the author discusses her experiences as a principal of a school where Navigating the American School System, a program to educate and involve parents in their children's school, has been implemented.

As school administrators, we all want to see our students succeed in school. We look for ways to bridge the home and school connection to further solidify our chances for success. West Chicago School District #33 believes in empowering our families to find the resources to attain the knowledge they need to become effective advocates for their children while enrolled in the American educational school system. The norms of this new educational system can be overwhelming for immigrant families who attended schools in other countries. These challenges are further compounded by the language barrier or legal status of the parents. The result is that often the mismatch can hinder participatory involvement for parents and families. Many undocumented parents are fearful of visiting the schools and prefer to live in the shadows.

In the Fall of 2007, West Chicago School District #33 made the commitment to increase our Hispanic parents' involvement through the Navigating the American Educational System (NAES) program. NAES was created by Dr. Lourdes Ferrer who is a strong proponent in training parents to advocate for their children. The purpose of NAES is to increase the involvement of Spanish-speaking parents in the academic careers of their children. NAES looks to increase parental proficiency in the American educational system with the end goal being improved academic achievement of the Hispanic students. Parents participate in a four part seminar series presented in Spanish by facilitators. The seminars provide parents with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to become involved in the academic experiences of their children.

There is no greater joy than to see how the NAES program impacts the families.

Facilitators offer the seminars during four consecutive months. Each month covers a particular topic and its relevance to the Hispanic culture and student achievement. Whole group discussions are immediately held after a DVD presentation with facilitating teacher guiding discussions. Topics covered through the monthly seminars are

- Understanding the role of education in American society
- Establishing a positive and productive connection with school
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- Importance of homework, reading, extracurricular activities
- Postsecondary education

(cont.)

Lourdes Ferrer, Darlene Ruscitti, and author celebrate community's accomplishments.

- Improving quality of life

Parents are encouraged to become "Warrior Parents," a euphemism for advocacy. Discussions encourage building a relationship among parents, students, and teachers. When the three parts work together, it leads to awinning combination with the student emerging victorious in his or her education.

West Chicago School District #33 began training teachers in the Fall of 2007. Teachers were invited to attend a two day training led by Dr. Lourdes Ferrer. In order to increase teacher participation, training was provided during two consecutive Saturdays. The district provided participating teachers with a stipend for attending this training. Once trained, the facilitating teachers invited their parents to attend evening workshops at their respective schools. Parent interest and involvement began slowly and increased through word of mouth. Each year, the district has seen an increase in the number of parents receiving this training.

Facilitating teachers are encouraged to provide the seminars with their classroom parents first and to work as a team with another facilitating teacher in their building. In this manner, the planning and evening commitment is manageable. Facilitating teachers immediately began offering the NAES training district-wide. By the Spring of 2008, the district had over 150 parents graduate from this program. Many of the parents voiced that they were unaware of the impact their involvement would have in the life of their children. Parents became encouraged and wanted additional opportunities to attend future workshops on how to help their children at home.

We strive to provide parents with the skills and knowledge to navigate the American school system.

The district's vested interest in this program is evident to the teachers and staff district-wide. To date, the district has 38 facilitators trained. The facilitators present at their home school and invite parents to attend the NAES seminars. Each facilitating teacher is provided with a stipend and budget to plan their parent meetings. The district provides funds to pay for door prizes (usually books) and food for the evening activities. Child care is also provided to help parents attend these meetings. Each school creatively plans their seminars to meet the needs of their parents. Some schools encourage parents to bring food to share, others have the food catered, while others simply provided snacks. Almost every school provides books for parents to take home as prizes. Some teachers also order educational games and then teach parents how to use the games to cement learning at home. For example, dominos were used by one facilitator to teach parents a game that requires children to keep and add their score. As a challenge, students can also multiply and keep score.

Teachers find creative ways to inform parents about the upcoming workshops. They send home flyers, encourage their students to bring

Ferrer enrolling families in her vision.

their parents to the events, give extra credit for attending, give away school T-shirts, and find other resourceful ways to increase parental participation. Teachers found that the retention of parents dwindled from one seminar to the next. Constant reminders sent home helped with the retention of participates; however, the single most effective contributing factor for retention was the personal contact teachers had with their families. Teachers met with parents after school or personally called them to remind them to attend the next event. This greatly helped to reduce attrition of parents.

Dominos were used by one facilitator to teach parents a game that requires children to keep and add their score.

Each spring, the district holds a parent graduation ceremony to honor the parents who attended the seminars. West Chicago School District #33 has invited Dr. Ferrer to give our keynote address to our NAES graduates for two consecutive years now. In addition, Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, the Regional Superintendent of Du Page County Educational Service Region, has also attended each of our graduation ceremonies and addressed our parents. Dr. Ruscitti is the reason why this program and Dr. Ferrer are part of Du Page County's Regional Office of Education. She is a strong supporter of NAES and our work with our Hispanic parents. Together, we are making a difference as we strive to provide parents with the skills and knowledge to navigate the American school system. Our work would be exponentially more difficult without Dr. Ruscitti's strong support.

Each year, parents look forward to meeting Dr. Ferrer personally and taking their photograph with her. Families are mailed an invitation to attend the District's end of the year convocation ceremony. Every parent district-wide who attended the seminars is invited to the ceremony. Parents are asked to reply to their invitation to ensure an accurate amount of food is ordered. District administrators and Board of Education members are also invited. Parents

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receive a diploma and have their picture taken with Dr. Ferrer. The evening's enthusiasm is contagious. Parents and teachers rejoice over the participants' accomplishments and their future endeavors. For the 2009 graduation ceremony, we had over 450 parents and children in attendance.

There is no greater joy than to see how the NAES program impacts the families. Our Hispanic parents are becoming increasingly more involved in our evening activities and more likely to ask questions that pertain to their children's education. They are truly becoming "Warrior Parents" who want the best for their children and know that education is the key to their children's future success. ■

Rocio Fisher is currently a principal in West Chicago School District #33. She has experience teaching bilingual speakers of English and Spanish, sheltered English, and ESL students. Rocio is pursuing her doctoral degree at Northern Illinois University.

West Chicago District's Partnership for Wellness, Safety, and Student Achievement

Mayra C. Daniel – Northern Illinois University

This article describes a community partnership that began with a school district's effort to involve an entire community in bettering the lives of its children both in and out of school.

In an area approximately one hour from the city of Chicago, a school superintendent and an entire school district have offered their support to an initiative known as WeGo Together for Kids. In recent years district actions reflect efforts to work with the changing student demographics. The highly Latino district has experienced a steady increase in student enrollment. As a result, diversified instructional service has focused on addressing the needs of second-language learners and children from low-income homes. In terms of ethnicity, changes reflect an increase in Latino enrollment. In addition, school attendance rates have remained steady.

The belief that early childhood development is the key to success in school and life underlies the value of positive socialization, positive parent-child interactions, and high levels of bilingualism.

The mission of WeGo Together for Kids is to mobilize all segments of the West Chicago school and community to cooperate in a coordinated and comprehensive approach that addresses the health, safety, and well-being of students and families. The initiative seeks to address the effects on education of the cycle of poverty, to decrease student attrition, and to bring about improvement in a child's world that could positively affect their learning. The work engages the commitment andvolunteerism of community members such as police persons, fire persons, city staff, dentists, pediatricians, mental health professionals, librarians, teachers, parents, and students. The intervention encourages and compels the long-term commitment of a community to identify concrete ways to advocate for its children. Efforts aim to increase the opportunities available to children through implementation of preventive measures.

This article details the district-wide systemic plan that began in 2005. A strong collaboration has been established across a web of diverse participants throughout the community. One unique characteristic of this project is that the office of the Initiative director, Marory Lewe-Brady, is housed in the school district's administrative offices. This way she is able to identify day-to-day needs. She is able to work closely with district personnel and community partners to develop and implement strategies aimed at improving the quality of life for students and their families. Work originally funded with grant monies continues today with various funding streams to allow for the director position to continue. The WeGo Together for kids Model consists of six distinct elements.

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These are (1) A Healthy Coalition, (2) Safety and Security, (3) Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention, (4) Mental Health Promotion and Treatment, (5) Early Childhood Development, and (6) Learning and Wellness. (See Figure 1 Delivery Model)

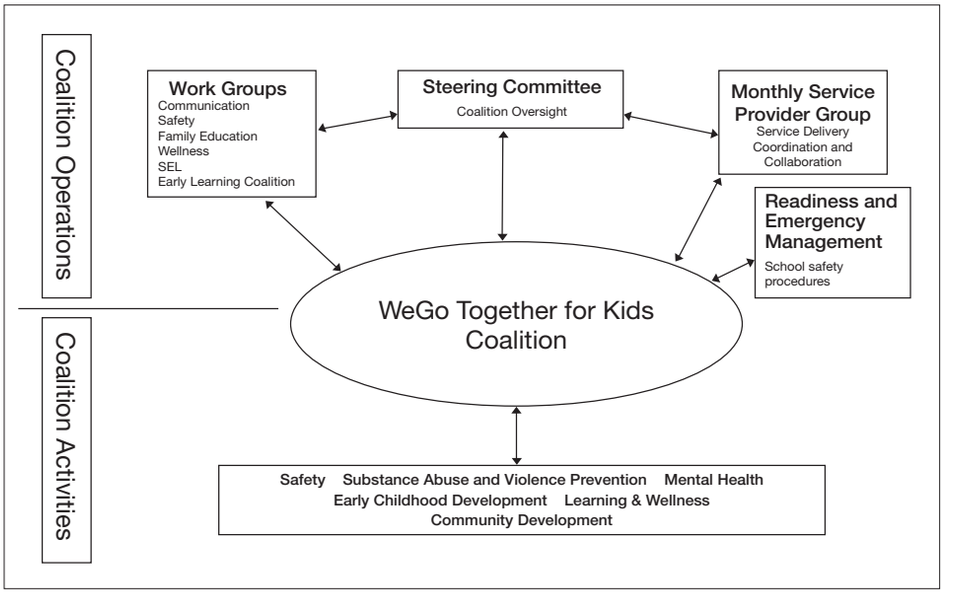

Figure 1 Delivery Model

A Healthy Coalition

The goal of improving relationships between providers, community members, and school staff focuses on achieving a collaborative effort that coordinates health, safety, and well-being resources with prevention activities, and treatment services for the community. Attendance and participation of stakeholders in meetings, services, and events is also an important part of the project. Activities to meet this objective include developing a strategic plan, facilitating work groups for service/ resource planning and implementation, quality assurance, and sustainability.

Safety and Security

The belief that children learn better when they feel safe and have clear and consistent high expectations for behavior and academic achievement is at the root of this element. This goal is reflected in efforts to develop a comprehensive district readiness and emergency management plan. Activities aimed to meet this objective involve ongoing reviews of building security and safety assessments and implementation of resulting recommendations, incorporation of training for all district staff, students, and community.

Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention

The philosophical stance that students who acquire skills for self-management and positive interpersonal relationships will not engage in incidents of violence and substance abuse underlies the goal of decreasing such incidents. This objective seeks to decrease alcohol consumption and use of cigarettes and other drugs. To address these problems after-school, prosocial skill programs and family events focus on preventing these behaviors and others such as student fighting and bullying that endanger the safety of others. Positive behavior outcomes are evidenced in student ability to demonstrate refusal skills, to show respect for classmates, and to verbally encourage each other to make good decisions.

Mental Health Promotion and Treatment

There is a high prevalence rate for affective disorders in this community for children and

A message of promises.

adolescents similar to the national rates. The ratio between crisis service demands and clients served was 250:1 at the beginning of this intervention. First, this objective incorporates the goal of promoting mental health awareness. Secondly, it aims to increase the number of students and their families who can access and receive mental health services and reduce the waiting time between mental health service request and service provider response. Positive outcomes for students and their family include the ability to articulate their feelings and develop appropriate parental negotiation for rewards and consequences and improve family communication. Meeting this goal required the development of a school community mental health model to deliver services and to offer assessments, provide referrals and consultation between the school, community, and community health clinicians.

Early Childhood Development

This objective focuses on increasing the literacy skills of early childhood students. The belief that early childhood development is the key to success in school and life underlies the value of positive socialization, positive parent-child interactions, and high levels of bilingualism. Addressing this objective begins with empowering families to encourage and support their children's success in school so they can become productive, healthy, and responsible citizens. Secondly, it is crucial to recognize that parents need to be provided tools to develop their own literacy skills if they are to promote their children's literacy. Thirdly, parental literacy is often reflected by parents' presence in classrooms. To meet this goal adult literacy classes focus on the development of essential skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and provide other opportunities for parents to develop or enhance existing skills. Parents are also welcome at their children's schools and communication with parents is in both English and Spanish.

Children learn better when they feel safe and have clear and consistent high expectations for behavior and academic achievement.

Learning and Wellness

We know that when students and their families are healthy, the families are more successful and experience less nutritionally related health conditions such as obesity and diabetes. In this project families are given the strategies that they need to increase their ability to problem solve, make decisions, and self-manage. Children from well informed families see the school nurse less often, eat more nutritious meals, engage in

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physical activities, and are more academically successful. This objective is met through healthcare and nutritional activities, a Wellness Program that is part of the district's curriculum, and training of district staff in the Framework for Understanding Poverty.

Concluding Ideas

The successes of WeGo Together for Kids are visible in several areas. First, all direct services have led to an increase in students' academic achievement. Also, discipline issues have decreased. Thirdly, direct services have been provided to over one third of the district's students. Overall, resources have been used more efficiently than before, and families report easier access to care. Without doubt, communication, cooperation, and coordination of service among service providers have improved. Lastly, because community partners continue to demonstrate their commitment, the program has reached the sustainability stage. In conclusion, the outlook for students and families in this school district is very positive in spite of the changing demographics. ■

Mayra C. Daniel, the editor of this issue, is happy to have shared details of how committed educators improve the lives of children.

Schooling Struggles of Hispanic Youth: Lourdes Ferrer's Plan of Action

Mayra C. Daniel and Alexis Ball - Northern Illinois University

In this article the authors describe the efforts of an educator who is a strong advocate of Hispanic youth and who seeks to change the cycle of nonachievement that plagues this population of learners.

In the United States the 21st century brings populations of students to schools at levels K-12 that are more diverse in ethnicity, language, and backgrounds than ever before. In the State of Illinois alone, the number of languages spoken in schools increased from 138 to 145 in 424 of 800 districts in 2009, and ELLs totaled 209,000 in 2,300 schools (V. Feng, personal communication, June 18, 2009). Endless discussions about what programs should be implemented and what funding should be allocated for educating English language learners (ELLs) have been situated in politics and public opinion (Crawford, 2009; Cummins, 2000; Krashen, 1981). The United States Department of Education (2006) predicts that by 2025 one in every four students will be an ELL. While ELLs speak about 460 different languages (Kindler, 2002), Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) calculate the percentage of ELLs in schools who speak Spanish at 79.5%. This makes Spanish the top language spoken by ELLs in the nation's schools. There are wide differences in the achievement of students with those from select Hispanic groups lagging far behind their Asian and Caucasian counterparts (Garcia, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008).

In a report titled *Reasons Behind the Lack of Achievement Among Hispanic High School Students*, Dr. Lourdes Ferrer addresses the underachievement of Hispanic students. She shares that "according to national research, the four greatest factors associated with the under-achievement of Hispanic students are the lack of qualified teachers, the lack of preparation of practicing qualified teachers, inappropriate teaching practices and at-risk school environments" (personal communication, August 15, 2009). She was asked by an Illinois school district to work as a consultant to help them close the achievement gap between Hispanic students and their White peers on the Prairie State Assessment Exam (PSAE). The PSAE is an exam that is administered yearly in Illinois to high school juniors, which includes the college entrance exam, the American College Test (ACT). As part of this work, Dr. Ferrer conducted a comprehensive year-long qualitative study to find out, from the Hispanic students' perspectives, the reasons behind the lack of success on the PSAE. She felt that this was an important factor to research because "what people perceive becomes the frame of reference in which they operate and respond to the world in and around them." She believes that "Any school reform initiative set out to improve the academic achievement of minority students that does not take in consideration . . . students' attitudes, beliefs, values and frame of reference is positioned to fail."

The Study

Dr. Ferrer began her investigation with many

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hours of observations and conversations with students in the school halls, cafeteria, and classrooms, with teachers, and parents. She conducted numerous one-on-one interviews and focus groups with more than 100 Hispanic students. She asked the students, "Why are Hispanic students' scores lower than their White peers?" Participants were students enrolled in a school district with a high number of either Mexican or Mexican-American students. Background analyses of student responses revealed a range of levels of acculturation, English language proficiency, Spanish language proficiency, academic success, socio-economic status, family background and other family dynamics. Despite these differences, one commonality emerged. All students recognized the value of living and being educated in the United States and perceived themselves deeply entrenched in this society. Study findings suggest that the main barriers to Hispanic academic achievement fall along four categories: students' personal motivation, family involvement, circumstantial factors, and social factors. Her findings, implications of those findings, and recommendations, are the focus of this article.

Personal Motivation

Dr. Ferrer's belief that students are motivated by those elements that are familiar and understood within their reality, was solidified by all data gathered in her study. She argues that students will perform better when they perceive relevance to achievement through shared paradigms with service providers. Teachers, school administrators, guidance counselors or other professionals working with students have a greater capacity to motivate students when they share their frame of reference.

Through this work she learned that the school system operates on a paradigm where postsecondary education is the central goal and a high school education is the scaffold. On the other hand, Hispanic students, specially the newly arrived, view success very differently. Their perception of success is that they have achieved it because they are in the United States and have left behind the poverty of their homeland. Their focus is on staying in the United States and in attaining skills that will allow them to survive in this culture. For Hispanics of this mind-set, being admitted to college is not an identified goal. This is not how they define success. The steps to achieving college admittance such as getting good grades, doing well in school, and obtaining a high score on the PSAE are not meaningful. Graduating high school was perceived by participants as an accomplishment in and of itself.

Hispanic students self-reported that they are not motivated to do well on state tests because these tests are not a requirement for graduation and because they perceive such tests as only important to college-bound students.

A significant number of Hispanic students self-reported that they are not motivated to do well on state tests because these tests are not a requirement for graduation and because they perceive such tests as only important to college-bound students. Other factors that students included relating to their lack of motivation to achieve on state tests was the belief that they needed outside tutoring to do well on the ACT, and since this would create added expense for their family, and they need to help support their families financially, this is not possible for them.

Dr. Ferrer recommends that motivating Hispanic students involves creating awareness among students themselves that they must take responsibility for their own academic achievement. First, she suggests that there is a need for academic programs such as a *Latin American Studies Academy* that promotes English/Spanish bilingualism, Latin American/USA biculturalism and understanding the Hispanic experience in the United States. Secondly, she stresses the importance of planning for Hispanic minority staff recruitment and retention. This provides role models for Hispanic students. She argues that when

students see concrete proof of the success achieved by Hispanic role models who hold leadership positions in the schools, this experience helps bring about students' self-motivation. The existence of this personnel base would expose all students to diverse cultures, different perspectives on life, learning and leadership. Hiring and retaining minority faculty incorporates a wide world view of cultures into curriculum and pedagogy. Finally, Dr. Ferrer believes that schools should use developmental interventions to help students in navigating the school system and planning their academic futures.

Hispanic families must be empowered to overcome the challenges faced in their pursuit of a better life in the United States.

Parental Factors

Dr. Ferrer argues that the different role family plays in U.S. society as contrasted with the Hispanic culture affects school success. She states that Hispanic families tend to focus on the common good of the whole family and that this can result in decisions that may negatively affect individual family members when the family unit's well-being is at stake. A prime example of this is the student who contributes to the family by working after school and has little time to complete homework assignments. Students indicated that many of their parents do not understand the benefits of their academic success and lack the ability to navigate the U.S. educational system. Participants discussed the lack of ability of many parents to access services for their children and how this makes it difficult for these learners to fully participate in academic or extra curricular activities that support potential achievements. This lack of support is visiblein the areas of supervision of homework, holding students accountable at home for what happens at school, and providing guidance in their academic cares. Students were cognizant of the negative impact that the lack of financial resources had on their schoolwork. Some Hispanic students also perceive that their parents hold low expectations for their success at school. Many Hispanic parents view students' graduation from high school as a high achievement. This leads some students to feel that there is no need to go to college because they assume there is a lack of appreciation for postsecondary education on the part of parents. Dr. Ferrer states that based on the study's observations, any interventions to improve academic achievement of Hispanic students must include partnership with parents.

In recognizing the challenges in the area of parental involvement, Dr. Ferrer puts the focus on the home dynamic and how this affects students' ability to succeed academically. She argues that Hispanic families must be *empowered to overcome the challenges faced in their pursuit of a better life in the United States*. She suggests a number of measures to help achieve this goal. First, she details a system of forums for Hispanic families that could be used to present issues of importance for their children's well-being. This would allow schools to gather feedback and suggestions for improvement from parents. These formats are intended to help develop Hispanic families' abilities to navigate the school system. She feels that these types of communications would yield positive benefits such as improved collaborative home-to-school academic planning for Hispanic children' increased parent participation in adult English as a second language classes (ESL), computer literacy, and job training classes; improved understanding of the reasons for the lack of achievement among Hispanic children; and, greater feeling of empowerment and confidence to monitor their children's academic life through proven home practices.

Circumstantial Factors

Dr. Ferrer discusses a class of endemic factors in Hispanic students' lives that appear to be the byproduct of parental decisions. The latter, while necessary and logical in the context of the parental obligation to the family, create challenges for learners. First, students recognize the lack of English proficiency as a barrier to extra curricular activities and view

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A leader with a vision of equity in education.

this as necessary in finding and keeping a job. Second, gaps in education and poor preparation by the home-country educational environments are seen by students as factors that contributes to their academic challenges with the high school curriculum. Finally, illegal immigration status confounds the lack of motivation and achievement by causing insurmountable fear and hopelessness. Many Hispanic students know that even if they achieve academically, they will not qualify for federal financial aid if they have illegal status in the country.

Dr. Ferrer offers several ways to help mitigate circumstantial factors. First, she suggests forming partnerships between high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, as well as affiliations with local civic, business, and community leadership. She believes this will promote collaboration and commitment that increases the graduation rates and improves the performance of Hispanic students at all levels of the educational spectrum. These cooperative initiatives would empower families by providing the knowledge and skills needed to ensure the academic success of their children. In addition, she stresses that schools should develop and monitor plans to accelerate student development of English language proficiency. She suggests that students should be monitored individually and as school groups to demonstrate growth and proficiency in reading and mathematics exams. High schools can identify incoming freshmen who are below grade level in these subjects. Remedial reading and math courses during the summer can be used to eliminate achievement gaps and allow students to reach high levels of proficiency as soon as possible. She also advises a one semester PSAE preparation course in reading and math for 10th graders who score low on standardized tests. She believes that stakeholders must create awareness in leadership about the connection between undocumented status and student achievement. She considers that to hold schools accountable for the performance of students who see no importance in school achievement because of the ways their illegal status limits access to future academic environments is to be wearing blinders. In order to counteract negative social factors, Dr. Ferrer suggests interventions targeted to diminish beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that hinder academic success. First of all, the school's appearance can be changed to reflect understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and the achievements of all members of the school community. This will build self-esteem and self-confidence in all students. Second, implementation of culturally sensitive teen-pregnancy prevention programs for both boys and girls needs to begin at the middle school level. Third, antidrug programs and internal investigations of schools' problems with drug sales and gang activity can be highlighted in student workshops that aim to help students understand the negative effects of this type of belonging. Hispanic youth may be growing up in neighborhoods where gang membership is an expected right of passage. Efforts that

Hiring and retaining minority faculty incorporates a wide world view of cultures into curriculum and pedagogy.

break this cycle and offer alternatives will go far to promote the self-esteem so needed by adolescents. Finally, schools should take seriously the feelings of rejection and inferior treatment felt by Hispanics. Educators must develop opportunities to engage students in dialogue to help foster social understanding among students and between teachers and students.

Conclusion

Dr. Lourdes Ferrer's study with Hispanic students allowed her to understand their frame of reference. This was important to her because she views the gap between student frame of reference and teacher frame of reference as the most significant barrier to addressing the achievement gaps experienced by Hispanic students. Some of the attitudes that she has outlined are viewed as non-conducive to academic success. From her perspective, all observations and subsequent suggestions to remedy the state of affairs must be situated within a common frame of reference between service providers, students, and their families. She argues that schools have not effectively narrowed the achievement gap and that what is needed is planned and persuasive communications between home and school, transformational experiences for students and parents, and mentoring and exposure to role models that help create a shift in thinking. In order to support this process, she envisions the establishment of a Welcome Center where programs can be designed around the recommendations discussed in the study and where the needs of the Hispanic population can be met with appropriate sensitivity and professionalism. Dr. Ferrer warns how crucial it is to recognize that as children learn English, if they do so faster than their parents, the role reversal that can occur in families may make it appear to the child that the parent is no longer the leader of the household. In her work she therefore stresses the need to involve all stakeholders in her mission: students, parents, community, and school staff. Dr. Ferrer summarizes that the schoolhouse must strive to help Hispanic parents achieve the following three competencies. First, Hispanic children must be exposed to the habit of reading from an early age, and parents must grasp the importance of reading to school success. Secondly, the connection between home and school must not be a token one; rather, parents must be valued as equal contributors to the education of their children. Lastly, completion of homework must not create a battlefield or an area of uncertainty in the home. Parents, whether they are fluent speakers of English or not, can be involved in the daily homework assignments by making conversations about what is due part of daily interactions in the home. ■

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Mayra C. Daniel and Alexis Ball are committed to the success of multilingual learners throughout the world. It is with pleasure that they share this story about an individual who identifies possibilities and concrete paths to success for students of Hispanic descent.

Can ELLs Conquer Biology? But of Course, My Dear Watson!

Brigid Trimble and Barbara Roth - Elgin High School, Elgin, Illinois

In this article two biology teachers discuss their path to learning how to plan instruction for English language learners and the reasons they teach as they do.

Teaching high school biology can be a challenging situation under the best of conditions. The subject matter is ever changing, new to most secondary students, and replete with new vocabulary. Besides this, teachers have to consider the adolescent angst and personal issues of students of this age and how these affect learning in the typical high school classroom. What is not so obvious are the ways the individual student's understanding of the English language controls mastery of content area knowledge. English language learners (ELLs) do not arrive at school with a label that identifies their individual language needs and prior educational experiences.

When we began to teach at Elgin High School in the fall of 2004, the English as a second language program (ESL) was not available at our school. Although we were recent graduates of a State of Illinois approved teacher certification program, we had little knowledge of the needs of ELLs nor of the strategies that are most effective to teach them. Students who required ESL services were bussed to another high school in our district. We could have shrugged our shoulders and simply decided this roadblock was for someone else to handle had we felt totally successful in our work. Instead, after seeing that our first teaching experiences with our students were frustrating even with the students who were not identified as requiring ESL services but were ELLs, we began to explore our plight in endless discussions. We would often ask ourselves and each other, "How can these ELLs have no prior knowledge?" and "How can they answer verbally so well, and yet bomb the tests?" Slowly, the idea surfaced that perhaps there was something awry in our understanding of what was taking place in our classrooms. Finally, we switched the question around and asked, "What can we do to get through to these students and help them learn?" We realized that although we were prepared to teach science, we were not ready to differentiate instruction for ELLs.

The opportunity to participate in a nationally funded grant program to prepare teachers to work with ELLs offered by Northern Illinois University presented itself in January 2008. We applied to the Project SUCCESS cohort and began a year-long program. We studied theories of second language acquisition, read about the different programs of instruction funded by the federal government for ELLs and their different goals, became familiar with the legislation and court cases that ensure ELLs receive comprehensible instruction, and, most importantly, started down a path to become experts on strategies to use in our classrooms to effectively teach these populations of students. Participation in Project SUCCESS provided the opportunity for professional

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development that will help us advocate for our ELLs and their families. The coursework encouraged us to reflect on our teaching and attitudes towards ELLs and begin to make the necessary changes to better serve this population of students in our classrooms.

Our Students

We are happy to report that our high school began to offer ESL services during the fall of 2008. We now teach two kinds of ELLs at our school, those who are *identified* as ELLs and those who are not identified but are. Since the inception of the ESL program in 2008, students who are identified at ESL Level 4 or 5 (highest levels but yet not ready to be mainstreamed) are placed in a Contextual Biology class and most are also enrolled in ESL classes. The Contextual Biology class is designed to address the needs of students who are reading at least two grade levels below the 9th grade. The class meets for a longer period of time, and special emphasis is given to reading strategies within the content area. The rationale for this curricular design was that ELLs would benefit from the additional time in class and the emphasis on reading strategies would facilitate comprehension of content and promote metacognition (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994).

We work with students who were formerly identified as ELLs at some point in their academic career but who are now enrolled in mainstream classes. Sometimes students voluntarily leave the ESL program for a variety of reasons such as wanting to be with their friends in classes, not understanding that a second language takes time to acquire, or their parents decide to take them out of the program. In our district we label these students Long-Term English language learners (LTEL). They, as well as monolingual students struggling with reading, benefit from strategies that appropriately address the needs of ELLs. Unfortunately, when the LTELs are placed in regular education classes, their teachers have no idea of their academic English language challenges because their social English is at a higher level than their academic English. As a consequence, it is not surprising that many of our students, and in particular the LTELs, perform poorly on high stakes, standardized academic tests. These students have not reached the level of academic English necessary to successfully comprehend content area texts. In this article we will share some of the strategies that we have learned help our ELL students make gains in acquiring academic English (Refer to Figure 1.)

Strategies

The strategies used for English language learners are not a far departure from the classroom strategies used by mainstream classrooms. Many of these strategies were highlighted in professional development opportunities we had experienced as new teachers. However, we learned through Project Success that there must be a very conscious effort to address language needs and to include differential instruction for the variety of language needs Several important theories of language acquisition are very important to our understanding of teaching ELLs, and we would like to discuss briefly the contributions of those theories of language acquisitions proposed by Cummins and Krashen. After much gnashing of teeth and

Strategy	Definition
Frontloading	Providing students with audio or visual cues to illicit prior knowledge on a particular subject
The Big Picture	Creating a statement that expresses the main point of the lesson so students know where to focus.
Read –Say-Write	Partner reading strategy designed to increase comprehension and language skills in a non-threatening environment.
Puzzle Patterns	Strategy used to teach the various processes in biology. The steps of a procedure are printed and cut up into cards that the students organize in the correct order. Can be designed for different levels of ELL
Guided Notes	A scaffold of the notes is preprinted for the students. Students are required to listen and fill in key words in the notes. Guided notes can also be used a study guide for tests.

Figure 1.

Vocabulary exploration.

personal anguish, we came to the realization that many of our ELLs are lacking the understanding of academic words, so using academic words to teach creates some very real problems. Cummins (2000) explained in great detail what we have observed in the classroom. Our students have a really good grasp of social English. Cummins (2000) refers to this level of English understanding formally as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) informally as "playground language." This ability to communicate with their peers and others in English is very deceptive. Their parents and teachers see them carrying on extensive conversations in English and mistake that social interaction for knowledge of academic English. Most of the time the students themselves do not know what they do not know when it comes to academic language. While BICS is fine for functioning in a social situation, we know that BICS alone will not be enough when they approach the material in a high school classroom or when they take the high stakes standardized tests. What we know that they need is academic English. Cummins calls this Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) or "classroom English." CALP requires abstract analytical thinking and expression of complex meaning that is primarily *acquired through the written word*. This obviously makes our job much more challenging. What we have come to realize that our students at the high school level do not have these skills or much foundational language. Our obligation is to meet them at their current understanding of English vocabulary (BICS) and move them into proficiency in academic English.

Biology as a subject requires that student know more new terms than any other subject.

Students who are proficient in basic skills such as reading and writing in their native language can transfer that knowledge and understanding to their new language. Cummins (2000) recognized that students must reach a certain threshold level of proficiency in their first language to support academic achievement in their second language, what he called the *threshold hypothesis*. What we have observed in our situation is that many, if not most, of our students have limited or no basic skills in their native language. Although they may be able to communicate in their native language, they are not using academic vocabulary in that native language. Neither language has a means by which to understand academic subject matter.

Once we know where to begin with what the students do understand, we can create a *means* to teach them biology. Krashen (1982) proposed two theories of language acquisition that really made sense to us. *The Theory of Comprehensible Input* states that students must be given information that they can understand. We know that we cannot use academic language to teach them the subject matter. A conscious effort to give multiple simplified examples of new subject matter is required. We must look for cultural connections to heighten interest and comprehension. We have also noted several strategies that seem to improve student comprehension that we will discuss later in the article (Santa, Havens, & Valdes, 2004).

(cont.)

Lack of classroom participation is exacerbated by our students' lack of basic skills. Many are intimidated by a feeling of inadequacy in their language skills. Some speak very little while others choose to goof off to draw attention away from their lack of comprehension Krashen's (1982) *Theory of the Affective Filter* explains what we have observed and makes us aware of the importance of providing a safe learning environment whereby students can participate fully.

Taking these theories and other theories of language acquisition into account, we would like to share some lessons we have modified to address these special needs of our ELLs. Keep in mind that we have not been teaching for years and years. To come into the classroom and revamp absolutely everything that we teach is a remarkably overwhelming task. To maintain our sanity and maintain some sort of a personal life, we have strategically made changes to our lessons bit by bit as we move toward lessons that eventually will use all of what we have been taught. We daily take what we have learned and add to that what is working in our unique classrooms. Here are some lesson ideas that can be incorporated.

We begin new units in biology by frontloading. We find that by frontloading a lesson we are able to enlist the interest of the student and bring an awareness of any prior knowledge that the students may have of the subjectmatter. It is at this time we are most cognizant of the cultural backgrounds of the students. The materials used for frontloading can be conversational, video, or even current event readings that have a high interest value. Academic words that are needed to explain the upcoming new concept are introduced so that the students can recognize and make connections to the new material. An example of an activity that we have used is a simple *ABC word find sheet*. As a video on the subject is played the students are asked to listen for and write down important vocabulary that they hear and see on the screen. This strategy improves their listening skills, activates prior knowledge, and piques their interest in the subject.

We came to the realization that many of our ELLs are lacking the understanding of academic words, so using academic words to teach creates some very real problems.

Another frontloading overarching idea that we have used is that of identifying, clarifying, and graphically representing *The Big Picture*. The format for *The Big Picture* is from the student perspective and is written: "I learned that _____ for example_____." A classroom example would be: ***I learned*** that macromolecules are important for the body ***for example*** glucose gives the body energy. *The Big Picture* allows the student to focus on the main idea that is being taught. Sometimes the smaller parts of the lesson may become overwhelming, but if a student can refer back the main idea, *The Big Picture*, their comprehension is enhanced.

Biology as a subject requires that student know more new terms than any other subject. Enhancement of the student's academic vocabulary is mandatory. Biology can be used as a vehicle to learning academic language. We spend time in class talking about word structure and the meanings of root words that will help with new language acquisition. For example we teach that the word *biology* can be separated into its roots: *bio* means life and *logy* means the study of. Many words in biology can be learned by directly teaching students how to recognize and learn new words based upon their roots.

It is every teacher's obligation to make sure that his or her students can read and comprehend what they are reading. Our students come to us with a variety of reading skills and at reading levels from second grade on. For us to be able to teach our students we must carefully examine the written materials that we provide our students. We also know that CALP or academic language is acquired through the written word. Unfortunately our written materials do not always meet the needs of our students. Changes often have to be made. We have turned our attention to classroom activities that can be used to increase engagement and understanding

of the written word. Textbooks written at a high school level are not appropriate for our students without modifications and extensive pre-, during-, and postreading strategies. Some of the prereading strategies that most teachers use in the classroom are to skim the text and preteach those new vocabulary works that are a large part of the "language of science." These are new vocabulary terms that are essential for the concept being taught. What we have noticed in our classes that a lot of the *connecting words* used in the readings are unfamiliar to our students. We often take the time as a class to skim the reading and find those nonhighlighted words that the students do not know, words that we as educators often assume that a 14- or 15-year-old must already know. By taking a few moments before reading to identify and define in simpler terms these words, the frustration level of our students for reading the assignment decreases while comprehension and often enthusiasm increases. We try to find articles that would be interesting to students to pique their interest in a new topic. For example when we were studying viruses, we read an article from a science magazine called "Killers Without a Cure." We found that the students did not know many of the connecting words in the article. Connecting words, for us, are the

A conscious effort to give multiple simplified examples of new subject matter is required.

(cont.)

potentially primates inquiring epidemic mechanism illness

trigger spur endothelial hazardous syringes grisliest culprit

massive vaccine rat droppings CDC particles charcoal

afflicted spawn outbreak vaccine droplets bowels

WORD SPLASH
(Circle the word(s) you are not familiar with in the reading)

filovirus Petri dish life threatening epidemiologists quarantine surprisingly

infectious rodent multimammate rat antibiotics slang immune system

cytoplasm microbe anti-parasite airborne RNA biohazard

Figure 2 Word Splash

everyday words we took for granted that they would know or words that could be easily deciphered if read in the context of the reading. We ended up using a strategy called Word Splash. In this strategy, students would skim the article to see if there were unfamiliar words in the article. We would compile a list of those words before we read the article. (Refer to Figure 2 Word Splash) We would put those words on an overhead, give the students a copy as well, and as a class go through the list and try to get a sense about what those words meant. After we discussed the words, the students would read the article and their comprehension of the content material would improve.

Passive Voice

In organisms, some polysaccharides function as storehouses of the energy contained in sugars. Two polysaccharides that store energy in this way are starch, which is made by plants, and glycogen, which is made by animals. Both starch and glycogen are made of hundreds of linked glucose molecules. Cellulose is a polysaccharide that provides structural support for plants. Humans cannot digest cellulose. Thus you cannot digest wood, which is mostly cellulose.

Many substances, such a proteins and polysaccharides, are too large to be transported by carrier proteins. These substances are moved across the membrane by vesicles. The movement of a substance into the cell is called endocytosis. During endocytosis, the cell membrane forms a pouch around a substance. The pouch then closes up and pinches off from the membrane to form a vesicle. Vesicles formed by endocytosis may fuse with a lysosome or other organelle.

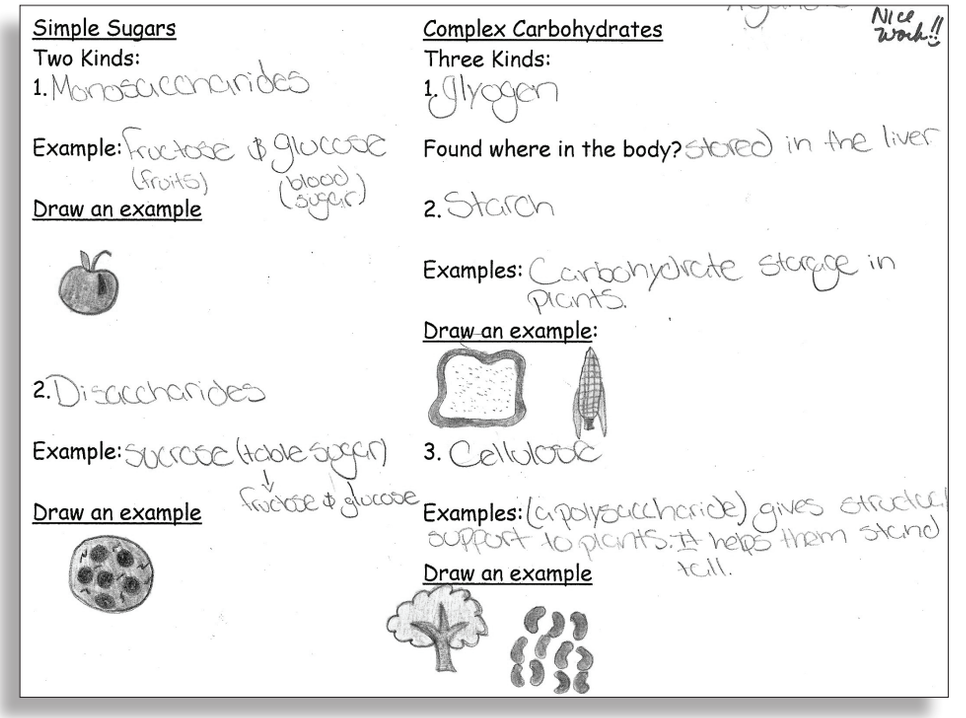
Figure 3

During reading we have used a strategy of *READ-SAY-WRITE*. This strategy can be done using partners, whereby the students read a paragraph, explain what they have read to their partner, and then cooperatively come up with a sentence that explains what they just read. This strategy improves comprehension while lowering the affective filter because the students are working with a partner and can share ideas in a less inhibiting manner. While listening to each other explain concepts, ELL students are given an opportunity to hear and speak what is being studied. This strategy can be used in a number of ways depending on how the teacher wishes to focus it. A teacher may wish to group students according to language or reading abilities. If differentiated readings are chosen, the groupings can be done accordingly. If a student needs assistance, a teacher may group that student with a willing helper student.

We now teach two kinds of ELLs at our school, those who are identified as ELLs and those who are not identified but are.

On occasion we noted that even with these strategies our current text is written in unfamiliar grammatical structure such as passive construction. (Refer to Figure 3 for an Example of Passive Voice.) In lieu of spending a great deal of time teaching English sentence structure, we have sought and occasionally found outside reading materials, or we have rewritten the materials in a more comprehensible active voice. We identify the important information, that which is vital to the lesson while meeting state standards, and remove extraneous information. This is not "dumbing down" but highlighting and focusing on the essential concepts.

Of course in a science classroom the lab experiments are a critical component of the curriculum. Some experiments are written beyond the comprehension level of our students. Nearly all of our labs have been rewritten to make the lab more accessible



Exploring for comprehension.

to our students. This does not mean that the academic words are eliminated; they are addressed directly in the lab by highlighting and explaining within the context of the lab. An activity that is sometimes used is to have students preread the lab and then draw a step-by-step cartoon of the procedures for the lab. By incorporating vocabulary terms into the drawing, the students get additional exposure to academic words.

Additionally, there are many other activities that accompany a science classroom besides lab work. Many of those activities can incorporate the written language with little effort. Paper labs are those activities that use manipulatives. These activities can include cutting and pasting, putting processes in order, and having students move around to different learning stations. Language can be brought into these activities in many manners. Simply labeling the materials will help to increase a student's vocabulary. Biology consists of a number of processes that must be memorized in order, so we can use a *Puzzle Pattern*. A procedure is made into a number of written or drawn steps that are manipulated by the student who will put them into the proper order. The *Puzzle Pattern* can be created on many different language comprehension levels. Pictures can be used exclusively or in combination with words, or it can be exclusively written out. Like the *Puzzle Patterns*, matching card manipulatives can be created for ELLs with different language levels. The cards can be used to learn new vocabulary and to learn ordinal processes. (See Figure 4 for Matching Cards.) With the matching cards, students can also write down the process and use the written material as notes on the topic.

The idea surfaced that perhaps there was something awry in our understanding of what was taking place in our classrooms.

We often give notes in a *guided* fashion. Students are required to fill in the blanks as they follow along with a teacher lecture that is enhanced with a PowerPoint or overhead transparencies. We employ this strategy because of the amount of material we are required to cover in the Biology curriculum set forth by our district and the State of Illinois. By receiving the *guided notes,* the students are able to focus on the essential vocabulary and have the formal definition prewritten for them. These written notes can later be used as a study tool when students are preparing for test. Notes are not the only way we focus on essential vocabulary words. We often use *Word Map* for students to construct their own meaning of essential vocabulary words. (See Figure 5 Vocabulary.) We have had the most success in implementing the *Word Map* scheme as adopted by our district because students are usually familiar with its layout and usage. Our *Word Maps* include the formal definition of the term, the definition in the student's own words, a graphical or pictorial representation of the word, and a meaningful sentence using the word.

Assessment

Accountability for both teaching and learning

(cont.)

Name _____ **Period** _____
Objectives: Organic Chemistry

1. I can describe the four most important types of organic macromolecules: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids and nucleic acids.

2. I can name the elements that are in the four most important types of organic macromolecules: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids and nucleic acids.

3. I can tell the building blocks of the four most important types of organic macromolecules: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids and nucleic acids.

4. I can describe the function of the four most important types of organic macromolecules: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids and nucleic acids.

5. I can give examples of the four most important types of organic macromolecules: carbohydrates, proteins, lipids and nucleic acids.

6. I can give examples of foods that are made of carbohydrates, proteins, lipids

Pre-Check/Post-Check: Topic – Organic Chemistry
Directions: In the space before the term placed on of the following symbols:

1 = I don't know what this word means and I need more help.
2 = I have some idea of what this word means but I need more examples.
3 = I know what this word means and can explain it to another person.
4 = I know more about what this word means than I was taught. I can use it in my writing and in my conversations.

Pre-check		Post-check
	_____**organic chemistry** _____	
	_____ **carbohydrates**_____	
	_____**monosaccharide** _____	
	_____**disaccharide** _____	
	_____**polysaccharide** _____	
	_____ **lipid**_____	
	_____**protein** _____	
	_____ **amino acid** _____	
	_____ **nucleic acid** _____	
	_____ **nucleotide** _____	
	_____**DNA** _____	
	_____ **RNA** _____	
	_____ **ATP** _____	

Figure 6

is done through assessments. Like it or not, standardized testing is how we as teachers and students are also measured. In our experience there often appears to be a discrepancy between informal and formal assessments with our students. Verbally our students are able to answer the questions and explain the concepts so we know that they are learning the material. Unfortunately, the standardized tests are not given to our students orally. We can assess our own classroom lessons by rewriting much of the book created test bank questions. Even when we write the questions in a more active voice, our students are still struggling to answer the question. For example, when given an "either/or" question, they often answer "yes." This indicates to us that they are not carefully reading the questions or employing good test taking strategies. Hence, in addition to teaching the "what" that is on tests, we also have to teach our students the "how" to not only succeed on our tests but on the standardized exams as well. With the enhanced emphasis on college readiness standards, teachers and students are placed under ever increasing pressure to perform. This is a very real struggle for our ELLs when they have so little CALP. It will require a great deal of effort on behalf of everyone to have ELLs catch up with their native English speaking grade level peers. (Refer to Figure 6 for Academic Vocabulary in an Organic Chemistry Lesson.)

Conclusion

Teaching high school ELLs, both those identified as ELL students and those who have voluntarily exited the ESL program, is an often daunting task. However, they are our current population of students, and we see both the strengths and weaknesses they bring to the classroom. Through what we have learned in Project Success we now better understand the needs of our ELLs and how to start to address many of those special needs. Another realization we have made is that many of our colleagues are unaware of the both the needs of ELLs and the strategies teachers can use to enhance ELLs' learning. By sharing the knowledge we have gained and advocating for our students, we help our colleagues understand the needs of English Language Learners. Our students are benefiting because we are creating a safe learning environment that increases their English language proficiency. Through the study of biology, we are introducing them to strategies that they can use throughout their academic careers. ■

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Brigid Trimble and Barbara Roth attended Northern Illinois University and earned Bachelor of Science degrees while completing teaching credentials in May 2005. Even though they attended some of the very same classes, it wasn't until the following August that they became close friends when they were both hired to teach science at Elgin High School in Elgin, Illinois. A few years later they decided to enroll in the Project Success program through NIU, each earning a Certificate of Graduate study in Teaching English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education in December 2009. As an extension of their work, Barb and Brigid are members of the PBIS Committee (a positive behavior initiative) and Parent University (an outreach program to Spanish-speaking parents). Brigid spends her free time bird watching and running with her husband, Ted. Barb spends her free time playing tennis and hiking with her husband, Jim.

The Right to ROAR: Integrated Vocabulary Instruction for English Language Learners

Chris Liska Carger - Northern Illinois University

This article describes a project that places undergraduate students in bilingual elementary school classes and teaches them to teach reading through literature and art.

For the past 12 years I have been involved with a project currently entitled Reaching Out Through Art and Reading (ROAR). The project began as an initiative of Northern Illinois University's Art Education program with the goal of providing field experiences for their majors which would put their students in diverse classrooms in the city of Chicago. Students were transported by bus to Chicago, which is approximately 70 miles east of our large state university.

I heard about the program through the Art Department's field experiences coordinator and asked if I could get involved and connect children's picture books with the art projects that were being facilitated by their preservice art teachers. I brought some multicultural picture books to the art instructors to show them the beautiful art work in the illustrations and they agreed to add a literacy component to their program originally called "The Chicago Experience."

Working with the Art Department was a wonderful collaborative experience. I met with their students and prepared them to do good read-alouds and discussions of high quality multicultural picture books that I selected. I tried to find books that reflected the ethnicity of the neighborhood schools we visited and that were easy to connect with art projects. For example, we read *Going Home* (Bunting, 1998), which used various Mexican crafts to create borders for the book which told the story of a Mexican-American family that traveled to Mexico by car for the Christmas holidays. The elementary school we were visiting that week had a 96% Latino enrollment, and visiting family in Mexico was a common experience for most of the children. The art instructors had their students direct a traditional Mexican craft activity making hammered tin ornaments which were featured in the borders of David Diaz's award-winning illustrations. Both the elementary students and the college students enjoyed the experience. Many of our college students had never worked with linguistic minority children and were pleasantly surprised at the children's ability to understand an illustrated story and art project directions in their second language, English. College students were given small groups (3-5) of children to teach in two hour blocks of time so they had significant opportunities to verbally interact with students and build rapport with them.

I also explain to my college students that for English Language Learners even Tier 1 words may be novel.

During another visit, this time to an African-American neighborhood school, the art students read Julius Lester's version of *John Henry* (1999), the tall tale of a wondrous African-American railroad worker. A rainbow was featured by illustrator Jerry Pinkney in this book whenever John Henry was hammering through mountainous terrain as the railroad was being constructed. The reader of the story came dressed in overalls and a cap, carrying an ax just like the character was pictured in the book. The elementary students made pastel chalk rainbows on black backgrounds for the art project that day, learning how to use that media effectively. At one point during the activity a young child asked if she could touch the long blond hair of one of our university students and said, "I never touched hair like that in my life." Our student replied "Sure, and can I touch your hair because I've never touched hair like yours in my life either." The journals that our preservice teachers wrote were filled with moments like this where cross-cultural learning and the breaking down of stereotypes were palpably occurring.

I saw many benefits blossoming for both the college and elementary students during The Chicago Experience years. Our college students experienced diversity firsthand; many of their fears about teaching in urban neighborhoods were broken down. Some wrote in their journals that they now were considering applying to school districts in diverse areas when before this class they would never have considered doing that. They also learned how to integrate literature across content areas as our lessons crossed not only art and literacy disciplines, but also social studies and science as well.

Through ROAR, teachers offer not only rich instruction in vocabulary, they facilitate rich integrated vocabulary instruction. ord needs to be repeated about 10-12 times for it to be remembered

The elementary students saw reflections of themselves in the culturally congruous books we were using in the program. They were very attentive during the read-alouds and made thoughtful comments during the book discussions. The readers also discussed vocabulary so students were enriching their language comprehension. And, of course, students were thrilled to use special art materials and learn varied media techniques. Teachers reported to us that their elementary students looked forward to our visits and repeatedly asked when we were coming next.

After about three years, the two art instructors that I collaborated with left the university due to a retirement and a location change. The Art Department could not find instructors willing to continue their work and decided to end the program which required dedicating full days for the trip into Chicago. At that point I received permission to continue it within my department, Literacy Education. The focus of the project changed somewhat from art techniques to literacy learning in the primary grades, and ROAR was born.

Through ROAR I emphasized literacy development with young linguistic minority learners because that is my specialization and it is an area of great need in our state as bilingual immigrant populations move farther and farther into the suburbs surrounding Chicago. The classes we visited were a mixture of young monolingual and bilingual students. I mixed classrooms when possible so that the bilingual children had both their monolingual peers modeling English for them as well as their teachers demonstrating their own use of the English language. School administrators also reported that vocabulary development was a goal for all of their students, whether monolingual or bilingual learners. My emphases became the reading aloud of high quality children's literature and vocabulary development.

Reading aloud to children and discussing what is read is one of the most agreed upon research-based recommendations for encouraging emergent reading in the field. The famous *Nation of Readers* report in 1985

(cont.)

Exploring pumpkins in two languages.

along with well-executed studies with emergent readers by researchers like Sulzby and Teale among others, supported read-alouds as being the most important activity for building toward early reading success. Another long-standing activity that enjoys widespread acceptance in the field of reading is vocabulary development. Hart & Risley (1995) completed a careful study of early language development and found that three-year-olds in highly professional families had an average vocabulary of 1,100 words while their peers from working class families had a vocabulary of about 650 words. Three-year-olds from welfare families had just over 400 words in their repertoire. Farcus (2001) and Juel, Biancarosa, Coker, and Deffes (2003), among others, found that although language stimulation in early school experiences could facilitate growth in vocabulary, the original gap did not narrow.

With this research in mind, I worked with my preservice teachers to provide engaging read-alouds with discussions and direct vocabulary instruction. Art was used as a hands-on method to enrich and amplify vocabulary for both monolingual and bilingual students. Vocabulary games made by the preservice teachers, now from the Elementary and Early Childhood Education programs, wereadded to the project lessons as well as visual cues and discussions of meanings for novel vocabulary. These discussions were far more than defining a word and used child-friendly, comprehensible language. Preservice teachers looked at elementary level dictionaries but then discussed the best way to meaningful explain words to their young learners as part of their lesson preparation in weekly seminars. The art projects became less sophisticated but were still thoroughly enjoyed by the children. While my college students were working on the art projects with the children, I instructed them to continue discussing the books that were read and to continue using the targeted vocabulary words in their conversations.

Linguistic minority children typically enter kindergarten with far less than the average 5,000 word vocabulary that English monolingual students know.

The importance of vocabulary development for language and literacy learning cannot be overemphasized. Linguistic minority children typically enter kindergarten with far less than the average 5,000 word vocabulary that English monolingual students know. They often face the double–edged challenge of being nonnative speakers of their language of instruction and low socioeconomic status. Hart & Risley (1995) concluded that children from high socioeconomic status had 16 times more language stimulation than children from low socioeconomic status families.

It takes much effort to enrich and amplify an individual's vocabulary. It requires many exposures to new vocabulary for an individual to acquire it. Since 1985, research has informed us that a word needs to be repeated about 10-12 times for it to be remembered (Nagy & Hernay). Rich Instruction, a term used by vocabulary researchers Beck, McKeown, Mezynski, and Stahl & Fairbanks since the mid-eighties, has been shown to improve students'comprehension of vocabulary at deep

evels. It includes meaningful, comprehensible discussions of word meanings, explaining many examples of word usage across contexts, and providing examples and nonexamples of word uses (Beck & McKeown, 2007). The work of Beck and McKeown in 2007 concluded that Rich Instruction along with Text Talk, which promotes the construction of meaning based upon trade book read-alouds, can improve the oral vocabularies of young, low-income children. Many of the children in the ROAR program are from low-income Mexican-American families that have the additional challenge of nonnative English speaking households when it comes to English language vocabulary development. In ROAR, we are careful to maintain a positive view of our bilingual students' dual language abilities and often use storybooks with Spanish words sprinkled throughout English texts. Yet the task of enriching Englishvocabulary is at the center of all that is done in ROAR—reading a book,playing vocabulary games prepared by the preservice teachers, discussing the book with varied levels of questions, and discussions during art activities. ROAR teachers are often so good at creating engaging vocabulary games such as Bingo, computer-based vocabulary Jeopardy, and handmade board games that they need to watch their timing so they can complete the art connection activities. Through ROAR, teachers offer not only rich instruction in vocabulary, they facilitate rich integrated vocabulary instruction. The topic, theme, or art technique in the children's literature provides the thread throughout the entire lesson. Because ROAR teachers receive input from input from classroom teachers regarding topics and themes for the book selections, ROAR's vocabulary work is also integrated with the students' content area instruction. The following table exemplifies some typical ROAR vocabulary games, art activities and books:

Title	***My Abuelita***	**Animal Poems of the Iguazú/Animalario del Iguazú**
Author	Tony Johnston	Francisco X. Alarcón
Illustrator	Yuyi Morales	Maya Christina Gonzalez
Target words	storyteller, grandma, starry, blossoms, swoop	ancestors, jaguar, turtle, hummingbird, serenade, borders, extinct, waterfalls, rainforest
Grade Levels	1-2	2,3,4
Cultural and/or Content Connection	Latino; the art of storytelling	Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay; various endangered classes of animals in the rainforest
Vocabulary game/activity	picture dictionary	bingo (9 squares)
Art Project	starry feathered crowns (cardstock, glitter, feathers, metallic paper stars)	air dry clay animals (classified as mammals, birds, insects amphibians or reptiles), markers

(cont.)

Literacy development through art.

Using trade books, children's literature, is an important aspect of this program because trade books offer a rich, elaborated vocabulary versus the restricted, controlled vocabularies of the reading textbooks most classrooms are using. In ROAR, we use both narrative storybooks and nonfictional information books for reading aloud. The informational books have been particularly helpful for clarifying and reinforcing previously taught basic science and social studies concepts. Outstanding illustrations in these books add rich visual cues to content concepts.

Selecting target words from trade books is another area that requires thoughtful planning. Few teachers receive training in the selection of target vocabulary. I use a tier system developed by McKeown, Beck and Kucan (2002) to teach college students which words to target. According to their system, Tier 1 words are those that most students already have heard and understand. Tier 2 words are those with which students are somewhat familiar but more sophisticated than they would typically use. They may have heard this type of word and have some idea of its meaning. Tier 3 words are those that are completely unfamiliar, novel words for students. For example, *sad* could be considered a Tier 1 word; *sorrowful* could be considered a Tier 2 word; *melancholy* could exemplify a Tier 3 word. Some teachers make the mistake of selecting only Tier 3 words from a picture book, which can be frustrating to children, particularly English Language Learners. Also, Tier 3 words are often very specialized vocabulary relating to a particular context. It will be more helpful to students to learn words that will be useful to them in varied contexts. I also explain to my college students that for English Language Learners even Tier 1 words may be novel. So we concentrate on Tiers 1 and 2, always keeping in mind the usefulness of the targeted words and the need to recycle them. When we come across a Tier

Reading aloud to children and discussing what is read is one of the most agreed upon research-based recommendations for encouraging emergent reading.

3 type word, we explain it, show a visual cue if possible, but we don't typically include it in vocabulary games unless the children show particular interest in it or it is helpful in a certain content area.

The integrated approach that ROAR takes in vocabulary development fits well with research in second language reading by Freeman and Freeman (2000) showing that English Language Learners do well with language that is taught thematically across content areas. Breaking learning into discrete separated skills is not the answer to English Language Learner needs although it is the most typical fare that they are served in American schools.

The elementary students saw reflections of themselves in the culturally congruous books we were using.

Children in ROAR benefit in another way that is hard to quantify. They come to enjoy books. They fill out a survey after each book reading and their responses are overwhelmingly favorable to the books they experience. College teachers also make note of the types of responses the children make to the books, and over the semester the number of self-to-text and text-to-world responses always increase. Teachers begin to hear text-to-text responses as well as children connect book themes and notice favorite illustrators' work. Increasing interest and connections to and among books are wonderful results of our program, for we believe that forms the basis for lifelong enjoyment of reading.

I believe that ROAR could be duplicated by classroom teachers in collaboration with art teachers. One important key to vocabulary development is repetition of new words in varied contexts. If a teacher targeted several words from a trade book during read-aloud time, then integrated them again into a subject area such as science or social studies, then students heard the wordsagain through an art project that linked to the trade book, it could be very helpful to vocabulary development. It could provide avenues for Rich Instruction with the goal of narrowing the vocabulary gap that exists for many low-income, bilingual children early in their educational experiences. Such a program can also address the lack of emphasis upon vocabulary acquisition for mainstream students as well which is widely recognized in schools' curricula (Beck & McKeown, 2007, Juel et al., 2003). An engaging children's book, vocabulary discussion and games, a motivating art project—these are simple tools with which to build upROARiously enjoyable, research-based, rich, integrated vocabulary instruction for English Language learners and mainstream students. ■

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Meeting the Needs of Adolescent English Language Learners

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Adolescent English learners arguably attend school in the one of the most precarious environments of all school-aged children. Some come to the United States with severely interrupted formal schooling experiences, unfamiliar with common school routines such as raising one's hand to standing in line, while others arrive with schooling experiences that could easily rival the best our country has to offer. High schools on the receiving end need to address the needs of both of these students; however, few have the capacity, and many do not have the will. This article discusses the schooling environment in which the overwhelming majority of adolescent immigrants must negotiate on a daily basis upon entering the U. S. high school system. I conclude with a few suggestions to provide a more productive and less stressful environment for all involved.

The United States is presently in the middle of a giant wave of immigration from all corners of the world. Within the period between 2000-2007, 10.3 million immigrants came to the United States, the highest seven-year periodof immigration in American history (Camarota, 2007). In fact, "immigration accounts for virtually all of the national increase in public school enrollment over the last two decades. In 2007, there were 10.8 million school-age children from immigrant families in the United States" (Camarota, 2007, p.2).

Of those 10.8 million, the fastest growing population of immigrant students has been the high school-aged immigrant (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Chu Clewell, 2000). In the 10-year period from 1992-2002, this group's number increased by 70% and now comprises 10.5% of the nation's K-12 enrollment. This is up from 5% in 1990 (Hoffman & Sable, 2006; Kindler, 2002).

Although these statistics are impressive and imply large influxes of English Learners (ELs) within classroom settings, they do not explicate their experiences within the schools. In fact, the experiences that adolescent English Learners have in their high school classrooms are unique and are quite different than both their younger elementary counterparts as well as their native English speaking cohorts. Eloquently, Olsen (1997) describes the high school-aged immigrant experience as such:

> . . . the logistics of schooling can be problematic. Bells ring and everyone moves around, lockers need to be opened, and food bought in cafeterias. Moving from class to class in large schools, few students are able to develop close relationships with any one teacher. With thinking and learning processes shaped by other cultural and national backgrounds, they need to figure out how we teach and learn in U.S. schools. Speaking out in class, participating in discussions, the relative informality between teacher and students are all quite foreign to students who have been

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> educated in other cultures and nations. . . . (p.155)

Life is often difficult and confusing enough for any teenager, but to "add a new culture, a different language, a different school system, different teaching styles and expectations, new friends, and an all together different environment to the cauldron compounds the difficulties that adolescent immigrant students must deal with in order to be academically successful" (Cohen, 2007, p.165).

This article explores some of the issues and challenges American high schools face while working with immigrant students. It is divided into three subsections: structural challenges, lack of teacher preparedness, and exclusion of immigrant students from the mainstream. Within each section, some possible solutions are presented.

Structural Challenges

At the high school level, many administrators and teachers are challenged by how best to structure their schools to accommodate immigrant students (Adger & Peyton, 1999; Olsen, 1997; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). Traditional high schools are organized by academic departments (i.e., English Dept., Science Dept, Math Dept. etc), and often teachers within one department have little or nothing to do programmatically or pedagogically with teachers in other departments. That is, Social Studies teachers traditionally do not plan with English teachers, despite covering similar topics in their classes (i.e., reading *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne, 1850/2005) in English while learning about the Puritans in Social Studies). The departmentalization of the schools effectively bars language (English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and content (subject) teachers from working together to assist ELs (Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). By default, content area teachers (and counselors and administrators) leave any issues with ELs to the ESL teachers, instead of sharing responsibility for their academic and personal welfare (Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). This "us" vs. "them" mentality is unfortunately pervasive in many schools across the country regardless of the numbers of ELs enrolled in their school.

If we welcome them as new members of our school community where they feel like valuable actors, their sense of belonging will increase.

Some high schools, however, have taken it upon themselves to restructure their schools to better assist their ELs (and by proxy the mainstreamed students as well). In New York City, the International School (Walqui, 2000) houses approximately 450 students from 56 countries speaking 40 different languages and is held in the basement of LaGuardia Community College. The school's curriculum is organized by thematically-based, interdisciplinary units. For example, the unit "Crime and Punishment" integrates English, American studies, and mathematics. Teachers in each of the disciplines collaboratively prepare and design two- or three-week units with a culminating presentation that serves as the assessment. Although English is stressed, students may use their native language to mediate their learning.

Calexico High School in Calexico, California (Walqui, 2000), where 65 percent of the students are ELs, has also gone through tremendous restructuring. This high school spent years restructuring its existing programs to create an academically rigorous environment for all its students. The school did away with their tracking system and began offering content classes in Spanish, English, and sheltered English. The same number of credits is granted whether the class is taught in Spanish, English, or sheltered English, and none of the classes is a watered-down version of the other. Because of these and other changes, Calexico High School has lowered its dropout rate to well below the state average, to 14.5 percent. The most promising result of this restructuring is that the mainstreamed and ESL teachers worked together to restructure the school, thus making it a positive learning environment for all of its students.

If these examples of reform are too extreme for your school, it is not necessary to restructure an entire school. On a much smaller and probable scale, individual teachers from various subjects can take upon themselves to work together and plan accordingly (i.e., English and Social Studies; Science and Math). This, however, requires common planning periods and scheduling support by the administration. By having the different content area teachers working and planning instruction together, it provides an environment for the ELs where they are repeatedly reinforcing similar information but in different contexts. Moreover, these interdisciplinary units are more reflective of the world outside of the classroom walls where students can naturally see the connections between the subject matter.

It is okay if the ELs do not speak English correctly; they need practice, which means making lots of mistakes, before they fine-tune their English speaking proficiency.

The structure of the school also plays an important role in developing ELs' self-concept as members of the school community. Schools have to be cautious where they place the ESL classes within the hierarchy of departments and classes. If the EL population is new to the region and the numbers of ELs are substantial enough, the school will have to either create an entirely new ESL department or structure the English department to include a subgroup of teachers who work with ELs. Unfortunately, both the departmental status and subdepartmental status frequently create a "sub" mentality for those teachers and students affiliated with the department, causing embarrassment and humiliation on the part of ESL teachers and students alike (Derwing, DeCorby, Ichikawa, & Jamieson, 1999).

To help with this common phenomenon, time must be given to ELs and mainstreamed students to interact, whether in gym and art classes or in a content subject class, where the mainstreamed students visit (as a class) the ESL class to work collaboratively on a common task. By having one group interact with the other, the two separate groups will learn about each other, thereby reducing the ignorance of one group's knowledge of the other. Furthermore, this interaction can provide a venue in which the ELs can utilize their new English skills as well as learn content knowledge, and the native English speakers can learn both content and culturally based knowledge. Via these interactions between the two groups, it is hoped that not only content knowledge will be learned, but also that the student paradigm that focuses on "those students" will be changed to "we students."

Likewise with teachers, due to the common practice of schools physically segregating the ESL classrooms by clumping them together on a separate wing or floor within the high school (Katz, 1999) (I visited two schools where the ESL classes were placed in the portable classrooms in the parking lot!), the mainstream teachers (as well as administration) often take on the belief that "those ESL students are not my responsibility." By strategically placing the ESL classrooms interspersed within the mainstreamed hallways of the school and having the two groups mix in content classes on a regular basis, both the teachers and the students become more open to integration and less apt to buy into the premise of the "us vs. them" paradigm.

Lack of Teacher Preparedness

The purpose of this section is not to place blame on teachers, but to explain what is happening in the schools due to the lack of preparation many teachers have regarding teaching ELs. The fact that teachers are placed in classrooms with students who do not speak their language, with students who may have literacy skills below those of the "regular" child in his or her classroom, and with students who come from different cultures and belief systems, poses difficulties in instruction. Teachers all over the country are doing the best they can with the materials and knowledge they have to work with the ELs within their classrooms. With that said, however, there is indeed a critical shortage of well prepared teachers nationwide

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who can work effectively with the larger and growing number of nonnative English speaking students (Cornelius, 2002; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). Data from the 2003/4 Schools and Staffing Survey (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2007) indicate that fewer than three percent of teachers who work with ELs reported holding a degree in ESL or bilingual education. In fact, 27% of all schools with bilingual/ESL staff vacancies and 33% in central city school districts report finding the vacancies "difficult" or "impossible" to fill (Strizek et al., 2007).

Due to the scarcity of teachers who have extensive experience or training working with ELs, a few common characteristics have surfaced within classrooms with ELs throughout the country. And interestingly, these phenomena are based on commonly held beliefs of language acquisition.

Immersion is the best way to learn a language

This is probably the belief most expressed over all beliefs. The fact is, however, if one were to be immersed in a language one does not understand, all of the talking one hears will simply be noise to the learner. The question bilingual advocates like to ask is, "If you were to go to a classroom in China not knowing Chinese, how much content would you understand?" Now, this question has two answers. The first answer is "nothing at all" if one has not had a strong literacy and content foundation in one's native language. Not only would one not have the language background, but one would not have the content/subject matter knowledge, either. The second answer is "maybe a little." If one had numerous years of math instruction and found oneself sitting in a math classroom in China, one may have some inkling of what is transpiring due to the prior math experiences and knowledge. The answer overwhelmingly depends on the student's prior schooling experiences (Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1996).

The fastest growing population of immigrant students has been the high school-aged immigrant.

This common belief of immersion plays out in high school classrooms by the teacher's requiring the students to only speak English. Sure, there are times that the students really need to be practicing their English. However, if the students are talking to each other in their native language, they may just be speaking about how to do the assignment the teacher just assigned. Or perhaps one student is translating for the other. The teacher needs to be open to the students having some dialogue in their native language. Not only will allowing students some freedom in their linguistic usage provide a space where the students feel an openness to self expression, but the students will feel a certain respect from the teacher because the teacher is not negating their language (Crawford, 2004). It is up to the teacher and the students together to find a balance of first (L1) and second language (L2) usage.

Learning a language requires memorizing and drilling

This belief probably has such prominence in the United States because many teachers were taught this way when they were in high school studying a foreign language. The question that I have for teachers who experienced this methodology as a student and are now replicating it as a teacher is, "How much of that foreign language in high school did you actually learn?" I have sat in many classrooms where the teacher is drilling the students on topics ranging from subject verb usage to correct pronoun usage. I have also experienced teachers providing worksheet packets as part of their main pedagogical practices. These decontextualized experiences that teachers feel are necessary to learn a language are actually providing an environment of confusion. Danling Fu (1995) in her book "*My Trouble is My English*" writes about four students from Laos at the middle and high school levels in New Hampshire. Their teachers give them the usual dosage of decontextualized spelling tests each Friday and worksheet after worksheet during the week. One of the students in the book studies English every night after school and during each free

moment she has during school. However, she becomes tremendously confused because she is studying as hard as she can (both memorizing words and doing worksheets—assignments her teachers had given her), but her English is not improving. In effect, what she is doing is becoming an expert on doing worksheets, but is neither becoming an orally proficient speaker nor an effective or efficient writer/reader of English. Unfortunately, she ultimately places blame on her own shoulders, when the true culprits in this scenario are the teachers. Often teachers will execute behavioral activities with ELs (Harklau, 1994a) because they think it is necessary to start with the basics. Moreover, it is believed that the students will not pick up any bad habits of language usage (i.e., double negatives, run-on sentences, etc.) because the language production is controlled (via drilling and worksheets). The truth, however, lies in the contrary. Just as a baby learns to walk by falling, the best action a teacher can take is to provide a venue in which the students can interact on a daily basis in English, whether that is on paper (i.e., dialogue journals) or orally (i.e., pair work, group work, etc.). The point is for the teacher to provide a venue in the classroom which the students are utilizing their new found English skills in meaningful and authentic ways. It is okay if the ELs do not speak English correctly; they need practice, which means making lots of mistakes, before they fine-tune their English speaking proficiency.

Exclusion of Immigrants from the Mainstream

Upon entering high school in the United States, adolescent immigrants are sometimes excluded from mainstream experiences. ELs have been known to be excluded from taking college-bound courses (Harklau, 1994a, 1994b). Due to ELs' limited English ability at the time of placement, administrators and teachers often falsely assume this to be a sign of weaker intelligence and place the students in lower track classes to compensate for this deficiency (Callahan, 2005). Harklau (1994a) has shownthat ELs placed in lower track classes are not exposed to the deeper thinking practices/ discourses of the higher level courses, but instead receive more rote memory, superficial level repeat and respond drills. Thus, the lower tracked ELs never receive the appropriate academic skills necessary for postsecondary education.

The point is for the teacher to provide a venue in the classroom which the students are utilizing their new found English skills in meaningful and authentic ways.

ELs have also been excluded from participating in after school clubs, social events, and extracurricular activities due to linguistic differences (Necochea & Romero, 1989). Sitting in a classroom where the over-the-speaker announcements are in English, ELs will not know that the softball tryouts are after school on Tuesday, or that the drama club is looking for actors/actresses for their next play. They may be interested in participating, but because they did not understand the announcements, they are excluded from those particular activities.

Moreover, ELs are frequently excluded from a school's accountability system (Glod & Paley, 2007; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2002; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). Traditionally, during times of standardized testing, principals exclude ELs for fear of lowering test results. This practice of exclusion still exists (Glod & Paley, 2007) despite the stipulation in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) mandating annual testing of every child, including ELs, (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2002) to make adequate yearly progress.

To solve these issues above, counselors, teachers, and administrators need to take into account that immigrant parents frequently do not understand the importance of after school activities and prefer that their children go straight home after school, where they are more contented with their children's safety. Moreover, ELs themselves may or may not understand the importance of extracurricular activities as a meaningful and enriching component of high school life.

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The school can provide open forums with parents and students to discuss (use a translator if necessary) the school's expectations of behavior, homework, inclass work, transportation, and after school activities. This time can be used to learn the parents' and students' expectations, as well. Coaches and representatives from the various extracurricular activities can attend this meeting to demonstrate their sincerity of openness and desire to have the ELs participate. If there is open communication, then there will be less confusion. When organizing these meetings, be sure to apply the old adage, "Offer food and they will come."

Conclusion

Newcomers to U. S. high schools need not have a negative experience. The American high school is the introduction to American culture and language to these newcomer students. We should welcome them as human beings with needs and goals, just as we do with native English speaking students. If we approach their arrival as a problem and a hassle to be dealt with, then the likelihood of their not wanting to be there and ultimately becoming another dropout statistic increases. However, on the contrary, if we welcome them as new members of our school community where they feel like valuable actors, their sense of belonging will increase. The role of feeling a part of something bigger than themselves (i.e., a community) is quite powerful when one is struggling with so many issues already as an adolescent immigrant.

There is a tremendous amount of research and data on the experiences of high school immigrants. Likewise, there is a growing amount of information on how to improve schools and classrooms to assist ELs become as academically successful as possible. Although only a representative fraction of that research is cited in this article, it is my hope that this article will spark some interest to be more of an advocate for high school English learners. ■

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Designing Programs for ELLs: Leaving No ELL Behind in an Era of Diminishing Resources

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When the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) became law in January 2002, there was general support in the educational community for the explicit emphasis on traditionally marginalized groups, especially the fast growing demographic known as English language learners. Eight years later, there is growing angst in this same community over the increased emphasis on accountability manifested through what is perceived as excessive class time devoted to testing, and the failure of many districts to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) because of the very population of English language learners that has benefited from this legislation in so many other ways. Illinois is one of the very few states that still mandate bilingual education under certain conditions. But even in Illinois knowledge of these conditions by instructional leaders is sadly lacking in many districts, and bilingual education remains a source of controversy in local communities. The purpose of this article is to spell out some of the major issues regarding instruction of English language learners. What does the research say regarding effective programs of instruction for English language learners? What should all teachers and administrators know to best meet the needs of English language learners in achieving their academic goals?

Across the United States, children for whom English is not the home language comprise the fastest growing demographic group among school-age children ages 5 to 17. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the total population of enrolled English language learners increased by 284% from 1970 to 2006, in contrast to the entire population which increased by only 19.5% during this same period (NCES, 2009). And in this group, the fastest growing subgroup is comprised of Spanish-speakers. Passel and Cohn (2008), demographers at The Pew Hispanic Center, have predicted that "the Latino population, already the nation's largest minority group, will triple in size and will account for most of the nation's population growth from 2005 through 2050. Hispanics will make up 29% of the U.S. population in 2050, compared with 14% in 2005" (p. i).

According to the Office of English Language Acquisition, limited English proficient (LEP) students in U.S. schools speak more than 400 languages. Nearly 80% of LEP students speak Spanish; another 5% speak Asian languages (OELA, 2008). Six states have traditionally ranked at the top of the list of states with the largest numbers of children for whom English is not the primary or home language. These states include California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois. The states with the highest shares of English language learners in grades K-5 include California (47%), Nevada (29%), New York and Hawaii (28%), Texas (27%), and Florida (26%). Illinois comes in at the national average of 19%. However, these are not the states experiencing the fastest growth of this population. From 1990 to 2000,

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the states experiencing the fastest growth in the numbers of English language learners included Nevada (206%), North Carolina (153%), Georgia (148%), and Nebraska (125%).

When the Elementary and Second Education Act was reauthorized in 2001 and renamed No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110), there was general support in the educational community for the explicit emphasis on traditionally marginalized groups, especially the fast growing demographic of English language learners. New language in the law stipulated that English language learners would be expected to meet the same high standards as other children. However, gone from the newly reauthorized bill was any mention of bilingual education, which had been part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since 1968 and known as Title VII. The newly reauthorized bill now covered English language learners under Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students). Within the Department of Education, the former Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, or simply the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). Thischange in the language of policy at the national level did not go unnoticed by those who have studied implementation of programs for educating English language learners (Gándara & Rumberger, 2009).

The classroom should be an environment which promotes vocabulary acquisition through literacy and oral language practice.

Definitions and Terms

For teachers and administrators new to the field, the number of labels and acronyms used to describe populations and programs is daunting. The following are terms and definitions recognized by the Department of Education and found in the 2004-06 *Biennial Report to Congress* (OELA, 2008). The first set of terms includes definitions or names for instructional programs for English language learners that focus on developing literacy in two languages:

- ***Two-way Immersion*** or ***Two-way Bilingual*** or ***Dual Language***

The goal of a two-way immersion program is to develop strong skills and proficiency in both native language (L1) and English (L2). These programs include students with an English background and students from one other language background.

Instruction is in both languages, typically starting with a smaller proportion of instruction in English, and gradually moving to half of the instruction in each language. Students typically stay in the program throughout elementary school.

Dual language programs are similar to two-way immersion programs. When called dual language, programs may refer to students from one language group developing full literacy skills in two languages—L1 and English.

- ***Early Exit Transitional***

The goal of early exit transition programs is to develop English skills as quickly as possible, without delaying learning of academic core content. Instruction begins in L1, but rapidly moves to English; students typically are transitioned into mainstream classrooms with their English-speaking peers as soon as possible. This model may be the most common model of bilingual education in U.S. schools.

- ***Heritage Language*** or ***Indigenous Language Program***

The goal is literacy in two languages. Academic content is taught in both languages, with teachers fluent in both languages. One difference between the two programs is the fact that heritage language programs typically target students who are non-English speakers or who have weak literacy skills in L1, whereas indigenous language programs support endangered minority languages in which

students may have weak receptive and no productive skills. Finally, both of these programs most often serve American Indian populations.

- ***Late Exit Transitional, Developmental Bilingual*** or ***Maintenance Education***

The goal of late exit, developmental, or maintenance bilingual programs is to develop some skills and proficiency in L1 and strong skills and proficiency in L2 (English). Instruction at lower grades is in L1, gradually transitioning to English. Students typically transition into mainstream classrooms with their English-speaking peers. The major differences among these three programs can be found in the degree of literacy students develop in the native language.

The following labels refer to programs which focus on developing English language literacy skills only.

- ***Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), Content-based English as a Second Language (ESL)***, ***Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP),*** or ***Sheltered English***

The goal of these programs is developing proficiency in English while learning content in an all-English setting. Students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds can be in the same class. Instruction is adapted to students' proficiency level and supplemented by gestures and visual aids.

- ***Structured English Immersion (SEI)***

This program model is typically used in cases where multiple home languages are spoken by students. The goal is fluency in English. All instruction is in English and adjusted to the proficiency level of students so subject matter is comprehensible. Teachers need receptive skill in students' L1 and sheltered instructional techniques.

- ***English Language Development (ELD)*** or ***ESL Pullout***

This model may still be the most widely used model of English language instruction for immigrant students. The goal is fluency in English. Students leave their mainstream classroom to spend part of the day receiving ESL instruction, often focused on grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills, not academic content. There is typically no support for students' native languages.

- ***ESL Push-in***

This model is a variation of the pullout model described above. The goal is still fluency in English. However, unlike the pullout model, students here are served in a mainstream classroom, receiving instruction in English with some native language support if needed. The ESL teacher or an instructional aide provides clarification, translation if needed, and uses ESL strategies.

All teachers should consider themselves language teachers.

What does the research say?

A positive impact of NCLB has been the heavy emphasis on research-based evidence to support decision-making. Out of this flowed a number of research studies that have looked at specific strategies, in particular strategies that promote more effective teaching of reading. Not surprisingly, English language learners have traditionally scored very low on standardized measures of reading comprehension. Kindler (2002) compiled a summary from 41 state reports of English language learners and observed that only about 19% of English language learners that were assessed scored at or above state norms for reading comprehension in English. Only 13 states reported assessment results of English language learners in native language reading comprehension and the results showed that 57.4% of those assessed scored at or above state norms in native language reading comprehension.

Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian (2006), in the process of conducting an extensive and detailed review of the

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literature dating back to 1980, initially identified over 4,000 reports. However, after applying strict rules for scientific research (National Research Council, 2002), only 200 reports met these strict guidelines and were included in their study. Some of their major conclusions after reviewing this literature included the following:

- The development of L2 oral language is vital to the school success of ELL students.
- Development of L2 oral language proficiency takes time.
- English language use both in the classroom and outside of school is positively associated with the development of English proficiency.
- The use of language learning strategies often characterize L2 acquisition because ELLs are typically older and more mature than L1 learners, and they already have competence in L1.
- English-L2 literacy development is similar to the process of L1 literacy development. Both are influenced by learner's oral skills and metacognitive skills. The more capable the learner is in L1 literacy, the faster the acquisition of English as L2 literacy.
- Aggregating across studies, there was strong convergent evidence that the educational success of ELLs is positively related to sustained instruction through the student L1.

The former Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition.

In summary, what do these findings tell us about effective instruction of English language learners? First, these findings point out the importance of developing the learners' oral language in English. This is done with an emphasis on vocabulary development, with recognition that this process takes time, and with the admonition that it is important for the learner to practice oral language in and out of the classroom. What is noteworthy here is the finding that relatively little time is spent by English language learners in the typical classroom developing oral language skills. Moreover, once the students leave the school environment, they are not likely to find opportunities to practice oral English with appropriate language models. Secondly, these findings support the claim that learning literacy in a second language is similar to learning literacy in the first language. These findings support the sustained instruction of the learner's L1 because proficiency in the L1 will promote faster and more effective acquisition of the L2.

These findings support certain program models over others. One of the seminal research studies in the field was conducted by Thomas and Collier (2002). They examined several hundred thousand student files from a number of different school districts across the country over a five year period. Their findings led to the observation that the most effective instruction of L2 students was in the form of dual language programs which also benefited English majority learners. In contrast, the least effective format for instruction of English language learners was through traditional ESL pullout programs which represent the major program model in use today in the United States. Part of the reason for the effectiveness of dual language instruction rests on the role of the student's L1 and the role played by English language majority learners in the same classroom which contributes to the self-esteem of the L1 learner. In contrast, the ESL pullout model makes no use of the learners' native language and by definition segregates for at least part of the day the ESL learner from his or her English speaking peer group. However, Genesee, et al (2006) also concluded that whether the ELLs be instructed in a dual language program or an ESL program with some native language support, their chances for success are greatly enhanced over an English only or submersion program.

What else should teachers and administrators know?

In addition to the role of the first language in

instruction of English language learners, many knowledgeable practitioners and researchers agree on a number of other factors which lead to successful instruction of English language learners. These factors are not restricted only for use with English language learners, but can be effective with all learners (Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1997). Included among these factors for effective instruction of English language learners is the creation of a climate of belonging by valuing the home language and culture of the learners. Another factor that promotes success is encouraging parents to interact with their children in the language they know best. Effective programs reach out to parents and bring in community resources that students can identify with.

Effective programs reach out to parents and bring in community resources.

Miramontes, Nadeau, and Commins (1997) go on to promote the organization of instruction around a common body of knowledge. Critical to this factor is the clear articulation of curriculum within and between schools, from elementary to middle to high school. At the same time, it is important to differentiate instruction to meet the varied learning styles and backgrounds of the different learners in the classroom.

Teachers and administrators are urged to find out as much as they can about the learners in their school. Use multiple means of assessment to gather data. Do not rely solely on standardized tests, but also include authentic assessment activities which build on the learners' achievements. When possible, assess academic progress in the learner's home language.

Increase opportunities for practice of the oral language. Incorporate into daily teaching activities opportunities for practicing language structures and vocabulary which are the focus of instruction. Tie that oral language to the instruction of literacy through language experience exercises.

Use the classroom as a resource for promoting language. The classroom should be an environment which promotes vocabulary acquisition through literacy and oral langua ge practice. This can be done through use of word walls, colorful posters, and learning stations that promote active interaction with the language.

Collaborate with professional colleagues. All teachers should consider themselves language teachers. The ESL resource teacher can work in teams with the mainstream classroom teacher to be sure to maximize instructional time around the major themes of instruction. This will also help to make the transition for the ELL seamless as they are exited from the ESL or bilingual program into the mainstream classroom. But the ELL teacher should never be considered the only language teacher. The research clearly demonstrates the importance of engaging all students in active learning. And in an era of diminishing resources, these strategies can effectively promote academic success. ■

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Leading With English Language Learners (ELLs) in Mind: How School Administrators Can Support ELLs in their Buildings and Districts

Elizabeth Freeman - Rochelle Township High School, Rochelle, Illinois

In this article a secondary school principal discusses the needs of English language learners and the impact of this group of students on schooling today.

The role of a school administrator is one that can have a profound impact on the academic and social success of the English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in the school. While the responsibilities and expectations of school administrators continue to mount, we can not lose sight of why we entered school administration in the first place: to help make decisions that are in the best interest of our students.

Administrators are facing increasing pressure to improve student achievement through a careful analysis of the instruction and curriculum delivery in their buildings. The National Association of Secondary School Principals recently published an article about time management for new principals indicating that there are more tasks to do than time in a day (Ruder, 2008). The position of a school principal has become more complex over recent years (Shellard, 2003). No longer is a school principal someone who simply manages the playground and the busses; now principals are expected to be the instructional leaders of their building. Superintendents and other district leaders are also stretched thin by the demands of their leadership positions. School Board members need to increase their working knowledge of the impact of policies on the students their district serves. You might be wondering where you will find time to address the complex needs of a diverse student body. The reality is this group of students cannot wait any longer.

One very valid reason to be concerned about the achievement of ELLs is the looming consequences of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), and the impending Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization of the current administration (Obama Administration's Education Reform, 2010). School status, as defined by NCLB, is based on subgroups and high stakes testing. The number of schools in Improvement Status, or undergoing Corrective Action, has increased dramatically over the years as the regulations and requirements of the law are increasing. ELLs will continue to make an impact on the measurements used for determining a school's improvement status. As the number of ELLs increases, the impact of their achievement will be felt on a school and district level. Perceptions in some districts are that ELLs are unwelcome challenges to programming and dwindling budgets (Rance-Roney, 2009). School test scores are regularly publicized in local press and media; it is essential that the public understand the achievement of the students in their local districts. By addressing the needs of ELLs, school leaders will simultaneously be demonstrating their support of school improvement initiatives.

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Another reason to address the needs of ELLs in schools is that these students need the benefits and opportunities that education can provide. Often ELLs are enrolling in school already at a disadvantage by coming from a linguistically challenged family setting, being brought up in a low-income household, having reduced parental involvement in their schooling, or having limited resources for engaging in the traditional school programs (Houk, 2005). Echevarria (2006) writes about ELLs,

ELLs should not be shuffled from available room to available room as an afterthought.

Although most of these students enter school eager to learn and want to take advantage of the education their parents have told them about, the reality is that as a group, they have experienced persistent underachievement and, by the time they reach the secondary level, a pattern of failure. (p.17)

Education is a great equalizer that can allow these students the opportunities that are available to their monolingual peers. By supporting ELL programming in your building you will be having a direct and profound impact on the ELLs that you service.

What are some concrete steps you can take as a school administrator to help increase the success of your ELLs? In what ways can you show support for ELLs in your school? How can you help staff better meet the needs of these diverse and unique learners? Perhaps you have heard the adage: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Addressing the needs of ELLs can seem like an insurmountable task, and yet, when approached with a realistic understanding of the complexities of the undertaking, very practical steps can be taken. In this article you will find ideas on how school leaders can support ELLs by

- Providing a climate that appreciates multiculturalism
- Providing faculty learning opportunities that focus on ELLs
- Including ELL strategies in teacher observation and evaluation
- Becoming educated on laws and best practices
- Considering financial allocations for ELLs
- Building the master schedule with ELL considerations
- Continuing to market the program with stakeholders
- Advocating for ELLs in the school community

Providing a Climate that Appreciates Multiculturalism

The most inclusive idea that will support a wide range of diverse learners in a school is the concept that the school must embody the tenets of multicultural acceptance. It is not enough to tolerate other cultures; schools must strive to accept the cultures that are represented in their hallways. This process does not happen overnight. Students must learn to collaborate with people who are "different" than themselves. Teachers must learn to differentiate their lessons, not only for different levels of academic achievement, but also for students at differing linguistic abilities (Houk, 2005). Principals and other district leaders set the tone of multicultural acceptance in all of their communications and expectations. Hayman and Freeman (2006) mention that "Although not all schools can fully promote additive bilingualism every school can find creative ways to link the school with the community to support ELLs, welcome their families, and provide a more enriching educational experience for all students" (p. 42). Newsletters that promote multicultural principles, support staff that is able to communicate with parents of ELLs, and faculty meetings that engage teachers in introspection of their values and beliefs are examples of strategies which develop a school that embraces diversity and the ELLs it serves.

Provide Faculty Learning Opportunities that Focus on ELLs

It is critical that mainstream teachers and support staff have ongoing professional learning

sessions that focus on the specific needs of ELLs and the research-based strategies that best support these unique learners. Mosca (2006) agrees and adds, "A crucial responsibility of administrators is ensuring that everyone in a school and in a school district, regardless of the person's position or specialization, shares the responsibility of educating English language learners" (p. 109). Principals and Curriculum Directors may not be experts in the field themselves; that is understandable. They must then research and seek out consultants and other experts who can provide faculty learning sessions in this area. Perhaps a local university is willing to engage in a partnership with area school districts? Maybe there is a language learning center, such as the Illinois Resource Center, which has consultants available in your region? Is there a retired teacher who has a background in language acquisition skills that you could invite to team meetings? With decreasing school budgets and increasing faculty need, principals and building leaders need to be creative when planning ongoing teacher support. Best practices in professional learning indicate that content be job-embedded and ongoing. Samway and McKeon (2007) dispel the myth that ELL-specific staff development is not effective and write, "When districts allocate sufficient resources to intensive, ongoing, substantive staff development on issues relating to ELL students, their efforts are usually seen the in the greater academic achievement of English language learners" (p. 153). These ideas must be considered when making arrangements with faculty trainers. Professional learning can focus on any number of issues including

By showcasing the ELL student achievements at Board of Education meetings, in press releases, and at community events, the stakeholders will begin to understand the complexities of ELL programming and the rewards for supporting these students.

- integrating language objectives into lesson plans alongside content objectives
- state testing methodology for ELLs
- cultural beliefs of target cultures represented in high numbers in the district
- lesson plan design that includes ELL instructional best practices
- authentic assessment design for ELLs

While the list may seem overwhelming at first the best news is you can start anywhere! Giving your teachers concrete skills to use with ELLs will help them feel more effective and will increase student achievement. Staff training will have a positive impact on the achievement of ELLs as "many ELLs receive much of their instruction from teachers who have not had preservice or inservice training that prepares them to address ELLs' academic and second language development needs" (Echevarria, 2006, p.18). Another strategy for professional learning is for administrators to distribute articles and website links that illustrate best practices for teachers of ELLs.

Additionally you can promote collegial collaboration about the needs of ELLs. These conversations can take the shape of team meetings, grade level meetings, content area meetings, or even Intervention Team meetings. Stuart and Rinaldi (2009) have developed a collaborative planning framework whichis effective for ELLs because it "integrates planning, reflection, progress monitoring, and team problem solving from various disciplines (e.g., general educator, bilingual educator, special educator) as the team moves from the first phase of the framework, planning, through the third phase of the framework, feedback" (p. 56). By allowing teachers to collaborate across disciplines with ELL specialists the general classroom teachers will increase their knowledge base on how to better service ELLs. Unless this happens Rance-Roney (2009) maintains that "Mainstream school personnel may abdicate responsibility for the needs of ELLs because they believe that the specialist understands the students better" (p. 34). The federal Response to Intervention mandate is just one concept in which teachers can collaborate in order to develop solutions to problems facing ELLs.

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From left to right: Elizabeth Freeman - Director of Curriculum, Rich Harvey - Assistant Principal, Travis McGuire - Principal

Including ELL Strategies in Teacher Observation and Evaluation

Teacher observation and evaluation are tools that building leaders have for prompting individual conversations with teachers. This scheduled obligation to close the office door and to discuss student learning with members of your staff is a prime opportunity to support the achievement of the ELLs in your school. Make dialogue about ELLs a component of the formative evaluation of teaching staff. Ask an open-ended question of your teachers such as, "In what ways are you addressing the unique needs of the identified and unidentified ELLs in your class?" This prompt will allow the teacher to reflect on their instructional strategies and their accommodation techniques for differentiated learning. By asking such a question you are also sending the message that the success of ELLs is an important component of overall school improvement efforts. Iddings, Risko and Rampulla (2009) add, ". . . it is of critical importance that English monolingual teachers—who are encountering an ever-increasing number of linguistically diverse students in their classrooms—be supported in their attempts to fully access their students' potential" (p. 52). Including questions about ELLs in the teacher evaluation process will help the teachers feel supported in their efforts to adapt their teaching methods for these special students.

Make dialogue about ELLs a component of the formative evaluation of teaching staff.

Becoming Educated on the Laws and Best Practices of ELLs

Does *Lau v. Nichols* mean anything to you? *Lau v. Nichols* was a Supreme Court case that expanded the rights of ELLs so that they must receive linguistically appropriate accommodations (Russo, 2004). Are you aware of the most effective ELL instructional delivery

programs? Have you heard of World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Proficiency Standards? These WIDA standards include academic language skills in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies standards (Gottleib, Cranely & Oliver, 2007). Are Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummings, 2000) terms you understand? BICS and CALP make a distinction between two different types of language proficiency: "playground English" (Crawford, 2004, p. 195) and "classroom English" (Crawford, 2004, p. 196). If you are like most busy school leaders you just skimmed over the words you didn't know (which is likely what your ELLs do with classwork that they don't understand!).

Promote collegial collaboration about the needs of ELLs. These conversations can take the shape of team meetings, grade level meetings, content area meetings, or even Intervention Team meetings.

Challenge yourself with a professional goal of expanding and increasing your understanding of ELL issues. It is important for school leaders to grasp these fundamental aspects of ELLs. Hayman and Freeman (2006) write, "For the first time in the history of the United States, schools are being held accountable by the federal government for the English language development and academic achievement of ELLs in their classrooms" (p. 2). Pick one concept per semester that you want to learn about, such as legal mandates, state funding for ELLs, or civic groups that support language learners. Develop a method for increasing your working knowledge on the topic. Promise yourself that in one semester you will attend one workshop, read one journal article, find one expert to discuss the topic with, and read one current news article about the idea. Put the appointment on your calendar so that it gets done. Approach the regional coordinator of schools in your area to host an informational session on ELLs. Solicit support from the organizations that work with ELLs so that you get on their mailing lists and become their "fans" on Facebook. If you make your own professional learning on ELLs a part of your regularly scheduled routine you will be surprised how much you can learn in just a few semesters.

Considering Financial Allocations for ELLs

School Boards of Education, Superintendents, and School Business Officers all wield financial swords that can either destroy or support programming for ELLs. It is critical that funding allocation be examined. ELL programming does not come cheaply. ELLs need specially certified teachers and often classroom aides to provide academic and linguistic support to students. ELLs need rich access to technology, supplemental learning opportunities, and other special resources that are unique to their situations. Many ELLs have not had the academic offerings they need to make adequate academic progress (Echevarria, 2006). Conducting an equity audit is beneficial in the analysis of financial expenditures. "Equity audits are a systematic way for school leaders—principals, superintendents, curriculum directors, teacher leaders—to assess the degree of equity or inequity present in three key areas of their schools or districts: programs, teachers quality, and achievement" (Skrla, McKenzie & Scheurich, 2009, p.3). Evaluating these areas for equity will bring up ELL-related fiscal questions. Do we have the best teacher for these students? Is our current program effective? What other resources are needed to increase student achievement? Districts spend money on what they value. Take a moment to consider how your district budget sends a message about the importance and value of your ELLs.

Another funding decision comes in the management and coordination of ELL programs. As the size of the district increases and as the number of ELLs increases it may become necessary to employ a district level administrator to coordinate these specialized programs. As this need emerges in districts some states are setting guidelines for these

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ELL coordinator positions. In Illinois, a state with a large ELL population, the State Board of Education has written policies about the district leadership of ELL programs (Title 23, 2006). The policy indicates that if the district has a Transitional Bilingual Program for a population of greater than 200 students who are speakers of the same language the district is obligated to have a Transitional Bilingual Director. This Director must hold bilingual approval or endorsement. In order to secure this endorsement the Director must have an administrative certificate, completed a language exam in the non-English language, and have completed 18 semester hours of bilingual and multicultural coursework (Title 23, 2006). These requirements, set by the State of Illinois, send a clear message to districts that they must appropriately service, staff and fund the programs in their buildings that service bilingual students. It is conceivable that other states with high ELL populations will develop similar requirements for bilingual program directors.

With decreasing school budgets and increasing faculty need, principals and building leaders need to be creative when planning ongoing teacher support.

Building the Master Schedule with ELL Considerations

The equity audit that you conduct may reveal some room for improvement in the areas of teaching staff and facilities allocation. Teaching staff is one of the leading indicators of student achievement (Schmoker, 2006). ELLs need to have access to high quality programming delivered by highly qualified teaching staff. teaching staff. learning or in bilingual education are in great demand (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Districts will need to work hard to recruit, retain, and develop effective ELL teachers. Room allocation and assignment is also important in the support of ELLs. ELLs should not be sequestered in their own hallway. ELLs should not be shuffled from available room to available room as an afterthought. ELLs should not have impediments in classroom resources that are not present in mainstream classes. How should ELLs be scheduled? With the care and attention that one would put on any group of special learners. Just as honor students are scheduled to have access to computer stations and science laboratories, and just as students with special needs are scheduled with access to instructional technologies and paraprofessional support, ELLs need to be scheduled with care and attention to their unique learning needs. Perhaps they need access to technology so that they can overcome the barrier of coming from a household without computers. Perhaps they need easy access to the library media center so that they can expand their learning beyond the textbook. Perhaps they need access to lab equipment, P.E. facilities, bilingual aides, or art supplies so that they can experience the same educational opportunities as their monolingual peers. It is our charge as building leaders to consider these learner needs when creating academic and building schedules for the year.

Continuing to Market the Program with Stakeholders

ELLs need special support from the school system. As administrators gain knowledge and background in the details of ELL instructional programming, it is easy to fall into complacency which allows the programs to stagnate. After we become more aware of the unique challenges that face ELLs, we need to provide that information to our school stakeholders. Education of our communities is important. Crawford (2004) discusses public opinion based on racism or ignorance and concludes, “Ignorance about English learner programs not only appears to shape attitudes among the dominant group; it also extends deep into the language-minority communities” (p. 369). Perhaps you belong to a civic group, like Rotary International, which allows members to make presentations. Take it upon yourself to prepare a brief explanation of the challenges and accomplishments of your ELL students. Take photographs of some students engaged in learning and share them with the community so that they can better see the successes of ELL

programs. Host special events that showcase the diversity in your building whether it be a parent information night, a performing arts show, or a visual arts exhibit. Create liaisons with other community groups who service the adults in your ELL families. How can you pool your resources to serve this unique population? Stakeholders do not always understand the intricacies of and the need for an ELL program; by showcasing the ELL student achievements at Board of Education meetings, in press releases, and at community events, the stakeholders will begin to understand the complexities of ELL programming and the rewards for supporting these students.

Advocating for ELLs in the School Community

It is our moral and social responsibility to serve all of the students in our schools. Challenges have been identified in the education of women, different ethnic groups, and speakers of other languages. Legislation and case law presents us with the obligation of serving the ELLs in our schools. The way in which we approach this group of students is up to each district. Some districts will approach ELLs as burdens, second thoughts, and heavy draws on finances. Other districts will approach ELLs as treasures, equal students, and opportunities to bring communities closer together. Districts must make decisions that are in the best interest of all students, including ELLs (Houk, 2005).

Ultimately appropriate educational services, program design, and resource allocation has a profound impact on the lives of ELLs in school systems. In this competitive culture that we find ourselves in we must prepare all of our students, including our ELLs, to be prepared for their next step. How school administrators approach ELLs will determine their future. Will your school and district ignore this critical student population? To do so is to condemn them to a future of less possibilities than that which is available to their monolingual peers. Or will your school and district develop a comprehensive plan to support the diverse community of learners, including ELLs? Will your school take concrete steps towards increasing teacher skills in the areas of language acquisition and challenges that ELLs face? Will your administrative team work to become better educated on ELL policies and mandates? Can your principal support ELLs through promoting multicultural acceptance and the equality of ELLs in school programming? School administrators play a powerful role in the future of ELLs through the choice of supporting or denying ELL-specific programming. Building and district leaders have to make a conscious decision to see ELLs as “resources to develop not problems to overcome” (Hayman & Freeman, 2006, p. xi). This group of students cannot wait any longer to have support from school administrators; it is time for administrators to lead with ELLs in mind. ■

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Imagining a World of Dual Language for All Children in the United States

Jessica Meland - Hanover Highlands Elementary School, Hanover, Illinois

This article provides an overview of why dual language has been strongly suggested to be the more effective option in bilingual education. It describes the goals and essential features of dual language program and the different models currently used, such as the 90/10 model or the 50/50 approach.

Dual language programs, also referred to as two-way immersion programs, are on the rise in school districts due to the increasing population of English language learners (ELLs) and the desire of many communities and school districts to promote bilingualism. Dual language (DL), one of several bilingual program models, addresses the needs of ELLs while promoting the acquisition of a second language (Howard & Christian, 2002). It values bilingualism and biliteracy and promotes cultural awareness. As a DL teacher, I have seen first hand how the program enhances interactions across both language and culture. In my experience, DL is the right choice for all my native Spanish speakers because it provides an ongoing validation for the learners' native language, and fosters cross-cultural relations. As the students develop skills in their first language they make the transition to the second language smoothly and efficiently. The growth that takes place within these students over the course of a year in my classroom is remarkable. Many of my students have continued to be very proficient bilingual readers and writers as they advance through the grades. It is always very exciting when teachers in the upper grades share how well my old students are doing.

As Collier and Thomas (2004) report, DL schooling is the only program for ELLs that closes the academic achievement gap, and therefore, is worth implementing to meet the needs of different student populations. Blakeslee (2009) notes that with all other traditional bilingual classes, the top priority is to learn English and exit students as quickly as possible. DL classrooms take on a very different approach, one that is dedicated to preserving students' first language while they learn a second. Because of the demands on school districts to best meet the needs of their students, along with the desire to close the achievement gap, dual language programs are a solid, research based choice.

As educators, we are faced with the challenging task of preparing our students for their best possible future. DL allows for the preservation of students' native language while increasing critical skills in English. In today's global society, bilingualism and biliteracy are indeed very valuable. The importance of adopting a well planned and implemented dual language program in school districts that service ELL students is not to be undermined.

What Exactly Is Dual Language and How Will the Instruction Look?

DL programs are becoming a popular option in

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bilingual education. According to the website of The Center for Applied Linguistics (2009), there were 349 in existence in the United States as of June 2, 2009. DL programs have proven effective for two reasons, the first being the approach that dual language programs uphold. For both groups of students participating, for example, native English speakers and native Spanish speakers, the program is additive, meaning that both languages are preserved and developed. In other words, depending on the target language of instruction, *all* students are learning English as well as the home language. For example, in a Spanish-English DL program, native English speakers are being supported in their native English, while acquiring Spanish as a second language through content learning in academic subjects. The same happens for their Spanish-speaking peers, as they are developing their native language while acquiring English. In my classroom, as well as in all DL classrooms, this model fosters the use of cooperative structures which provide students with many opportunities to use language. Since all students in the class are "experts" in their first language, there is consistent validation as the students can support each other in their second language use. It is very powerful to highlight how ELLs can help the native English speakers. It is natural that ELLs will feel more insecure in a learning environment that only stresses their second language, English. To be able to feel validated within the classroom and to become the models of language use is an empowering feeling that happens often in the DL classroom. Moreover, the students are learning a second language through integration in the various subject areas. Core academic instruction is provided to both groups in both languages. Second, the immersion of English speakers in the minority language (in the previous example, Spanish) will produce higher levels of second language acquisition, while language minority students will gain higher levels of English proficiency because of the development of their native language (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). According to Cummins (1992), data on bilingual programs suggests that strongly promoting literacy skills in the child's first language (L1) is a feasible means to achieve academic progress in English. Collier and Thomas (2004) report that the effectiveness of dual language education continues way beyond the success of students, having a positive impact on the school experiences of all involved. In my seven years as a dual language teacher, I have seen how dual language programs can promote cross-cultural respect and understanding, leading to improved communication between all students and families involved. In addition, in a study conducted by San Jose State University in 2002, students who had participated in a two-way immersion classroom reported fairly high academic performance and a strong motivation to do well in school. Results showed that the students valued education and saw it as the means to a better life. They reported understanding that getting good grades was important to getting into college and most agreed that they planned to complete their college education (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2002).

United States citizens and the country's educational system need to more fully embrace the benefits of bilingualism.

Depending on the program model chosen, and the language distribution of the program, which will be discussed later, students are immersed in both languages for a percentage of the day. In my fourth grade classroom our percentages are 50/50. In literacy instruction, we change languages by week. We conduct shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading in the language of the week. Math is conducted in English while science and social studies are conducted in Spanish. On a district level, our dual language program model changed this year, although it did not really affect me except for the fact that in previous years, I conducted math in Spanish. Now, district wide, dual classrooms in all grade levels are adopting a bi-literacy model. Therefore, at each grade level, students are receiving literacy instruction in their native language and their second language.

What Are the Goals for a Dual Language Program?

As mentioned earlier, the broad goal of any DL program is to promote bilingualism and biculturalism. More specifically, Howard and Christian (2002) discuss four goals for DL programs. The first two are that students will develop high levels of proficiency in their native language as well as in their second language. The third aims to close the achievement gap by assuring that both groups of students involved will be at or above grade level. The fourth goal is that all students will gain a deeper respect for other cultures and exhibit this through positive cross-cultural attitudes and actions. García (2005) points out that these goals are naturally interdependent of each other, stating that English-speaking children who are taught that learning another language and culture is equally important as learning their own, will be more interested in achieving these goals. As Collier and Thomas point out (2004), two-way immersion classes that are taught by sensitive teachers are more likely to create a classroom environment where students respect each other, and see each other as valued partners, partly because both share knowledge with students from the other language group. This helps foster an environment where children feel comfortable with each other and with taking risks, making their educational experience stronger.

What Does a Dual Language Program Need to Be Successful?

While DL is a great option to consider, it needs to be well planned and properly executed in order to be an effective choice. One of my colleagues commented that "if a dual language program is not going to be implemented with integrity, than it is better not to do it at all." Her statement demonstrates the great responsibility that school districts and teachers have to uphold a high standard for DL education, one that stays current on research trends of best practices. As Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri (2005) point out, there is a very real chance that poorly implemented programs will fail, which in turn would shed a very negative light on bilingual programs in general and particularly on DL. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that school districts take the proper steps to ensure the success of their programs.

It is very important to acknowledge the difference between conversational English and academic English.

Rogers (2009) discusses that remembering the basics of program design are crucial to success. There are certain nonnegotiable components to a two-way immersion program. When they are realized, they ensure academic, linguistic, and social success for both ELLs and native English speakers alike. He reviews the importance of maintaining a minimum of 50% in the target language. This does not include lunch or special classes such as library, music, P.E., and art. However, if classes are provided in the target language, for example, in Spanish, they may count toward the overall percentage of the day. Some ways to maintain fidelity to the first component are recruiting quality teachers, utilizing other social situations and extra curriculum activities to provide reinforcement and practice of the target language, and establishing clear expectations with staff and community members to maintain the status of the target language.

Rogers' second non-negotiable is the commitment to building DL programs that span from Kindergarten through 12th grade, although he admits this is an intense and overwhelming experience, the reason being that most DL programs are developed with little input from the secondary schools in their district. Trying to get a secondary program up and running at a later date after the elementary program begins is difficult because there is usually little ownership of the secondary program. However, he suggests that if the secondary schools are involved from the initial implementation at the kindergarten stage, then they have ample time to prepare. With the collaboration of elementary and secondary schools, the whole staff can determine and establish program goals and expectations. In addition, there is a commitment to the enrollment in the program and to the manner in which they will align curriculum, assess, and decide staffing patterns.

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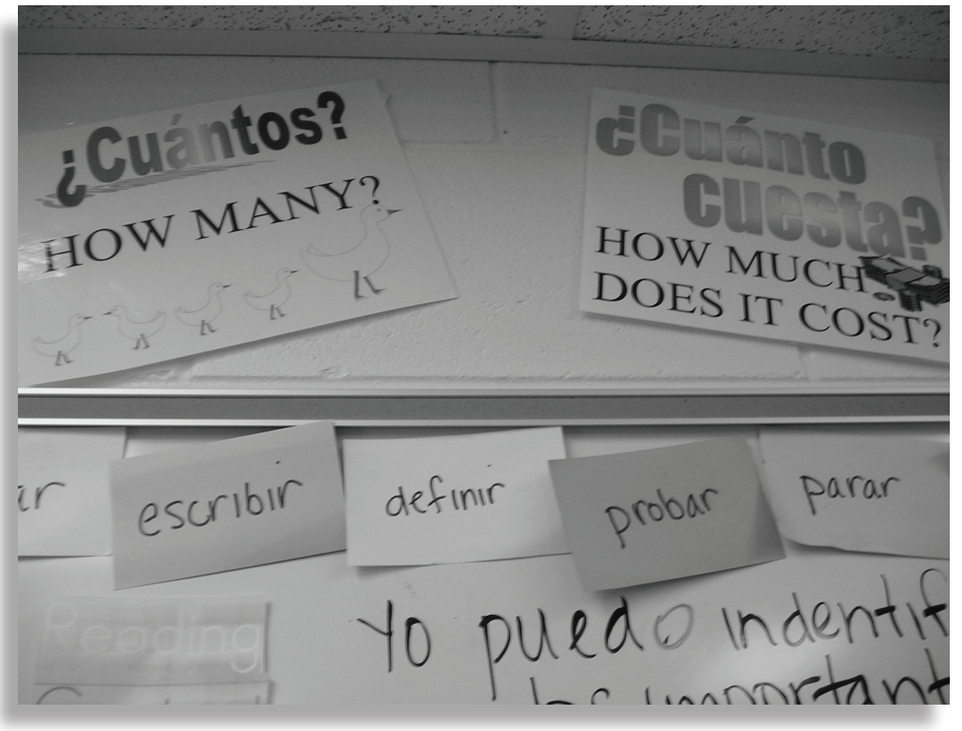


Words that encourage reflection.

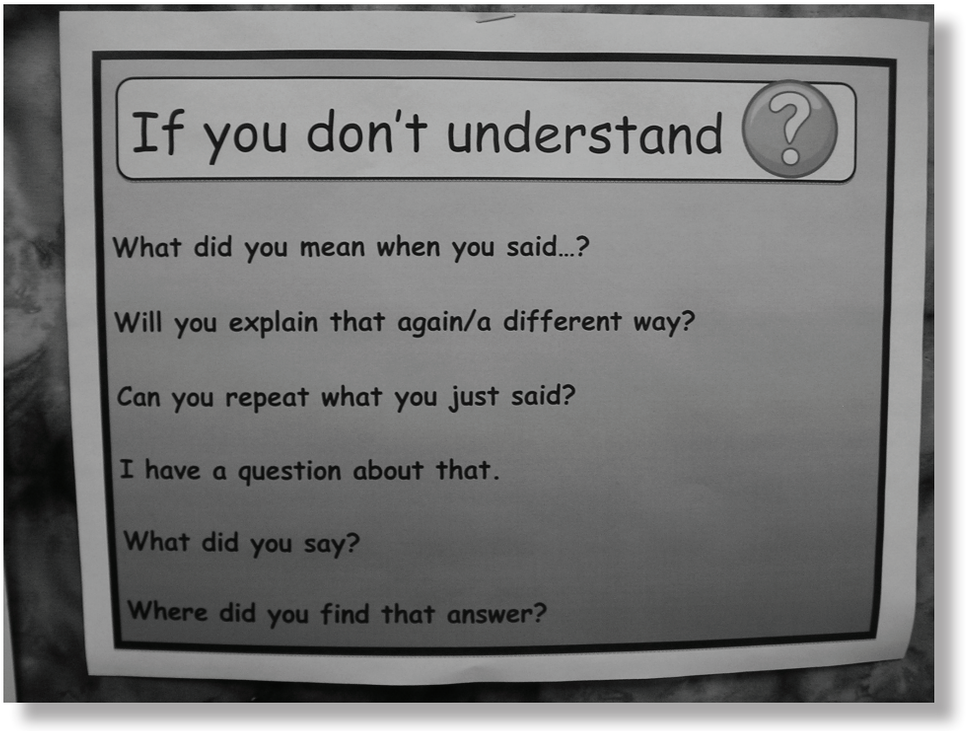
Another essential aspect of a DL program is the need for a somewhat equal balance between language speakers. While Collier and Thomas (2004) maintain that a perfect balance is not necessary, the need for an approximate balance is required to have enough peers in each language to support the natural second language acquisition process. They suggest the ratio of 70:30 as the minimum balance. Howard, Sugarman, and Christian (2003) also state that the population within any given DL classroom should be fairly balanced, with neither group falling below 1/3 of the total population within that particular classroom. Furthermore, Coy and Litherland (2000) discuss the importance of parental involvement and commitment to a two-way immersion program. Parents are involved from the very beginning. When they choose for their children to participate in a DL program, they need to commit to their children's participation for at least five years of the program. In addition, Cay and Liitherland (2000) point out the importance of ongoing assessments of students in both languages as they move through the program, using such alternative assessments as portfolios, journals, tests, and observations.

These assessments ensure that students are indeed achieving the above mentioned goalsof academic proficiency in both languages.

Parental involvement and home/school collaboration begin with parents who understand the DL model.

Lindholm-Leary (2000) emphasizes how parental involvement and home/school collaboration begin with parents who understand the DL model. Her research provides an insight on parents whose children participated in a DL classroom. The parents reported a high degree of satisfaction and shared that they would recommend the program to other parents. Blakeslee (2009) reports that enrolling children in DL programs requires a leap of faith by the parents. If parents do not fully understand DL programs, they are bound to question if their children will be successful. They may wonder if their child will learn a second language or lose their first language. Anglo parents may also be concerned about the literacy development of their child's English. Teachers and administrators are responsible for providing parents with enough information on the program to elicit their support, and therefore, decrease their worries and concerns.

Facella, Rampino, and Shea (2005) point out that at all grade levels, students are in different stages of language development. Because of this, it is crucial teachers understand where their students are in their language development, and therefore, can create lessons that are effective to the specific language needs of each child. In the district in which I work, a document provided by the World Class Instruction and Assessment group (WIDA) called the "Can Do Descriptors" provides an outline as to what to expect in each level of language acquisition. We use this often to determine where our students are and what activities they need to be involved in in order to progress to the next level of language proficiency. Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian (2005) point out oral proficiency in a second language occurs over time and that progress from initial to middle levels of proficiency is fairly rapid, while the progress made from middle proficiency to upper levels is slower. When



Questions that help children investigate their worlds.

ELLs reach the intermediate phases of oral language development, they still may need an additional three, four, or more years to develop full proficiency. Achieving full proficiency means that the student has enough command of the language to engage and effectively participate in complex interactions, ones involving concepts and references to things that are not in the immediate vicinity of the student. Here is where academic English comes into play, which is the language students need in order to understand and communicate about the concepts they are learning. It is very important to acknowledge the difference between conversational English and academic English. Academic language is the type of language students need in order to be successful in school. This type of language is typically difficult to master and also takes more time to develop than conversational English. Knowing conversational English certainly helps students to learn academic English, but the latter is much more challenging and takes more time (Goldenburg, 2008). Zehler (1994) helps educators understand that although social-conversational language skills are important, they are not enough for classroom-based academic learning. She points out that it is often easy for teachers to overlook that learning the academic language necessary for success can still be challenging for many ELL students who demonstrate fluency in everyday conversations.

In addition, as mentioned in the goals of dual language, students within DL classrooms are developing a deep respect for another language and culture. It is imperative that a DL teacher understand the nature and role of culture. When teachers better understand the culture of their students, they can more effectively design learning environments that connect to the students' experiences and therefore, support individual student learning. Lastly, it is imperative that teachers are effective in the design, implementation, and managing of instruction within the classroom (TESOL, 2003). Teachers need to be able to weave language and content learning together within the four domains of language and provide ample opportunities for students to engage in language usage throughout the day.

What Are the Different Models of Dual Language and What Do They Look Like?

There are several ways in which a two-way immersion program can be implemented. The model of the program refers to the percentage of the day spent in the minority language (Montague, 1997). The first option is a 90/10 model. This refers to the fact that 90% of the school day will be taught in the minority language. For example, within a Spanish/English dual classroom, 90% of the day in a Kindergarten classroom would be spent in Spanish, the minority language. As the grades increase, the percentage of the minority language decreases, and the amount of time spent in the majority language, in this case, English, would increase, therefore providing a breakdown of about 80/20 in a first grade classroom. This pattern continues until the languages even out at a balanced 50/50 split. Howard and Christian (2005) discuss the frequent misconception that can occur about this model, as many people believe the percentage of 90/10 stays the same over time. The other model is known as the 50/50 model. Here, the instruction is evenly divided between the majority language and the minority language throughout the day in all grade levels.

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The key difference to remember about the models is the amount of instructional time spent in each language during the primary grades. Because the 90/10 model decreases the amount of time spent in the minority language each year, most programs balance out at a 50/50 split by 4th or 5th grade, therefore the model chosen really only affects the language split in levels K-3 or K-4. School districts need to decide how they want to implement a dual language program, and even before they decide between the 90/10 or the 50/50 model, they need to choose the philosophy behind the model. Howard and Christian (2002) provide an overview of the three approaches that DL programs can adapt, which will then dictate which model they use within their program. The minority language first approach is what is classically used in the 90/10 model. Students in this program model receive initial literacy instruction in the minority language only. According to this model, informal literacy instruction in English will occur throughout a small percentage of the day where instruction in English takes place. However, more formal literacy instruction in English does not begin until students reach third grade. This approach is not recommended in the 50/50 model because students would not have enough exposure to the minority language for initial literacy instruction in that language alone to be effective. The learning of both languages simultaneously is another approach that is most used within the 50/50 model. The students receive literacy instruction in both languages throughout the day, learning Spanish literacy during a Spanish block of time, and English literacy during an English block of time. Finally, there is the native language first approach which involves separating students by their native language and providing their initial literacy instruction in their first language. So, minority language students would receive their literacy in the minority language, while native English speakers would be provided with literacy instruction in English. In certain cases, second language instruction may be provided to both groups of students. In addition, content-area instruction takes place in both languages, providing opportunities for informal literacy development to take place. Furthermore, by third grade, both groups of students are receiving direct literacy instruction in both languages. Within this approach, it is important for English students to still receive at least half of their day in the minority language, although they are receiving their literacy instruction in English.

It is always very exciting when teachers in the upper grades share how well my old students are doing.

Conclusion

In my opinion, participation in a DL programis the best option for all students. There is unlimited value in learning another language. Not only does it promote the necessary means of communication in both languages, but it also fosters cross-cultural appreciation. It opens doors for people and provides them with more opportunities for employment, for travel, and for communicating with more people worldwide. United States citizens and the country's educational system need to more fully embrace the benefits of bilingualism and realize the power and opportunity that are provided to students when they learn in two languages. ■

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Dual Language Education: Building on Diversity

Sarah L. Cohen - Northern Illinois University

The author illustrates essential elements of dual language programs and the ways schools can put these into practice.

Finney Elementary School[1] is located in the heart of a largely Mexican immigrant urban neighborhood and serves students from the surrounding neighborhood, most of whose first language or parents' first language is Spanish. Trio Magnet Elementary School is located in a middle class urban neighborhood and serves students who are bused from all over the city, some of whom speak English as their first language and others for whom Spanish is their first language. The former's student population is from a mostly low-income background and the latter's population is deliberately mixed in this as well as in the linguistic and cultural background of the students. What do these seemingly disparate school contexts have in common? Both are examples of dual language models and as such aim to develop bilingual and biliterate students throughout the course of their elementary school career. For the purpose of this article, these two schools will serve to illustrate the essential elements of dual language education and the different ways in which a school can put those elements into practice. I begin by explaining the overarching aims of any dual language program model. Then I discuss the different methods that these goals can be implemented. I then discuss the rationale for promoting dual language programs and point to the possibilities, as well as some of the challenges, of putting into place a strong dual language program model.

Dual language programs are fundamentally different from the more traditional model of bilingual education found in the United States called transitional bilingual education (TBE). The underlying difference is explained by understanding the contrast between "additive" and "subtractive" bilingual education (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Additive bilingual education aims to add a new language to the child's repertoire without taking away another. Subtractive bilingual education on the other hand, intends to scaffold students as they learn a new language with some first language support, but without the aim to maintain and develop their first language. TBE falls into the latter model because it is set up to provide first language instruction for children when they enter school, but has as its aim to transition students to all English instruction by grade 3. This is termed subtractive because while students are allowed to begin learning with their first language (L1), the structure of the model by its nature replaces the L1 entirely with the second language (L2). Dual language programs, on the other hand, have as their goal to develop language and literacy skills for all students in both languages. Therefore, the students in the program whose first language is not English will be able to build on their knowledge of their L1 and develop strong academic proficiencies in it while also learning English.

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1. All names are pseudonyms

There are several different program models that fall under the umbrella of dual language, including two-way immersion (TWI), developmental bilingual, heritage language immersion, and foreign language immersion (Howard, Olague, & Rogers, 2003). For the purpose of this article, I will be focusing on TWI and heritage language immersion. As mentioned above, the main goal of any dual language program is to develop students' oral and written language skills in two languages; one will be the societal majority language (for our purposes, English), and the other will be the target language. Furthermore, the promotion of positive cross-cultural understandings is an important feature of these programs and often discussed as the "third goal" in dual language education (Parkes, 2009). It is this last goal that is underscored by Taylor (this volume) as well as numerous other advocates of educational programs whose aim is to support and develop students' bi- or multilingualism (e.g., Cummins, 2001; Moses, 2001).

A dual language program will often be able to maintain its status in a school district by virtue of its being cast as an enrichment program.

The achievement of grade-level academic success while developing language and literacy skills in two languages may seem a lofty and difficult goal to achieve; however, there are many reasons that this model of bilingual education is cited as meeting with the greatest success of any other type of bilingual education (see Collier & Thomas, 2004 for a thorough review). Among the features that contribute to this success are the integration of content and language instruction, a unified mission of the school faculty and parents, and an integrated student population of both minority and majority language speakers. These features will be elaborated upon and discussed in more detail below.

Research Foundation

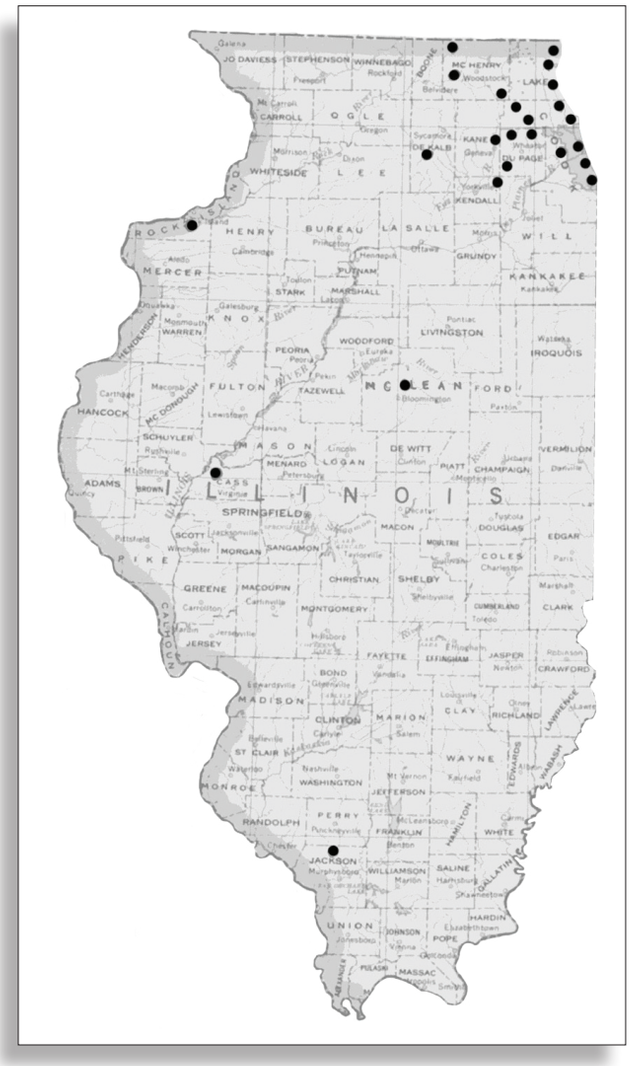
Research indicates that it takes ELLs 5 to 7 years on average to catch up to their native English-speaking peers (Cummins, 1981). The common underlying principle (Cummins, 2000) explains that the content and skills learned in one language is common across languages thus making it easy for these understandings to transfer from one language to another. New vocabulary that encodes this learning will need to be explicitly taught as students move from one language to another; however, the underlying knowledge will not need to be repeated.

Access to academic vocabulary is often cited as a challenge for students engaged in this process because the very texts students need to be able to read in order to master content-area learning use specialized academic vocabulary (Corson, 1997). Although most concepts transfer from one language to another, vocabulary is the one thing that has been shown to require direct instruction in each of the student's languages in order to learn the lexicon unique to each language. Coppola (2005) explains that, "research on vocabulary is one aspect of dual language development that is directly related to quantity and quality of input and patterns of exposure to each language" (p. 20). The importance of academic vocabulary for school success and the consequent difficulty of catching up to native-English-speaking peers in mastery of this content increases as bilingual learners go up in the elementary grades. Therefore, the flexibility that teachers in dual language programs are afforded because of the integration of language and content in both languages is of great benefit to this process. Teachers in these programs are able to give instruction in ELL students' L1, a practice that helps establish a strong foundation of academic language and content learning without sacrificing either the maintenance of the first language or the learning of the second.

Research has demonstrated that greater cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness is present in bilingual children than monolingual children (Cummins & Swain, 1986). By developing two ways to name the same objects and developing the control to maintain two languages separately, children seem to have access to more meanings and more ability

to analyze different meanings. These abilities, as well as the increased ability to control executive functioning, appear to positively influence the processes involved in learning to read (Bialystok & Martin, 2004). Therefore, a program model that develops strong first language literacy while also developing students' literacy and learning in their second language is a powerful tool to help ensure academic success for students whose first language is not English. Furthermore, in a dual language program, teachers will be able to easily create activities that encourage students to make connections between the two languages that they are learning (Reyes, 2001). Word walls are typically found in two languages and can be supplemented with cognate walls, students can create bilingual vocabulary dictionary notebooks, write bilingual stories, and *dichos* (sayings) can be learned and compared in both languages, to name just a few examples of the ways that biliteracy can be developed.

thesubject matter. This contrasts to the way many English as a Second Language (ESL) programs have typically functioned for English language learners (ELLs). Similarly, it is different from the way that most foreign language instruction takes place. In both cases, the instruction of the target language is commonly taught in isolation from content matter. Teaching language through content requires some special considerations on the part of teachers; however, the benefits are numerous (Genesee, 1994; Stoller, 1997; Tedick, Jorgensen, & Geffert, 2001).



Dots highlight areas with dual language program.

Models, Methods, and Trends

A key feature of any type of dual language program is that the teaching of the target language is integrated through the teaching of content. This means that the target language is not being taught as a separate subject. Instead, it is being used as a medium through which the student is learning

Children for the most part do not choose to immigrate, and even those born here to immigrant families are often caught between two cultures.

The number of TWI programs in the United States has grown at a rapid pace during the last several decades to the current number of about 350 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008). While most of those included in this number are Spanish-English programs, there are also several programs across the country with a variety of different target languages. These include French-English, Japanese-English, Korean-English, Mandarin-English, and Navajo-English. In Illinois, 23 school districts have at least one dual language program, and at least one has transformed all of its bilingual education programs to follow a TWI model. However, most schools and school districts continue to rely on the transitional bilingual education (TBE) model mentioned above.

Although the TBE model begins instruction for students in their native language, they are then

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transitioned into an English only classroom after two to three years. Thus in the TBE model what begins as native language support for literacy development and learning of academic content results in students having to leave behind their native language and culture by grade two or three. The lack of follow-through for native language instruction then fails to make full use of what Cummins (1978) terms the interdependence hypothesis. This posits that with strong first language development, the learner will be able to successfully transfer this linguistic knowledge to learn a second language. Within TBE programs, it is common to hear teachers complain that their students do not develop high levels of literacy in one *or* the other language. And, contrary to the TBE model, with a dual language model, students are able to become literate in their first language while learning English and then continue to improve their literacy skills in both languages throughout their grade level learning in elementary school.

Thematic units are a recommended structure for enabling teachers to coordinate language and content objectives across content areas.

Within dual language education there are a variety of models. The main feature that distinguishes one model from another is the student population. For example, a TWI model enrolls an even balance of native English speakers and native speakers of the target language. This mixture of language dominant students enables both groups to serve as language models for each other as they develop proficiency in their new language. A heritage language program, on the other hand, may enroll some students who speak English as their first language, but typically all students speak the target language or come from families whose first language is the target language. In this case, as mentioned in the introduction, the dual language program serves to maintain and support students' heritage language while at the same time developing their proficiency in English language and literacy skills. Students learning to read and write in Spanish in this program may begin school with little productive knowledge of Spanish, but may have receptive language skills and are able to draw on and reconnect with their parents or grandparents' Spanish language knowledge. When this happens, students report with excitement their newfound ability to read books with a grandmother at home or to talk on the phone with an uncle in Mexico. Students in this type of program, with limited educational and other resources in their home environment, are often those most at risk for school failure in today's society. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Latino students have the lowest achievement rates of all ethnic groups in the United States (NCES, 2010). They also stand the most to gain from instruction that builds on their families' funds of knowledge (Cummins, 2001). Programs that use students' first language as a tool for learning affirm students' identities by virtue of this essential part of themselves being made a part of the curriculum (e.g., Chow & Cummins, 2001; Giampapa, 2010; Reyes & Vallone, 2007). This in turn promotes a strong sense of self, a crucial element to developing an investment in school learning.

Each of these different programs may also vary in the organization of instruction in each language. For example, some programs will have teachers at the same grade level who teach subject matter in one language, while their colleagues will teach the remaining subject matter in the other language, and the same students will move between the two classrooms. In other programs, however, all teachers will be bilingual and will divide up the instruction between languages within their own classroom. The decision about which option to follow will most likely come down to whether there are sufficient bilingual teachers to be found for the latter structure. Furthermore, much of the flexibility regarding making these decisions depends whether the program is being integrated into an existing school program as a strand within the school or whether it is being started from the ground up as a new school program.

Regardless of the structural arrangement, there are common principles and practices that are essential to any successful dual language program. First, because language is being taught through content, it is important to ensure that

the language and content objectives are clearly articulated within units and also across grade levels. Thematic units are a recommended structure for enabling teachers to coordinate language and content objectives across content areas, for key vocabulary to be integrated into a variety of subject matter, and for students to be able to make connections from one subject to another and to have new ideas reinforced in multiple contexts. Language Arts instruction needs to be scheduled in each language at separate times in order to encourage literacy learning in both languages; however, all other subject matter need only be taught in one language. In the primary grades most of the subject matter will be taught in the target language; by the upper grades generally the division of subject matter will have changed to be equally split between languages.

Sociopolitical Rationale

The way language and culture are attended to (or not) in schools reflects wider societal views and policies. It is no surprise, then, that a country that is extremely politically and ideologically divided regarding issues of race and immigration has also had inconsistent at best and often extremely conflicted responses to the idea of providing first language instruction for students whose first language is not English. By the same token, these same societal divisions and conflicts regarding immigration and race inevitably make it difficult for immigrants or children of immigrants growing up in the United States to feel a sense of acceptance and identity affirmation regarding their cultural and linguistic selves (Cummins, 2000; Noguera, 2006).

Almost a quarter of all children currently in the United States are born to immigrant families (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009). And, according to statistics, 1 in 8 residents of the United States is an immigrant, a number that reflects a consistent rise and the highest level in 80 years. The number one factor that affects immigrants' ability to rise out of poverty is education (Camarota, 2007). However, these are the very students for whom the mainstream educational system does not seem to be working or working well (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009). Immigrant youth or children born to immigrants in general and in the Latino population in particular face a number of difficulties that can make achieving school success a challenge. Children for the most part do not choose to immigrate, and even those born here to immigrant families are often caught between two cultures and needing to reconcile differences in cultural norms, language, and other realities (Noguera, 2006). When schools are able to establish curriculum that actively recognizes and uses students'language and culture as a tool for learning, these differences can be felt as an asset rather than as a deficit. From another perspective, the importance of preparing society's youth to be able to negotiate an increasingly globalized economy is present in the minds of many parents and educators. This need is also however, present in the business world. Evidence that supports the necessity for increasing students' capacity to function in different languages and with different cultures is found, for example, in the fact that the percentage of publically traded companies the world which are internationally owned rather than U. S. based companies has essentially doubled in the past 20 years. Global companies are now more common than national companies worldwide (Latif, 2008). If, as has been the case, the number of global companies continue grow, and those tied solely to the United States continue to shrink, it stands to reason that parents will want their children to know another language to be able to compete for jobs in international companies that require knowledge of other languages. Some firms actively target diversity: "A diverse job market calls for diverse ways of thinking," argues Kip Hollister, founder and CEO of Hollister, Inc.

Vocabulary is the one thing that has been shown to require direct instruction in each of the student's languages.

Numerous researchers in the fields of immigration studies, education, and public policy argue that diversity must be seen as an asset rather than a deficit (e.g., Cummins, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009; 2001; Nieto, 2005). Furthermore, researchers hailing from a wide range of perspectives in education cite the greater effectiveness of building on children's prior knowledge in order to engage students

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and increase their ability to and interest in making connections to new concepts (e.g., Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Moll, 1992; Cummins, 2001). Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri (2005) explain that effective reading instruction for English language learners (ELLs) builds on and activates students' prior knowledge and organizes curriculum around themes. These are essential features of dual language programs. Indeed, dual language education provides a structure for negotiating diversity as a central feature of school programming and curriculum building on students' prior knowledge, making linguistic minority students the language experts, and integrating a focus on culture into the fabric of the curriculum.

Although there are challenges to changing program models, administrators interested in implementing a dual language model in their school will find many advantages to this structure over the more commonly found TBE model. One of the striking differences between this model and other responses to educating bilingual learners is that in this model students from different language backgrounds are integrated. Although the Bilingual Education Act of 1972 was made possible by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, many of the subsequent programs put into place to provide native language instruction of non-English dominant students had the unintended consequence of creating segregated classrooms/tracks of students within schools. There are several problems with this design. These relate both to theories of how languages are learned and to issues of equity in education (Orfield & Lee, 2005). For large urban centers whose neighborhoods are often already segregated by race, the segregation of students by language dominance can serve to further isolate students of minority backgrounds from mainstream peers. Segregation of this nature has been linked to inequities in the resources related to and the delivery of instruction (Orfield & Lee, 2005). When the instructional model is that of a dual language program, however, instruction must be aligned with the needs of both populations, therefore holding teachers and administrators accountable to students from both groups. When students from different backgrounds are integrated, it is therefore more likely that teachers will hold high expectations for all students, develop curriculum that will challenge all, and be expected to diversify instruction, than when students are segregated into homogenous groupings by language.

Programs that use students' first language as a tool for learning affirm students' identities.

Challenges and Possibilities

While bilingual education has been outlawed in three states and has been negatively affected by recent federal policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that have mandated high stakes testing in English for all students, dual language education has the advantage of benefiting the majority as well as the minority language population (Collier & Thomas, 1998; Christian, 1996). This means that in many cases, where bilingual programming is not seen past grade two or three, a school that implements a dual language program can maintain instruction in both languages through the elementary grades. Because of the appeal for both language populations, dual language programming can be seen both as a way to promote educational equity and academic achievement for linguistic minority students and as a way to attract middle and upper middle class families to public school programming. Thus, a dual language program will often be able to maintain its status in a school district by virtue of its being cast as an enrichment program where more traditional bilingual programs such as TBE are seen as remediation programs.

One of the main challenges cited to successful implementation of dual language programs is the lack of qualified professionals who are not only fluent in both languages, but who also have been prepared to teach in a bilingual or dual language program. Currently there are few teacher education programs at the undergraduate level that include bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework. Fewer programs still have a focus on providing exposure to the essential

principles and practices that are required for successful dual language programs to flourish. I argue here that this needs to change in order both to make teacher education programs more competitive in an environment of shrinking enrollment and to positively influence policy and practice at the school level.

Another challenge is to change the public's misconceptions about bilingualism and bilingual education. Contrary to what is often heard in popular opinion, learning in two languages does not cause difficulties for students as long as both languages are adequately supported in the school context (Collier, 1995; Reyes, 2001). In fact, not only are those students who learn two languages better prepared for future success in today's global job market, giving all students the gift of being bilingual will benefit all of society and provide more children with the ability to succeed academically and to be active contributors to a diverse society. For language minority children, dual language education affirms their first language and home culture while acquiring their second language. It enables them to make use of the cognitive, linguistic, and social resources that are embedded in their first language and family networks. For language majority children, dual language education expands their horizons by facilitating the learning of a new language and culture and preparing them to be able to function in different contexts. The rest of the world considers it fundamental to teach their children more than one language. It is time that we in the United States begin to consider the importance of maintaining and building on the bilingual advantage that many of our students come with. Dual language programs are a structure that will enable this additive view of bilingualism to flourish.

In Illinois, 23 school districts have at least one dual language program.

Current Practice in Illinois

In Illinois there are a growing number of school districts that have dual language programs. Although the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE, 2007) lists 23 dual language programs in the state, this number has surely at least doubled in the last several years. The Illinois Resource Center (Sandoval, 2009) created a dual language program directory that cites 42 dual language programs in Illinois. Forexample, 29 new dual language programs are being added in Elgin U-46 this year (Bruno, 2010). Eight schools in Schaumburg offer dual language programs; six use Spanish as the target language, and two use Japanese as the target language. Evanston changed all of their bilingual programming to run on the dual language model several years ago with dual language strands in five of their elementary schools. And in 2008, the Chicago Public Schools created a position at the board level titled Dual Language Education Initiative Coordinator whose charge it is to lead efforts on the part of neighborhood schools to create or build on existing dual language programs. Currently five schools are part of this initiative in addition to the Inter-American Magnet School, one of the oldest dual language programs in the country.

In the Northern Illinois region, one of the most called upon resources for school districts interested in developing dual language programs is the Illinois Resource Center (www.dualu.org) that offers ongoing workshops and seminars in dual language pedagogies. University programs that offer advanced certification course work in the field of bilingual education will typically address the methodologies needed to implement dual language teaching practices and will discuss particular issues needed to take into consideration when developing dual language programs. Given the strong research basis for these programs and their growing popularity among community members who either want a new language for their English-speaking child or want to help their child to maintain their first language while they learn English, we need to ensure that researchers, educators, and administrators continue to develop the resources and programs needed to be able to successfully fulfill the requirements of a sound dual language program. ■

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About *Thresholds*

In the summer of 1973, several professors from the former Department of Secondary Education at Northern Illinois University discussed the possibility for an education journal that united secondary school practitioners and university professors in dialog. They talked about problems, experiments, research, and new developments. This group, under the leadership of Dr. Leonard Pourchot, proceeded to elect a board of directors, establish a nonprofit foundation, solicit charter members, elect a managerial staff, and set the wheels in motion for a long-range goal of publishing the first issue of *Thresholds in Secondary Education* in February, 1975.

The word *thresholds* best represented the intention to explore ideas and share viewpoints that could lead to new educational advances while respecting achieved values and knowledge bases. The *Thresholds in Secondary Education* journal would stimulate thinking, influence education practices, inform, and inspire.

Over the years, *Thresholds* has broadened its focus beyond secondary education to include dialogue between educational theorists and practitioners from diverse locations. In 1977, the journal was retitled *Thresholds in Education.* Today it remains dedicated to the examination and exploration of new educational inquiries, theories, viewpoints, and program innovations. The title of the journal was well chosen and more than ever is relevant to the needed forum among educators in these complex times. The threshold is a structure familiar to all cultures from ancient times. Taken literally, it is the traverse beam of a doorframe. But it also stands as a metaphor for moving through time, place, and process. Thresholds are crossing-over places where we venture from the securely known to the uncharted spaces.

The publication of the *Thresholds in Education* journal is a cooperative effort between the Thresholds in Education Foundation, the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations, and the College of Education.

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