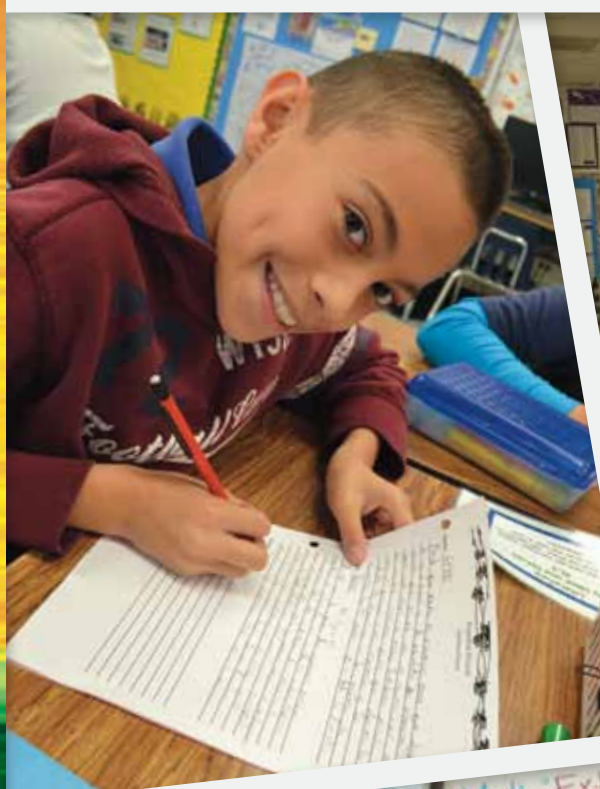


The

CABE 2016 EDITION

Multilingual Educator



FEATURED TOPICS

- Policy and Legislation • Dual Language and Bilingual Teacher Preparation
- Voices from the Classroom • Parents as Leaders • A Focus on LTELs



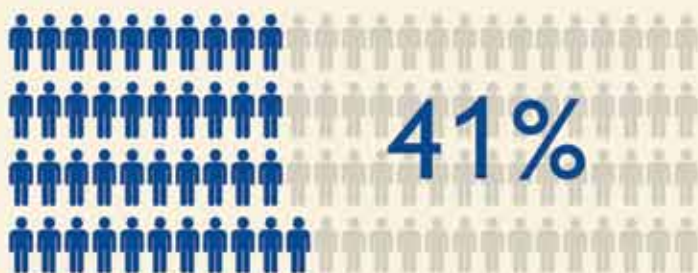
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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Laurie Nesralla



Jan Gustafson Corea

Welcome to the 2016 conference edition of the Multilingual Educator! The theme of CABE's 41st Annual Conference is "Bridging Multiple Worlds for 21st Century Success," which exemplifies CABE's Vision and Mission, and reflects the beautiful, diverse and vibrant city of San Francisco. In that spirit, we've included topics that move us forward, bridging us towards the CABE vision of biliteracy, educational equity and 21st century success. This issue includes articles in five key categories:

I. Legislation and Policy provides comments about the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) from the Working Group on ELL Policy.

II. Dual Language and Bilingual Teacher Preparation explores the importance of dual language immersion programs in building a high level of biliteracy, the role of Spanish language arts, and the challenges of ensuring sufficient numbers of highly qualified bilingual teachers to meet the growing demand statewide.

III. Voices from the Classroom is a new feature that honors engaging stories from the field that remind us all of why and for whom we have taken up the call of advocacy for multilingual excellence. These voices range from raw to tender to analytical, but all are authentic and inspiring.

IV. Parents as Leaders celebrates the special roles that parents play at home, in schools and in their communities regarding the education of their children, and highlights CABE's contribution to parent leadership and capacity building.

V. Focus on Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) highlights strategies to promote 21st century success for students who have been in U.S. Schools for 5 or more years and have yet to achieve full proficiency in English.

Our thanks go to the contributing authors for their thoughtful and meaningful writing. We hope everyone enjoys the CABE 2016 conference and finds this issue of the Multilingual Educator both inspiring and informative.

Multilingual Educator Editors:

Laurie Nesralla, CABE Education Consultant
Jan Gustafson Corea, CABE CEO



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Statement from the Working Group on ELL Policy Re: Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

With the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, the Working Group on English Language Learner (ELL) Policy¹ recognizes the continuing evolution of this landmark federal legislation to more fully include English Learners. This evolution began with the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act that introduced state academic standards into federal requirements and added provisions for the inclusion of English Learners in state assessment systems. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act added important requirements for English language proficiency standards, assessment, and accountability through both Title I and Title III. Building on lessons from state ESEA flexibility waivers and the introduction of college- and career-ready standards, the new ESSA continues to advance the inclusion of English Learners in Federal legislation affecting state and local education agencies.

The Working Group holds to a number of important guiding principles that are reflected to varying degrees in the new law. These principles include:

- Fostering academic achievement and language development. ELLs must be provided with equal opportunities to develop the same conceptual understandings, content area practices, and sophisticated uses of language that college- and career-readiness requires of all students.
- Providing additional supports. Federal and state policy must respond to the diversity of this population such that ELLs with differing educational backgrounds, contexts, strengths, and needs receive not only appropriate high-quality instruction, but also other supports necessary to ensure their success in school and in life.

- Establishing meaningful accountability. Federal and state policy plays an important role in developing the capacity of educators and systems to ensure language development and academic success for all ELLs, and in fostering the will to do so. Accountability in this context becomes meaningful when it supports capacities, policies, and behaviors that enable and meaningfully measure this success and recognizes the developmental nature of language learning.
- Valuing bilingualism and biliteracy. Proficiency in two or more languages should be encouraged and promoted for all students in the U.S., and accountability provisions should not undermine this goal. Multilingualism enhances cognitive and social growth, development of literacy in English, competitiveness in a global marketplace, national security, and understanding of diverse peoples and cultures.

The following highlights key features of the new law for ELL educators related to the first three principles. The law is silent on the fourth.

Title I:

- Decision-making authority for accountability is moved to states and localities, and significantly limits secretarial authority in providing guidance and allowing exceptions.
- States must have rigorous college- and career-ready standards in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science. They must also have corresponding English language proficiency (ELP) standards that reflect the language skills and practices ELLs need to engage successfully with those academic standards.
- States must administer and report school performance on annual standards-based assessments of

core academic subjects² as well as of English language proficiency for ELs. That is, ELP assessment is now fully integrated in Title I.

- States must determine their own accountability systems by establishing "long-term goals" for student achievement that include measuring interim progress. For the first time, this includes accountability for ELs' English language proficiency under Title I.
- States must have a method for identifying schools that are in need of comprehensive or targeted assistance and a system of assistance that is evidence-based as determined by the state.
- Two options are offered for assessing, reporting, and including in accountability recently-arrived ELs. States may exclude recently-arrived ELs from one administration of the reading/language arts assessment and assess and incorporate these ELs' test results after they have been enrolled in a U.S. school for one year, as was the case under No Child Left Behind. The second option requires states to test recently-arrived ELs and report results for the first two years, but allows states to exclude the results of these ELs from the state accountability system in the first year, include a measure of student growth in the second year, and include proficiency on the academic assessments beginning in the student's third year in a U.S. school.
- Formerly EL-classified students are to be included in the EL subgroup for reporting and accountability purposes for a period of up to 4 years after they have been reclassified. This suggests that EL students exited at Grade 5 or beyond may be included in the base for the calculation of EL graduation rates.



January 8, 2016

Kenji Hakuta and Robert Linqanti, in consultation with Diane August, Donna Christian, Michael Fix, David Francis, Patricia Gándara, Claude Goldenberg, Megan Hopkins, Jennifer O'Day, Karen Thompson, and Ilana Umansky.

- States are encouraged to be innovative in their assessment and accountability systems, including being allowed to use a variety of readiness and engagement indicators [Section (c)(4)(B)(v)] and encouraged to seek demonstration grants to use innovative performance-based assessments for state consortia.
- Parent and family engagement is emphasized and authorized at a minimum of 1% of Subpart 2 through Sec. 1010 with provisions to remove barriers to participation for families of ELs.

Title II:

- Title II is more explicit in mentioning ELs regarding expectations of teacher development plans and programs. For example, the state application is required to show how teachers, principals and other school leaders can identify and provide appropriate instruction for ELs; and local activities must address the learning needs of ELs.

Title III:

- States are required to adopt standardized statewide procedures and criteria for entry into and exit from EL status that are consistent across districts within the state. This is to be done in close consultation with a geographically representative sample of school districts in the state.
- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is allowed to determine the number of English learners in a state using a combination of the most accurate, up-to-date data from the American Community Survey and state counts of students being assessed on the state's Title I ELP assessment.
- Several LEA biennial reporting

requirements are specified, including ELs making progress in English language proficiency; attaining English language proficiency; exiting EL status based on their attainment of English language proficiency; meeting academic standards for each of four years after exit; and not attaining English language proficiency within five years of initial EL classification and first enrollment in a state's LEA.

- Biennial reporting also requires disaggregation of the performance of ELs and former ELs (for up to four years after exit) with a disability.
- Individual states are explicitly empowered to address early childhood, which will likely contribute to considerable variation among the states in providing a sound primary education for children. The law moves these programs to Health and Human Services with the intention of encouraging coordination with other early childhood programs, as well as the political intention to limit authority of ED. This may generate challenges around ensuring consistency in EL student identification, appropriate language-related instruction, and data sharing across departments.

Title VIII (formerly Title IX)

- Of rhetorical significance, the law replaces "Limited-English Proficient" with "English Learner."


Enduring Issues

Despite the advances noted above, ESSA remains silent in addressing the value of bilingualism and biliteracy, not only for ELs, but also for language-majority students. This is unfortunate given the surging commitment of states in recent years to foster both through initiatives such as the seal of biliteracy.³ The Working

Group on ELL Policy will continue to call attention to the strong and growing evidence base for promoting bilingualism and biliteracy for all students in the United States. This goal is in no way incompatible with promoting high levels of English proficiency for English learners, which is clearly necessary for success in school and beyond.

The law also misses an opportunity to set expectations for states to establish systems of school and district support that promote improved achievement of ELs. Current research evidence points to several guidelines centered on focused, concerted, and goal-driven school- and district-wide efforts. For example, school-level variables associated with improved achievement for ELs include learning goals for all students—including ELs—that are understood and supported by all staff; assessment practices that provide real-time and actionable information on students' current status and next steps relative to these goals; instructional resources aligned with learning goals; contextualized, ongoing support and professional development for teachers to interpret assessment evidence and pedagogically assist students in attaining learning goals; and effective school leadership that fosters accountability, while supporting and encouraging teachers' and students' working toward learning goals.

Rule-Making

The rule-making process to implement the new law needs to occur before the law takes effect beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. Many details will be worked out during the regulatory process, in which research evidence can play a significant role. The Working Group plans to issue in-depth analyses—including data models of alternative interpretations of key reporting and accountability provisions—during the rule-making period. 

Footnotes available online.

Ideology, Pedagogy, Access and Equity (IPAE):

A Critical Examination for

Dual Language Educators



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Dual Language Education (DLE) programs continue to exponentially proliferate across the nation, particularly in California where one third of the nation's programs exist (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015). This extremely rapid growth has propelled the need for the effective professional development of critically conscious DLE teachers (Alfaro, 2008; Alfaro, et al., 2014; Bartolomé, 2010; Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Darder, 2015; Garcia, 2014; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012, 2013). We view this challenge as a fundamental matter of equity and social justice, given our perspective that teachers can either announce or denounce dimensions of equitable classroom practices (Alfaro, et al., 2014; Bartolomé, 2008), and can thus affect the equality or inequality of emergent bilingual students' educational experiences in dual language classrooms (Cazden, 2001). We write from the vantage point of teacher educators and researchers, as well as former bilingual education teachers and administrators with over 30 years of experience in the field. Our intent in this article is to discuss the need to assist DLE teachers in developing greater clarity regarding the following four tenets:

Ideology, Pedagogy, Access, Equity (IPAE), necessary to critically strengthen the work of DLE classroom practices.

Bilingual teacher professional development workshops typically focus on methodology to develop high levels of bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism for all students (Baker, 2011, 2006; Quezada & Alfaro, 2012; Wright, et al., 2015). While research indicates that well implemented dual language strands promote academic achievement (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2009), we know very little about how DLE educators and their programs intentionally and strategically address the four critical tenets: Ideology, Pedagogy, Access, Equity (IPAE). Similar concerns and questions were published in a report titled: Urgent Research Questions and Issues in Dual-language Education (Parkes, Ruth, Anberg-Espinoza, & De Jong, 2009). Given this, we are left with the serious task of thinking deeply about the importance of IPAE in the effective implementation of DLE Programs.

The reality is that DLE teachers will most likely teach in classrooms made up of at least one half of students who are of low socioeconomic status (SES),

nonwhite and come from cultural groups historically and/or currently viewed and treated as low status in the greater society. Therefore, it is imperative that the initial preparation and continued professional development of DLE teachers include an understanding of the IPAE dimensions, particularly for vulnerable student populations.

Due to the critical impact of political and ideological factors in education and the need to strategically address them, critical bilingual teacher educators' conversations across the nation have begun to center around the challenges to identify, name, and confront the sociopolitical and ideological aspects in the preparation and professional development of DLE teachers, that intentionally and purposely address the four tenets of IPAE to create optimal learning conditions for all their students in DLE programs.

Ideological Clarity

It is essential for teachers to gain a firm understanding of dominant ideologies and develop effective counter-hegemonic discourses that can resist and transform oppressive practices in

today's classrooms (Darder, 2015). The process of critical dialogue, continuous self-questioning and reflection emanates the evolution of an awakening to critical consciousness (conscientizaçao) that beacons us toward ideological clarity (Freire, 1985).

“
A teacher's well-articulated ideology is the beacon that will empower her/him to navigate through, with, and around restrictive language policies and other socio-political agendas.”

It is important for teachers to arrive at the realization that it is their ideology that “announces or denounces” teaching for equity and social justice. Ideological clarity requires that teachers’ individual explanations be continually compared and contrasted with those propagated by the dominant society (Bartolomé, 2002). It is to be hoped that the juxtaposing of ideologies forces teachers to better understand if, when, and how their belief systems uncritically reflect those of the dominant society and support unfair and inequitable conditions (p.168). Additionally, Freire (1993) reminds us that teaching and learning in schools constitutes a political act tied to the ideological forces that operate on behalf of the dominant class. DLE teachers must guard themselves against perpetuating dominant hegemonic practices that have long existed in “English-only” classrooms and have made their way into DLE classrooms. In order for DLE teachers to experience a breakthrough to epistemological solidarity in their classroom practice, they must work diligently to become ideologically clear by asking themselves the critical questions (See Table 1).

Pedagogical Perspective and Clarity

Pedagogically clear teachers exercise a constant reciprocity of their ideology and classroom practice. Ideological clarity, critical reflection, and discourse inform a teacher’s practice and the intentional interaction between teaching and learning. A teacher’s pedagogical clarity that stems from an asset-based perspective centers on the belief that students and teachers construct knowledge together based on the funds of knowledge (assets) that students bring to the classroom (Yosso, 2005). Hence, teachers use instructional strategies to enhance the development of bilingualism and collaborate with students to create a democratic classroom environment. In order for DLE teachers to experience a critical breakthrough in their classroom practice, they must work diligently to develop pedagogical clarity by examining the critical questions (See Table 1).

Access for All

With all we know about the academic success and high motivation of students in DLE programs (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2002), we clearly lack studies related to students’ notion of access to quality curriculum, instruction, and materials. As rigorous standards and the complexity of vocabulary increase linguistic demands, DLE teachers need additional resources and/or professional development on instructional strategies to ensure access (Hernández, 2011).

Although DLE provides English Learners (ELs) the opportunities for advancement in academics, programs could potentially provide negative effects related to the success and failure of Mexican-origin children (Valdés, 1997). Possible drawbacks are the quality of instruction in the Spanish language, the effects of dual immersion on intergroup relations, and how DLE fits into the relationship between language and power,

affecting the children and society. Valdés (1997) argued that DLE programs have the potential to reduce Latinos’ natural advantage as bilinguals. This is a critical and valuable insight that Valdés called to our attention two decades ago, and we now see it clearly. In bilingual/dual language programs made up of working-class native Spanish speakers and middle-class native English speakers, the English speakers learn the valued standard Spanish and typically do not feel denigrated in the process. Furthermore, they often come to school with middle-class cultural capital they can transfer from English to Spanish. Given this, the IPEA framework calls on DLE teachers to reframe the sociopolitical notion of keeping the dominant class powerful and the subordinate group powerless. As we see it, if we are serious about leveling the education playing field, it is imperative that dual language educators, who teach students from the economically poorest populations, intentionally resist and interrupt persistent hegemonic pedagogies.

The issue of using more English in DLE programs in order to perform better on standardized tests by reducing the time spent on the heritage language is a concern for many teachers. Lindholm-Leary and Genesee (2010) explained this tactic has no scientific proof that it works. On the contrary, adding more English “time-on-task” does not expedite the acquisition of English or improve test scores (Gandára & Hopkins, 2010). Understanding the conceptual underpinnings of the third tenet of IPEA—Access, requires a profound analysis (See Table 1).

Equitable Spaces

The IPAE tenet for Equity is defined as the core of social justice in DLE classrooms, including how we define and position the sociolinguistic and sociocultural goals for all students. Equity provides a lens for DLE teachers to exert their

ideological clarity for safe democratic spaces, examining group membership, and balancing language status in our classroom practice.

Maintaining social equity in the classroom is no easy task for DL educators, since English is the language of power in America. Even though DLE programs assert a cross-cultural goal, studies on cultural and linguistic status between Spanish and English (De Jong, 2006; Fitts, 2006; Hernández, 2011; Palmer, 2008) affirm issues pertaining to social justice and equity. Findings indicate that English dominant speakers disrespect the academic spaces of heritage language speakers by cutting off classmates and taking over oral contributions (Hernández, 2011; Palmer, 2008).

Potowski (2004) examined influences that increased importance to English and eroded valuable connections to the heritage language in DLE schools. These influences included the emphasis of English on standardized tests, electives, assemblies, sports, fairs, and other schoolwide practices conducted in English that clearly send subtle messages to students, as they begin to associate the status of power with the dominant school language. Heritage language speakers can have a tendency to conform to the language of their dominant classmates to assert their status and competence in English, even with newcomers who know very little English. Potowski reported that during Spanish instruction, 68% of the time of student conversations resulted in English and only 32% in Spanish. Once again, we must ask ourselves the difficult Equity questions (See Table 1).

Últimas Palabras--Last Words

Language shift from Spanish to English affects the linguistic capital of heritage language speakers and undermines the vitality of Spanish in the classroom (Hernández, 2011, 2015). DLE teachers need to be cognizant of language preference during small group discussions and find ways to monitor linguistic equity. Given that language and cognition are the central elements to biliteracy and bilingual development in DLE settings, teachers need to create innovative and purposeful opportunities for target language use (e.g., Spanish) and ways to sustain conversations without language shift that favors the dominant language. Consequently, merely organizing students to perform tasks in Spanish (i.e., cooperative learning, literature circles) does not ensure student communication in Spanish. Teachers can manipulate these paradigms through alternative discourses/purposeful use of

language (Palmer, 2008), monitoring language use (De Jong, 2006), seeking allies for Spanish in peer group activities (Fitts, 2006), using counter-balance approaches (Lyster, 2009), addressing language functions in tasks (Hernandez, 2011, 2015), and placing symbolic value to the “investments in identity” that motivate the use of Spanish (Norton, as cited in Potowski, 2004).

The extremely rapid growth of DLE programs across the nation has made even more evident the pressing need for self-examination of practices that are critically conscious and fundamental to equity and social justice. Examining the four tenets Ideology, Pedagogy, Access and Equity (IPAE), as DLE teachers can allow us to ask ourselves the tough questions that cause us to reflect and recalibrate the core of IPAE. For this reason, we have developed a guide to assist teachers in asking themselves the tough questions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given historical and deeply engrained English monolingual, assimilationist, and deficit ideologies regarding linguistic minority students, we maintain that DLE teacher professional development must explicitly address the role of ideological clarity, pedagogical clarity, access for all, and equity in shaping the curriculum, including the often asymmetrical power relations inherent between the middle-class White language preferences and the reality that emergent bilingual students often come to school speaking nonstandard linguistic varieties of Spanish and English (Garcia, 2009; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2013; Sayer, 2013). In DLE, it is particularly important to prepare teachers to be aware and vigilant of their own middle-class preferences, including their biases against non-standard language use.


It is important to point out that much of the literature on the preparation of DLE teachers focuses on imparting technical knowledge, such as the various methodologies that will help them develop expertise in a range of content areas for teaching in dual language settings (Wright et al., 2015). It is our belief that, equally as important to teachers' knowledge of these technical and biliteracy methodological skills, is a teacher's knowledge of how a critically developed ideology informs their pedagogy that creates access for students from diverse backgrounds to ensure equity in the DLE classroom. We subscribe to a framework that challenges the notion of biliteracy development as a monolithic construct. On the contrary, we view it as the balancing of asymmetric powers embedded in the educational complexity of socio-cultural relations, tensions, and possibilities. 

Table 1: DLE Teacher's Examination of Critical Consciousness

IPAE Tenets of DLE	Don't be afraid to ask yourself the tough questions
<p>Ideological Clarity</p>  <p>Teacher announces or denounces teaching for equity and social justice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What beliefs, values, and epistemological theories inform my thinking? • What are the political, social, cultural, linguistic, gendered, and emotional circumstances in which I have learned? • Do I have the courage to speak up for the benefit of my students? • What kind of teacher do I want to be? • What do I want my students to know and do well? • What kind of changes do I need to make to my teaching that will enhance my students' bicultural identity and biliteracy development?
<p>Pedagogical Perspective and Clarity</p>  <p>Focusing on critical consciousness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What core values and research inform my practice? • What messages do I send to my students? • How do I demonstrate respect for my students' cultural and linguistic wealth? • Have I created a dialogical classroom environment or do I deposit knowledge? • Do I build on my students' assets/funds of knowledge? • Do I honor my students' non-standard language use while teaching standard language? • Do I co-construct knowledge with my students?
<p>Access for All</p>  <p>How language and power fit into the DLE classroom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is getting my attention? • Am I strategically creating universal access for all students? • Who do I call on first to answer questions? • Who are my thriving students? • Who requires additional scaffolding? • Am I watering down the curriculum? • Am I applying rigor and high expectations for all learners?
<p>Equitable Spaces</p>  <p>Equity is the core of IPAE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of language role model am I, honestly? • Who is dominating class discussions? • How am I navigating the status of languages and cultures in the classroom? • How is English perceived by my students? • Are some of my students conforming to subordinate roles? Why? • How am I keeping the students engaged in the language of instruction (e.g., Spanish)? • How are assessments positioning languages in my classroom? • How are school or classroom activities influencing the power of the dominant language or group?



PERFIL DEL MAESTRO BILINGÜE DEL SIGLO XXI

Compromiso, sensibilidad y preparación en el aula global

*Profile of the Bilingual Teacher (English-Spanish) in the 21st Century:
Commitment, Sensitivity and Preparation in the Global Classroom*

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En el 2012, California abrió un nuevo camino para apoyar el multilingüismo con la aprobación del Sello del estado de la alfabetización bilingüe (SSB) como parte del Proyecto de ley 815 (Brownley Capítulo 618, Estatutos de 2011). Numerosos estudios (García y Kleifgen, 2010; Lippi-Green (2011); Shin, 2012; Escamilla, Hopewell, y Butvilofsky, 2013; Rodríguez, Carrasquillo y Soon Lee, 2014) recalcan el poder que tiene el bilingüismo e instrumentos como el SBB para reforzar la idea de un estudiante global, multilingüe y competente del siglo XXI. Si bien hay muchos estudios sobre el beneficio y el impacto que el bilingüismo tiene en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes, a día de hoy, no se ha analizado de una manera continuada la figura del maestro bilingüe como pieza axiomática para conseguir los resultados antes propuestos: un estudiante global, multilingüe y competente.

En este artículo, iniciamos un análisis de las siguientes preguntas: ¿Qué características ha de tener el maestro bilingüe (español-inglés) para que el estudiante llegue a ser un individuo global, multilingüe y competente? ¿Qué tipo de programas, sinergias y colaboraciones entre entidades sería necesario fomentar para asegurar la existencia de suficientes

maestros preparados para afrontar los nuevos retos bilingües (español-inglés) del siglo XXI?

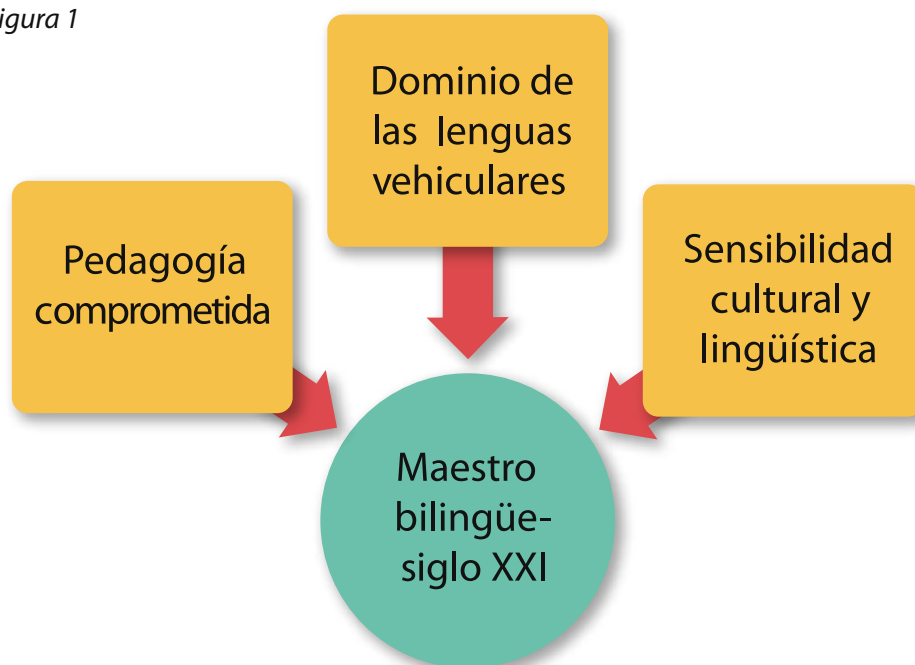
Como punto de partida establecemos y definimos tres destrezas específicas y fundamentales (ver Figura 1) que definirían al maestro bilingüe en el aula global: 1) pedagogía comprometida; 2) sensibilidad cultural y lingüística; y, 3) dominio de las lenguas vehiculares.

PEDAGOGÍA COMPROMETIDA

La incursión de la alfabetización en dos o más lenguas, como antagonismo al pasado monolingüe, abre las puertas para que se replanteen temas como la formación del profesorado y los modelos pedagógicos para educar al nuevo estudiante del siglo XXI: un estudiante que necesita ser capaz de expresarse en varias lenguas y poseer las destrezas necesarias para desenvolverse en una sociedad y en un mundo cada vez más global.

Dentro de este marco, un factor emerge como fundamental a la hora de definir los rasgos de un maestro bilingüe: la idea de una pedagogía comprometida como motor de un aula inclusiva.

Figura 1



El concepto de pedagogía comprometida visualiza a cada estudiante como un participante activo en los procesos de aprendizaje de las lenguas. Hooks (2010), en su análisis del pensamiento crítico en el aula, explica la importancia de dar a cada estudiante la oportunidad de poder expresarse, ya sea de forma escrita o de forma oral. La concesión de igualdad de oportunidades a todos los estudiantes les enseñará el valor del diálogo como una ventana donde uno puede expresar sus opiniones y éstas son escuchadas, así como la valoración de este diálogo como una expresión de respeto hacia las opiniones de los otros.

Este giro pedagógico supone crear un equilibrio entre las modalidades productivas de la lengua—expresión e interacción orales y expresión e interacción escritas—y las modalidades receptivas—lectura, comprensión lectora y comprensión auditiva. En el pasado, la enseñanza de las lenguas estaba basada en un modelo receptivo donde el maestro explicaba las normas gramaticales y los estudiantes las memorizaban para poder responder a las preguntas de exámenes unidimensionales (Livingstone y Ferreira, 2009). Tal como destacan Trujillo Sáez, Lorenzo y Vez (2011) en su análisis del poder del discurso pedagógico, aún hoy el estilo que muchos maestros utilizan al enseñar lenguas se distingue por el uso de expresiones imperativas como “sigamos, atiendan, silencio, oigan, observen.”

La pedagogía comprometida se distancia de un salón donde el maestro controla el diálogo y donde su voz sobresale y acapara el discurso de ideas. El nuevo salón, en el que las lenguas coexisten y los estudiantes aprenden una segunda lengua, es un aula que funciona como una cooperativa de aprendizaje (Gavilán Bouzas y Alario Sánchez, 2014). En este nuevo espacio de aprendizaje se espera y facilita que el estudiante participe de una manera activa y productiva en todos los procesos de adquisición de una nueva lengua. El maestro debe diseñar actividades, con las cuales, los estudiantes se sientan cómodos y a la vez motivados para analizar la lengua como una manifestación cultural que, al aprenderla, les va a proporcionar herramientas con las que leer el mundo y las palabras (Pahl y Roswell, 2010).

Enseñar una segunda lengua empieza por un trabajo de cooperación en el cual el maestro y los estudiantes analizan la lengua dentro de una realidad económica y socialmente específica (Arnejo Rey y Rodríguez-García, 2010). Esta colaboración entre maestros y estudiantes es un compromiso que va más allá de enseñar y aprender una lengua. Este compromiso sienta las bases para una educación que ha de ayudar al estudiante a crecer y formarse como un ciudadano global, preparado para enriquecer su cultura y su lengua con nuevas culturas y nuevas lenguas (García, 2009; Grosjean & Li, 2013).



SENSIBILIDAD CULTURAL Y LINGÜÍSTICA

El proceso de enseñar y aprender español dentro del marco global mencionado anteriormente nos lleva a reflexionar sobre una doble pregunta: ¿qué español se debe enseñar en el aula y cómo se debe enseñar el mismo? La primera parte de la pregunta debe incitar una reflexión sobre la riqueza de los localismos y regionalismos que el español tiene por su carácter multinacional. Si bien es cierto que los estudiantes tienen que tener un alto control y dominio de lo que se denomina español estándar, tanto en su vertiente de lenguaje académico como de lenguaje específico de cada materia (i.e., matemáticas, historia). También es importante que el maestro haga hincapié en la riqueza y variedad que el español posee como herramienta comunicativa en diferentes países y a través de diferentes generaciones.

Los estudiantes de diferentes países—e.g., Nicaragua, El Salvador, México, República Dominicana—llegan a las aulas hablando su español; un español correcto y con localismos que lo hacen brillar por su identidad y contexto histórico. No solo eso, hay que considerar también que los estudiantes que hablan español en EEUU pertenecen a diferentes generaciones. Puede que algunos hayan sido los primeros en nacer en EEUU o pueden ser los hijos, nietos o biznietos de aquellos que llegaron a este país con el español como seña de identidad única. Cualquiera que sea la situación, la tarea del maestro es proporcionar a los estudiantes una sensibilidad lingüística y cultural que les permita valorar el español desde una perspectiva multidimensional (Paffey, 2014).

Para responder a cómo se enseña esta sensibilidad lingüística y cultural, hay que expandir la idea de aula inclusiva desarrollada en la primera sección. Al concepto de pedagogía comprometida habría que añadir otro: la destreza y habilidad por parte del maestro de crear e implementar una metodología que potencie y expanda las lenguas y culturas que el estudiante trae al aula. En el aula inclusiva, el maestro enseña español y en español utilizando el idioma como una herramienta a través de la cual el estudiante analiza de una manera crítica los aspectos lingüísticos que le conectan y diferencian de

sus compañeros. El estudiante consigue desarrollar empatía y capacidad de aprender de otros para así poder aportar, enriquecer a otros con sus destrezas lingüísticas.

El maestro cambia su rol y no intenta que el alumno renuncie a su identidad al adquirir un español estándar y académico. Todo lo contrario, el maestro es un defensor, promotor y catalizador de los “bienes”—lengua, cultura y conocimiento—con los que el estudiante inicia el aprendizaje del español y en español. El educador sensible integra a cada uno de los estudiantes para así construir un espacio lingüístico de propiedad colectiva. Como reclama Sonia Nieto (2013) en sus investigaciones sobre prácticas educativas basadas en justicia social y equidad, el estudiante tiene el derecho de que su patrimonio cultural y lingüístico no solo sea valorado, sino utilizado para contextualizar y enriquecer los procesos de aprendizaje.

En el aula global del siglo XXI, los maestros y los estudiantes construyen un español multidimensional que refleja la diversidad y variedad lingüística de aquellos que lo aprenden, hablan, leen y escriben. En manos de estudiantes y maestros comprometidos y con la sensibilidad que da el respeto y la apreciación, el español se convierte en un nexo de unión de esta nueva generación bilingüe y alfabetizada en la riqueza de la dualidad y el diálogo entre realidades diferentes dentro de un ámbito de coexistencia y crecimiento (Montrul, 2012).

DOMINIO DE LAS LENGUAS VEHICULARES

La clave para conseguir que el español sea ese vínculo de compromiso y sensibilidad entre las culturas y realidades de los estudiantes y sus familias es un maestro que domine todos los registros de las lenguas que él y sus estudiantes utilizan en el salón y en la comunidad. Es de vital importancia que el maestro posea unas elevadas destrezas comunicativas en todas sus vertientes: comprensión auditiva, comprensión lectora, uso y expresiones orales y escritas así como un importante conocimiento del funcionamiento del español en su vertiente lingüística-gramatical. Este alto nivel de competencia lingüística

debe existir igualmente en inglés. Enseñar español en EEUU requiere un maestro que hable, comprenda, lea, escriba, y piense en español y en inglés (Marcelo, 2009).

En el salón inclusivo, las lenguas se entrelazan, con lo cual el estudiante debe poder investigar y verificar cómo las destrezas del español se pueden transferir y enriquecer cuando está aprendiendo inglés y en inglés, y como la lengua inglesa también se convierte en un instrumento de ayuda cuando se está adquiriendo el español. La reciprocidad entre lenguas debe configurar la pedagogía y la metodología que el maestro utiliza cuando diseña e implementa las lecciones en el aula. Para poder enseñar esta reciprocidad y complementariedad de las lenguas, el maestro necesita sentirse cómodo expresándose y entendiéndose con sus alumnos.

Este nivel de confort aparece si el maestro sabe cómo utilizar el conocimiento lingüístico del estudiante, ya sea en español o en inglés, para poder reforzar la adquisición de la lengua de una manera efectiva. El ejemplo del maestro como persona altamente alfabetizada en ambas lenguas es el espejo donde se debe mirar al alumno. Este dominio de las lenguas refuerza la idea de igualdad entre el estatus lingüístico de los dos idiomas. Ser un modelo de dos lenguas solidifica el rol del español como lengua vehicular.


La permanencia y el valor del español como lengua académica en los EEUU requiere por la figura de un maestro bilingüe que entienda la importancia no solo “de que los alumnos adquieran unas destrezas y estrategias más eficaces en su estudio de la lengua... [sino] de que [él] transfiera el control del proceso al alumno” (Martín Peris, pp. 12-13, 2010). El dominio de la lengua debe ser compartido equitativamente por el maestro y los estudiantes. El maestro debe evitar tener el monopolio del lenguaje académico en el aula. El estudiante debe sentir que está aprendiendo y tiene un dominio del español que va mas allá de las materias y conceptos impartidos por el maestro.

Tal como apunta el Sello del Estado de la Alfabetización Bilingüe (SSB), para enseñar español

en el siglo XXI en EEUU, será necesario contar con unos maestros comprometidos, con la sensibilidad y la nobleza para compartir y reforzar las destrezas comunicativas y lingüísticas de la nueva generación de estudiantes bilingües orgullosos de llevar una bandera dual.

CONCLUSIONES: SINERGIAS Y COLABORACIONES

En las tres secciones que preceden se han esbozado las características que debería reunir el maestro bilingüe del siglo XXI. Es obvio que hay otros aspectos que deben ser analizados cuando nos referimos a un maestro bilingüe, eficaz y competente en el aula. Asimismo conviene recalcar que la preparación de estas competencias no es una tarea que deba recaer solamente en las universidades. Educar a la nueva generación de maestros bilingües debe ser un esfuerzo de cooperación entre entidades gubernamentales, asociaciones educativas, distritos escolares, oficinas del condado, universidades, la comisión de credenciales de maestros y el Departamento de educación. Solo si trabajamos, cuestionamos e investigamos juntos se puede garantizar que el nuevo maestro bilingüe esté equipado con las herramientas y los conocimientos necesarios una vez que llegue al salón.

Este artículo abre la puerta para la reflexión y el diálogo entre todas las entidades y expertos que trabajan para asegurar que la alfabetización en dos lenguas, independientemente de cuáles sean estas, sea un proceso que facilite y celebre la integración de los ciudadanos en un país que es multicultural y multilingüe. 



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El surgimiento lógico del desarrollo del idioma español

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Evaluación de la capacidad para leer y escribir en dos idiomas en las escuelas

Otoño, 2015: Un capacitador de lecto-escritura/alfabetización bilingüe recién contratado en una escuela, uno de los muchos que hoy son financiados por el <<Plan de Control Local y Rendimiento de Cuentas (Local Control and Accountability Plan)>>, revisa las evaluaciones de quinto grado junto a una especialista en bilingüedad (lectura en dos idiomas). El capacitador presenta algunas medidas de diagnóstico recientemente administradas mientras la especialista hace preguntas sobre los análisis y las propuestas de intervenciones. Las calificaciones giran en torno a la comprensión lectora y las destrezas básicas.

El capacitador expresa sus inquietudes sobre el gran número de estudiantes que tienen dificultad para leer, según lo que le fue comunicado por los maestros que pidieron ayuda para apoyar a los estudiantes con mayores necesidades en sus salones. Todos los resultados analizados miden el desempeño en inglés, pese a que muchos

de los estudiantes hablan español como lengua materna. La lógica del equipo del nivel de quinto grado para analizar principalmente la alfabetización en inglés proviene del hecho que los estudiantes han participado en este programa de inmersión doble de artes del lenguaje 50-50 desde el jardín infantil (Kindergarten), por lo que se supone que en este grado ya saben leer y escribir bastante bien en inglés. Además, la creencia de importancia que tiene el examen de artes del lenguaje del Consorcio para el desarrollo de los exámenes estatales (Smarter-Balanced Assessment Consortium, la única evaluación que mide el desempeño y progreso de los estudiantes de California en lecto-escritura), el cual evalúa solo la capacidad de leer y escribir en inglés, ha creado expectativas subconscientes y, a veces públicas, de una fuerte capacidad de lectura, específicamente en inglés, incluso en escuelas que enseñan a leer y escribir en dos idiomas. En definitiva, la escuela quiere demostrar que los estudiantes han dominado la habilidad de leer y escribir en español, pero reconocen que el dominio del idioma es solo medido formalmente en inglés en las evaluaciones sumativas estatales.

La especialista en lectura indaga sobre algún tipo de evaluación de la alfabetización en español, averigua sobre la posibilidad de problemas de transferencia lingüística, como también intenta evaluar las inquietudes que pueda tener el equipo de desempeño académico del estudiante (Student Study Team). El capacitador indica que las medidas de diagnóstico en español aún no se aplican y no sabe dónde encontrarlas para medir las destrezas básicas en español. Por consiguiente, la especialista pide historiales de intervenciones en lectura (en español o inglés) que se hayan efectuado hasta la fecha, pide información sobre la asistencia a clases de los estudiantes para saber si han asistido a la mayoría de ellas, averigua si algunos estudiantes hablan idiomas indígenas de América Latina en lugar de español, recomienda una comparación entre las destrezas básicas y de comprensión en español y recomienda una mayor recolección de datos. El capacitador coincide con estas sugerencias y hace una cita a futuro para entregar mayor información.

Lo que la especialista en lectura no comparte es su preocupación basada en las observaciones de los salones de clases y datos anteriores, como los ejercicios de rendimiento en español del distrito, un ensayo de lectura-escritura administrado dos veces al año. Ella sabe, de acuerdo al análisis que ha hecho de las calificaciones y los errores, que en muchas de las escuelas bilingües los estudiantes tienen dificultad con la gramática en español, incluso aquellos que hablan español como lengua materna y que han recibido cinco años de alfabetización académica en español. En sus visitas a los salones de clases, ha escuchado y observado que los maestros creen que la adquisición del idioma se logra simplemente enseñando el

contenido de la asignatura en español. Es más, durante el periodo interino entre las adopciones de los libros de texto estatales, se pierde de vista el loable objetivo de la planificación de las unidades y lecciones para el maestro que por lo general omite la integración de cualquier desarrollo del lenguaje y programas de apoyo de calidad, ya sea en español o en inglés. La especialista se ha dado cuenta que algunos maestros creen que es suficiente con solo enseñar en español, cuando en realidad, puede que esto no sea suficiente para la totalidad de los estudiantes y analiza cómo cambiar las actitudes y mentalidades para incorporar la diferenciación e intervención del español durante el día escolar.



De común conocimiento

Desde su lanzamiento en el 2012, los estándares Common Core en español han generado una instrucción integral y rigurosa del español. La adopción de estos estándares dentro de California tiene un alcance mayor al anterior, ya que se espera que la instrucción en español sea elevada universalmente a través de la publicación de la versión nacional de los estándares. Incluso las escuelas bilingües internacionales en otros países han accedido y usado el mismo conjunto de expectativas para crear una coherencia en la enseñanza. En realidad, en términos de influencia de la alfabetización en español, California se ha

convertido en el modelo para impulsar un entendimiento generalizado de las artes del lenguaje en español a través de todo el país, incluso prestándole apoyo a los editores y escritores de currículo.

Sin embargo, el potencial de permeabilidad e impacto en los salones de clase aún no se ha

logrado incluso a tres años de la finalización, impresión, publicación y distribución de los Estándares estatales comunes para las artes de lenguaje y para la lecto-escritura en historia y estudios sociales, ciencias y materias técnicas. Más allá de la importancia de usar los estándares de artes del lenguaje en español para el desarrollo de la planificación y desarrollo del currículo para la enseñanza, los estándares deben también impulsar principalmente las evaluaciones de las artes del lenguaje a nivel local y estatal.

En la actualidad, California carece de medidas comunes para evaluar la lecto-escritura/alfabetización en español de acuerdo a los nuevos estándares. Hoy en día el estado no tiene ningún tipo de evaluación oficial que mida el dominio del

lenguaje, llevando a las escuelas al uso de evaluaciones creadas por las editoriales, en particular aquellas por computadora y con análisis de datos. Aunque los maestros bilingües pueden mostrarse un poco reacios a la idea de una evaluación uniforme impuesta en los salones de clases que enseñan la alfabetización en dos idiomas, existe un peligro pedagógico intrínseco en la falta de evaluaciones estatales que estén fuertemente alineadas con los estándares estatales comunes en las artes del lenguaje en español.

Los estudiantes que necesitan una intervención de alfabetización en español o un apoyo académico en el lenguaje pueden no ser detectados por las evaluaciones, a menos que los distritos tengan los recursos suficientes para producir tareas de desempeño actualizadas y de calidad en español y tengan la disponibilidad de exámenes para evaluar las destrezas básicas en español. Incluso si un distrito ha invertido en evaluaciones de lenguaje en español para sus escuelas bilingües, la conexión del análisis entre el estudiante, la enseñanza y el currículo puede subestimar la complejidad del multilingüismo dentro del programa de alfabetización en dos idiomas. Aunque las escuelas de inmersión doble, inmersión, programa de inmersión doble (two-way), y de alfabetización en dos idiomas han comenzado a experimentar con algunas evaluaciones que analizan

el dominio general del español en sí, dichas evaluaciones carecen de la profundidad de los estándares comunes, Common Core, en español.

Las escuelas bilingües merecen un sistema sólido de apoyo para la evaluación del lenguaje y lecto-escritura/alfabetización en español. Por lo general, la presión, ejercida por el Consorcio para el desarrollo de los exámenes estatales (SBAC), será en el inglés a costa del desarrollo de los recursos y del intercambio de conocimiento sobre el español. Ha llegado el momento de generar un liderazgo para entender las necesidades de los estudiantes que están adquiriendo un español académico. En resumen, California necesita una red de coordinación de los proveedores de servicios escolares para evaluar de mejor manera lo que se pueda llegar a conocer sobre los estudiantes del idioma español (Spanish Learners) en el estado.

Conexión entre las artes del lenguaje y el desarrollo del idioma

Dos años después de la difusión de los estándares estatales de las artes del lenguaje en español, el Marco del 2014 del desarrollo del inglés/ artes del lenguaje inglés de California (California English Language Arts/ Language Development Framework) lanzó una conceptualización de la escolaridad innovadora, progresiva y reconstructiva. La promoción del marco estatal de la educación de la lengua natal gira en torno a una sólida base de investigación y presenta modelos de enseñanza (en ejemplares descriptivos llamados “snapshots” y “vignettes”) que demuestran una estrategia acumulativa que respeta y extrae del conocimiento de la lengua materna. Más allá de consolidar una lógica para la enseñanza de la lectura y escritura en dos idiomas, también unió la enseñanza de las artes del lenguaje con el desarrollo del idioma.

En base al nuevo consenso sobre el conocimiento de la enseñanza y adquisición del idioma, el estado hace hincapié en dos tipos de desarrollo del idioma: designado e integrado. Cada uno tiene su propia definición dentro del marco:

1. ELD Integrado, en el cual todos los maestros con estudiantes que estén aprendiendo el idioma inglés (English Learners) en sus salones usan los estándares ELD (English Language Development - desarrollo del inglés como segundo idioma) del estado de California en conjunto con los CCSS (Common Core State Standards) locales del estado de California en lecto-escritura/alfabetización y estándares de otras asignaturas para los aprendices de inglés (English Learners).
2. ELD Designado, o un horario determinado durante el día escolar regular en el cual los maestros usan los estándares ELD (desarrollo del inglés como segundo idioma) del estado de California como los estándares principales de manera que el desarrollo del idioma ocurra por, para y desde la enseñanza de las asignaturas escolares específicamente para los aprendices de inglés (English Learners).

Ciertamente, la unificación de las artes del lenguaje y el desarrollo del idioma se beneficia de una amplia investigación como se ha promocionado en el marco, sin embargo la identificación de la implementación aún no ha influenciado fuertemente a las escuelas. A lo largo del estado, incluso los maestros que enseñan a leer y a escribir en dos idiomas (biliteracidad) pueden no entender la manera de asegurar que los estándares ELD sean parte de la planificación de la lección en todas las asignaturas cada vez que los aprendices de inglés participen en la clase. Peor aún, las escuelas bilingües pueden no entender que el ELD Integrado es amplio y de esta manera ignorar el horario de ELD Designado como parte del día o la semana escolar.

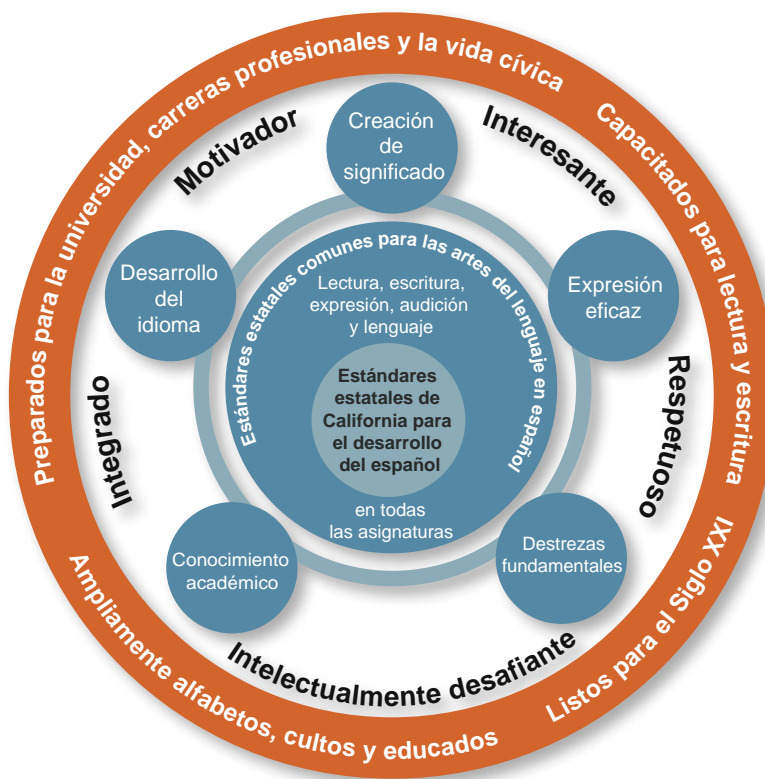
La importancia y el papel del desarrollo del idioma español

Junto con el empuje para incorporar las artes del lenguaje con el desarrollo del idioma, los estándares para el desarrollo del idioma español (Spanish Language Development: SLD), paralelos de los estándares ELD, se han estado desarrollando en el Condado de San Diego, y fueron presentados en forma de borrador durante la conferencia de CABE del 2014. Al igual que los CC en español estos son una equivalencia de los estándares de las artes del lenguaje -mucho más que una simple traducción- el propósito de los estándares del desarrollo del idioma español (SLD) tiene los mismos objetivos que su contraparte en inglés.

- “... desarrollar un entendimiento sobre el idioma como un recurso complejo, dinámico y social para crear significado, y sobre la organización de su contenido en distintos tipos de pruebas y a través de todas las disciplinas usando la estructura del texto, características del lenguaje y vocabulario dependiendo del propósito y el público...”

La intención de los estándares es de promover un entendimiento profundo de la enseñanza del español académico. Todos los maestros que enseñan a leer y a escribir en dos idiomas (biliteracidad) que han escrito y editado los borradores reconocen su importancia. De hecho, la lógica de los estándares ELD también se aplica para el desarrollo del idioma español, como se puede notar al simplemente sustituir la palabra inglés por español en cada recomendación hecha por el marco estatal:

- “Aunque el concepto de recibir un apoyo es importante para todos los estudiantes, los estándares ELD [SLD] del estado de California ofrecen una orientación general sobre los niveles de apoyo para los estudiantes EL [Spanish Learners] en distintos niveles de dominio del inglés [español]”.



- “...le entrega a los maestros información precisa sobre lo que deben esperar que hagan sus estudiantes EL [Spanish Learners] con y a través del inglés [español] a medida que van teniendo un mejor dominio del inglés [español] como segundo idioma”.

- “Los maestros pueden usar los estándares ELD [SLD] del estado de California como una guía para prestarle el apoyo adecuado a sus estudiantes EL [Spanish Learners] con distintos niveles de dominio del inglés [español] que les permita participar en análisis grupales profundos sobre los contenidos de las asignaturas”.

A finales de 2015, los estándares SLD serán publicados por commoncore-espanol.com, la organización central, no lucrativa, de los estándares de las artes del lenguaje en español. Se espera que los SLD aumenten tanto la enseñanza como las evaluaciones de cualquier asignatura que se imparta en español. A raíz de esto, está evolucionando un nuevo vocabulario que describe con mayor exactitud el objetivo de enseñar y evaluar el dominio del español:

- **Estudiantes del español o Aprendices del español (Spanish Learners):** estudiantes que quieren lograr un dominio dentro del nivel del grado en un español académico.

- **Desarrollo del idioma español, integrado (Integrated SLD):** apoyo lingüístico para los estudiantes de español durante la enseñanza del contenido de las distintas asignaturas

- **Desarrollo del idioma español, designado (Designated SLD):** crear un conocimiento sobre el lenguaje y desarrollar destrezas/habilidades para usar el lenguaje, haciendo hincapié en el lenguaje oral

El surgimiento del desarrollo del idioma español (SLD) como una práctica sólida está basada en mucho más que una lógica paralela con el desarrollo del idioma inglés (ELD) de acuerdo con el marco. A pesar de la falta de evaluaciones estatales en las artes del lenguaje en español, los maestros bilingües reconocen de manera intuitiva que tienen estudiantes en sus salones que aún tienen que lograr un nivel de dominio del español de acuerdo con el nivel del grado en lectura y escritura. Cuando a los educadores se les muestran los estándares SLD y se les pide que reflexionen sobre los desafíos que enfrentan sus alumnos con mayor dificultad en la lectura en español, inmediatamente se dan cuenta de las ventajas de ofrecer un acceso a y tutoría con textos, conversaciones y tareas de escritura en español. La fusión de las artes del lenguaje en español con el desarrollo del lenguaje es el próximo paso a seguir para elevar el nivel de la alfabetización en español. 📖

SPANISH
ENGLISH



Developing Language in Both Spanish and English: Explicit Instructional Conversations about Language

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One day, during a review of compound words, my colleague Claudia addressed a child in her second grade Spanish bilingual class for behaving immaturely. In the heat of the moment, she said, “¡No es un guardaniños, es una escuela!” (“This is not a daycare center, it’s a school!”). Listening intently, another student noticed that the word “daycare” was a compound word.

Student (enthusiastically): ¡Guardaniños! ¡guarda, niños, guardaniños!

Claudia: Sí, *guadaniños* es una palabra compuesta.

Student (enthusiastically): Daycare! day, care, daycare!

Claudia: Yes, *daycare* is a compound word.

Without being asked to, the student independently thought about the word daycare and categorized it based on previous Explicit Instructional Conversations about Language (EICALs) (Briceño, 2014), in which he had participated with his teacher and classmates. Identifying “daycare” as a compound word was evidence that the student had learned what compound words were and how they worked. Most importantly, he was thinking about language.

The concept of EICAL originated in findings from a case study that explored how teachers in Dual Language (DL) settings in California supported students’ language development in both Spanish and English (Briceño, 2014). Explicit instructional conversations about language were one of the primary instructional

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strategies teachers used to develop both languages. In this article we share what we learned about the use of EICALs to develop students’ school language in Spanish and English. All names in this article are pseudonyms.

School Language

Mastering the language of school is necessary for Emergent Bilingual students (EBs) to become successful academically (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008; Valdés, Bunch, Snow & Lee, 2005). In DL classrooms, the role of language is central to instruction as educators must teach both Spanish and English while teaching in each language. DL programs could build on Latino students’ funds of knowledge, as their home language is an important asset in a DL program (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). However, schools tend to devalue students’ colloquial registers of Spanish, not regarding these as “academic” (Alvarez, 2011; Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998).

The language of school has been found to be important for positive achievement outcomes in school—particularly for EBs—as language is the foundation of instruction and literacy (Delpit, 1992; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008; Valdés et al., 2005). However, there is no clear definition of academic language (Valdés, 2004), as “what counts as academic language is an utterly social phenomenon,” and is therefore dynamic and changing (Aukerman, 2007, p. 629). The research literature primarily refers to academic English (exceptions include Alvarez, 2011, 2012; Guerrero, 2003; Potowski, 2007; Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998) due to the prevailing view that ignores students’ primary language as a knowledge base and resource.

Without a clear definition of academic language, how do teachers know when students understand and produce it? Too often EBs are held to the English monolingual norm, and accuracy or correctness is lauded over depth of understanding (Alvarez, 2011, 2012; Cook, 2002). Schools maintain certain language requirements that can interfere with EB students’ academic success, yet without a clear understanding of academic language, expectations are often vague and typically not communicated to students (Valdés, et al., 2005). In fact, academic language is often not explicitly taught in classrooms, as teachers tend to assume it is acquired naturally. This assumption may privilege mainstream students who learn academic language at home, while disadvantaging those who do not (Alim, 2005; Delpit, 2001; Valdés, 2004).

Explicit Instructional Conversations About Language (EICALs)

EICALs are conversations that draw attention to a specific aspect of language. They can be initiated by students’ questions or by teachers’ observations of needs or confusions. Talking about language enables students to begin to think metacognitively and notice similarities and differences between languages. Topics of EICAL may include morphology, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, pragmatics, synonyms, antonyms, homophones, words with multiple meanings, cognates, and other linguistic concepts. Teachers and students may ask for a definition of a vocabulary word, provide a synonym or antonym for a word, discuss multiple meanings a word might have, and/or define a word based on its morphology. EICALs help students to be metacognitive about language by bringing it to the forefront of their thinking. For example, in a single, hour-long observation, Claudia conducted multiple EICALs with her students, regarding: the difference between “porque” (because) and “¿por qué?” (why?), the multiple meanings of the word “selección” (selection), multiple ways to ask someone to speak more loudly (“habla recio, fuerte, con volumen de voz alta”) (speak up, loudly, with a high volume), and how to transform a declarative sentence into an interrogative one.

Why Use EICALs?

EICALs support the development of school language, transfer between languages, and model metacognition about language.

The examples that follow illustrate how Claudia used EICALs to support students’ language development.

Support for the Development of School Language.

Claudia modeled thinking about language using EICALs. In the following example, she explored two common meanings of the word *selección* (selection), both of which were originally proposed by her students.

Claudia: *¿Qué significa selección?*

Estudiante 1: *Una selección de lectura.*

Estudiante 2: *¡De fútbol!*

Claudia: *Fijense bien, Yesenia está hablando de una selección como una lectura, la selección de la semana. Y Raúl, cuando escuchó la palabra ‘selección,’ pensó en su equipo de fútbol, la selección de fútbol. Aquí tenemos dos significados, ¿verdad? Pero el concepto de la palabra que Raúl tiene es ‘un grupo de personas’— la selección de fútbol, o de basketbol o baloncesto. Yesenia pensó en una historia, una lectura, una selección.*

Claudia: *What does selection mean?*

Student 1: *A reading selection*

Student 2: *A soccer team!*

Claudia: *Listen, Yesenia is talking about a selection of text, the weekly reading selection. And Raúl, when he heard the word ‘selection,’ he thought about his soccer team. Here we have two meanings, right? But the concepts of the word that Raúl has is a group of people, like a football or basketball team. Yesenia thought about a story, a text, a selection.*

Two students had different meanings for *selección* —a text and a soccer team— which Claudia built on to deepen the understanding of the multiple meanings of that word. She provided synonyms for both meanings (un equipo [team]; una lectura [reading], historia [story]) and explicitly spoke about the multiple meanings of the word (Aquí tenemos dos significados, ¿verdad? [Here we have two meanings, right?]). The EICALs Claudia had with her students increased their attention to language and how it functions.

Support for Transfer Between Languages.

EICALs can also be employed to help students use transfer by emphasizing the similarities and differences between Spanish and English. Claudia explained that the days of the week are capitalized in English but not in Spanish (“Acuérdate, en español los días de la semana no se escriben con mayúscula”). Similarly, “yo” (I) is capitalized in English but not in Spanish. She also reminded students that words with the suffix “-ción” often have English cognates with the suffix “-tion,” such as *conversación* and *conversación*. Explicitly pointing out where Spanish and English differ and where they are similar helps students to think about the languages

in relation to each other and how using what they know in one language can help them learn the other. For example, a student may think, “This is like something I already know in my native language, so it will be easy to learn in my second language”) (Cummins, 1979; Goldenberg, 2008).

Cognates might also be topics of EICAL discussions. Without explicit instruction students often do not identify cognates on their own or know how to use cognates to learn another language (August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow, 2005; Nagy, 1995; Nagy, García, Durgunoglu, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993). This is particularly true of younger children (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012). When a student asked Claudia the definition of the English word “cruel,” Claudia told the student to read the word as if it were in Spanish. The student immediately identified the cognate pair and Claudia added it to her cognate wall.

Modeling and Gradually Releasing Responsibility for Metacognition About Language.

EICALs were also a form of linguistic apprenticeship in Claudia’s second grade DL class. She explained that students would “empezar a pensar como yo pienso” (“begin to think like I think”), and imitate her consistent modeling of talking about words, synonyms, antonyms, how to make sentences interesting, etc. She said she tried to “Influirles para que ellos mismos piensen y busquen la palabra que pueda significar lo mismo, que le pueda dar un matiz más interesante a su oración, y [para que] se den cuenta de la riqueza que tiene cada idioma.” (Encourage them more so that they think and look for the word that means the same, that can make their sentence more interesting and [so] they realize the richness that each language has).

Claudia communicated her passion for language to her students. Students showed evidence of learning to think about language like Claudia, frequently suggesting synonyms or antonyms for words, or identifying compound words. In one instance, when Claudia asked for a definition of contradicción (contradiction), a student offered, “Alguien que no habla bien?” (“Someone who doesn’t speak well?”). The student used what he knew about contra (contra) and dicción (diction) to develop a logical, albeit incorrect, guess. Claudia’s constant modeling of thinking about language was evidenced in the student’s attempt at defining a new vocabulary word.

Following their teacher’s lead, Claudia’s students learned to be metacognitive about language and often provided their own thinking. Students continued to discuss words even when they

were talking amongst themselves. Two second grade boys had the following exchange:

Estudiante 1: ¡Muchas palabras! Distracción, desenfoque, (begins making up words) quitaojos, mataojos (giggles).

Estudiante 2: ¡Ésta es una nueva palabra compuesta, mataojos! (giggles)


Student 1: So many words! Distraction, unfocused, (begins making up words) eye-remover, eyekiller (giggles).

Student 2: That’s a new compound word! Eyekiller! (giggles)

The boys took the concept of compound words—two words combined to make a new word that is descriptive of its meaning—and created a new one, “mataojos” (eyekiller), as they pretended to stab themselves in the eye with their pencils. The boys took their new learning and applied it to their lives and interests. Due to Claudia’s modeling and gradual release (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) of EICALs over the year, her students independently noticed features about language that would help them use and understand it.

Conclusion

EICALs support the development of school language, transfer and metacognition, which in turn, develop bilingualism by better enabling students to compare languages and use what they know in one language to support learning in the other. School language—in any language—could be taught as an additional register, rather than as a replacement for students’ home language for two reasons: to enhance the implicit value of the first language, and to improve ELs’ chances of academic success (Christensen, 2011; Valdés, Brookes & Chávez, 2003).

This study emphasizes the need for Spanish language development, in addition to English language development, to support students’ bilingualism and biliteracy in DL classrooms. Since Spanish speaking students in the U.S. often speak a different, non-standard register of Spanish than might be spoken in their home countries (Alvarez, 2011), academic registers in Spanish, as well as in English, may be new to them. Regardless of the register(s) EBs bring to the classroom, their language is a strength. DL programs should build on EBs’ linguistic funds of knowledge, as their native language is an important asset (Moll, et al., 1992). 



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What we discovered at the end of this process, when children reflected and had an opportunity to make meaning out of their own ideas, is that they recognized—in embarrassment—that they had rejected their own color. And it wasn't because they did not recognize the color of their skin. It was because they knew that, with that label, came so much that did not represent who they are.

Sudanese Children of Immigrants: A Tapestry Unravels

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The United States has a long history of immigration. With that history comes many immigrant stories that allow for a greater understanding of immigrant adaptation, as well as an examination of the United States context. While much research chronicles the Latino and Asian experience, limited scholarship has dedicated its efforts to understanding the black immigrant experience. For the past nine years, I had the privilege of working with Sudanese families residing in Southern California. Our small Saturday school, coupled with many community events, resulted in a strong sense of extended family. As a doctoral student, I was urged to consider how I could engage in culturally-responsive research in order to shed light on their experiences as children of Sudanese immigrant parents. The complexity of race, religion, and language invites a deeper understanding of how these children make sense of who they are in our racialized U.S. context.

African immigrants who settle in the United States are not a homogenous group; they represent many regions of the African continent and a wide range of cultural, linguistic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. So varied are their cultures that, to gain a true understanding of their lives, one must recognize cultural identities that move beyond lines of color. This calls for shedding deeply-rooted, color-based ideologies that exist in the United States—ideologies that result in a racialized U.S. context. The complexities of this immigrant group offer much to be considered. The families who engaged in this research endeavor are Muslim. In addition, many of the parents possess limited proficiency in English; Arabic is the language most often found in the home.

Being Muslim in the U.S.

The reality of being black is that it is an outward characteristic that is readily identified by others. This truth thrusts

immigrant children into a reality that often causes them to understand and grapple with issues of identity. While not as outwardly apparent, the Sudanese children with whom I shared this experience, must also reconcile another aspect of their identity; they are Muslim.

Joshi (2006) claims the Christian-oriented context of the U.S. is exhibited at the institutional, societal/cultural, and individual level and puts forth that Christian groups, organizations, and individuals strongly hold claim over what is deemed normal in our society. Joshi combines this with a dominant white frame and contends that religion has been racialized. Hipsman and Meissner (2013) emphatically state that, “No recent event has influenced the thinking and actions of the American public and its leaders as much as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001” (p. 4). Kayyali (2006) articulates the damage and consequences of 9/11, “One of the long-term consequences of 9/11 was a questioning of identity and the outward expression of ethnicity and religion.

... “How do I present myself when the mention of my ethnicity and/or religion is enough to make others uncomfortable?”

The Study

This work investigates the lives of young Sudanese children living in Southern California. The thoughts and ideas of these children, ages ten through 15, provide an entry point for understanding how they negotiate and perceive their identities. Opportunities to listen to these children, who represent many intersections of identity (black, brown, Sudanese, African, African-American, children of immigrants, Arabic speakers, Muslims, to name a few), provide insight into their world. The question at the heart of this work considered, how do these children, thrust on the front lines of a racialized, Christian-centered, white society make sense of who they are?

The Children and our Context

My close ties with the Sudanese children grew mostly through my role as teacher for the Sudanese-American National Affairs and Development organization, SANAD. SANAD (the Arabic word support) also offers a small Saturday school. All children within the targeted age group were personally invited to participate in this study, which resulted in a total of ten children who represented this

middle childhood age (10–15), an age that is minimally considered in scholarship, despite its propensity for tensions related to identity formation (Coll & Marks, 2009).

The school curriculum consists of Arabic language and Islamic studies for children ages 6-15. For younger children, ages 3–5, we strive to provide a school readiness program, while also introducing Arabic language experiences and skills. My role as a director of the school is to coordinate activities and provide instruction during our whole-school session. My instructional role allows me to facilitate culturally-responsive learning experiences when all students are present (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). It is during this time that I use the Full Circle Learning curriculum (Langness, 2006), a humanitarian model of integrated education that infuses purpose in all learning experiences. Integral to this model are: fostering habits-of-heart, creating a peer culture with a focus on individual strengths, teaching conflict resolution, and designing interdisciplinary units of study that address community and global concerns.

A Tapestry Unravels

Sitting amidst data sources, past and present were interwoven before me, and the many strands of this work became threads of thoughts contributing to the creation of a tapestry. As I began to connect the ideas shared by these children, three major threads designed an image of marginalization: a blue thread representing religion; a black thread depicting race; and a green thread depicting schooling, came together on a loom—a loom of tension created in this socially-constructed, racialized society of ours.

Religion: The blue thread. Three religious themes were made clear when participants explained their personal sense of identity. Across all data sets participants set religion as a predominant and influential characteristic of their identity. Modesty was a major consideration, expressed more strongly by the girls. They perceived a clear point of demonstrating their affiliation with their religion by wearing a hijab (head covering), despite the fact that this is not a Sudanese cultural tradition. The greatest point of contention was the decision to disclose their religious identity; the children communicated the potential consequences. So, while religion provided a source of strength, it also created a source of tension.

Race: The black thread. The category of race and how these students perceived it demonstrated how deficit perceptions of blackness permeate our society. This inferiority rhetoric included a clear understanding that to be black was equated with concepts of ghetto, lack of intelligence, and unwillingness to participate in school. The binary opposites were clearly conveyed by one student, “Well, for black people they say stereotypes would be ghetto, not smart, don’t go to school, like live your life, and things. White people would be mature. They’d be I guess more smart, sophisticated.”

When asked for the root of these negative stereotypes, the children pointed to television shows and social media. They acknowledged these are false perceptions, but they also recognize a need to disassociate from being labeled as black. To this end, the children searched for other labels: Arab, Sudanese, American, and Muslim. Some creatively create words like oreo or caramel to describe themselves. This rejection of color was more strongly communicated by the girls who chose the white label when asked if they identify as white or black. In their view it was a matter of character; they identified with the characteristics society aligns with whiteness. Young Amal states, “I chose white because it doesn’t matter about your skin, it matters about your personality.”

Schooling: The green thread. The category of schooling provided a glimpse of the structure of schooling and some promising practices. While the children clearly recognized the privileges afforded the Christian majority, they also communicated how their families navigate the religious inequity of school calendars and attendance practices. For some the answer comes in the form of working within the system. A young boy explains: I think in the grand scheme of things, usually what we’ve learned to do, especially with Eid (religious holiday), is we’ll come for the first period of the day, the first hour, and then we’ll leave and they’ll technically still count as there. I was sort of cheating the system. . . . There’s supposed to be this separation of church and state, but it doesn’t really happen because there always are these underlying things.

Some teachers provided bright spots that assigned value to their Muslim identity. Two students were provided the

opportunity to share their knowledge of Islam. One girl shares, “I felt like a role model out of all the other people and I felt so glad because I got to, like, show people the Muslimah (Muslim way of doing things) and the toab (garment for women).”

The other bright spot was created via their involvement in our SANAD Saturday school. They expressed strong feelings about the value of gathering with other Sudanese families; they understood they were part of a larger cultural and religious context. A young participant shares, “You can be yourself. . . Also, not only that, if there are hardships that we face at school we can relate to each other.”

What does this mean?

Critical pedagogues recognize schools hold great potential to interrupt hierarchies of domination that exist (Apple, 1993; Eisler, 2000; Freire, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As our world becomes increasingly pluralistic, our classrooms must also engage in pluralistic pedagogy—a critical pedagogy that is eclectic and varied, ever-changing and evolving, with teachers both anticipating and reacting as they engage simultaneously in teaching and learning.

Informing Teacher Practice

Langness (2006) outlines habits-of-heart that serve to foster altruism and purposeful learning. In doing so, academic skills are used in combination with individual strengths and skillsets (academic, artistic, and peacemaking) to consider how we can serve as change agents in our own communities. However, teachers must be mindful of their actions and develop habits of their own. One very important habit is self-reflection.


Additionally, as educators we must develop a critical consciousness (Freire, 1987), and recognize the political nature of schooling (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Freire (1998) urges teachers to have a respectful relationship with learners and to recognize the conditions that shape them. He maintains that our profession imposes this commitment to knowing our students’ realities. I am Christian, but I recognize that Christians do not have a monopoly on values. I also recognize a need to create schooling structures that honor all faiths. To hold onto worn ideas that disenfranchise so many is irresponsible. It demonstrates a

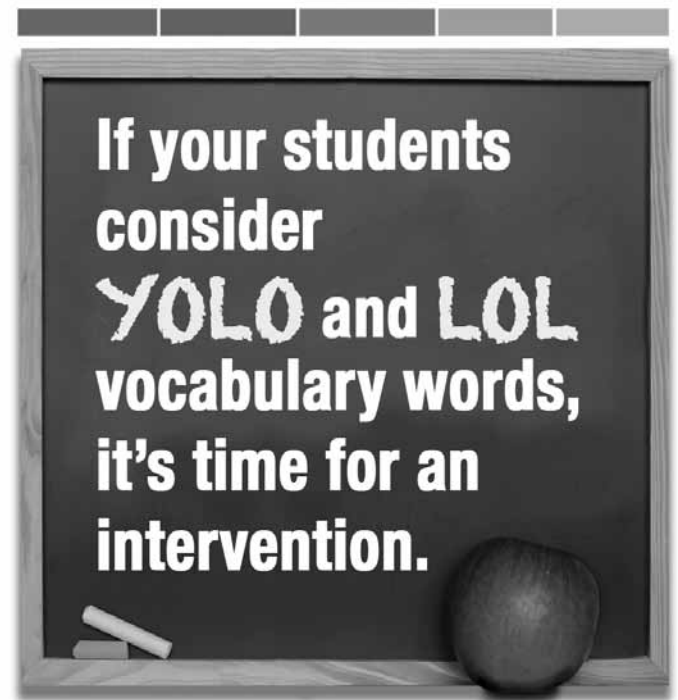
lack of reflective practice alive in our educational system. These young Sudanese children were placed in a position of attending public school on a Saturday to ensure Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funds for their schools. This ADA formula has become a primary concern that has overshadowed the respect and dignity of non-Christians. In a nation of so many immigrants, it is time we examine our schooling practices.

Weaving a new tapestry. Why it is that the black thread is not represented in our nations' tapestry? Where are those threads that serve to provide beauty, depth, and interest? There exists a tension that places children in a position of negating their color simply because it is associated with less than. Less important, less intelligent, less valuable...less.

What we discovered at the end of this process, when children reflected and had an opportunity to make meaning out of their own ideas, is that they recognized—in embarrassment—that they had rejected their own color. And it wasn't because they did not recognize the color of their skin. It is because they knew that, with that label, came so much that did not represent who they are. This is the tapestry we have created in the United States, and it is the work of critical educators to look at this relic of a textile and pluck away threads that are outworn and damaged. We must work to remove fibers of prejudice, bias, and injustice. To do so requires reflective practitioners with a commitment to develop their own socio-political awareness and response, while also creating opportunities for students to do the same (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 1999). Macedo (1994) looks to teachers to uncover the "poisonous pedagogy of big lies" (p.206) that exists in schools.

Final Thoughts

Schools are crucial cultural places where compromise, interpretation, and disparity function to reject imposed identities and racist dogmas, but how does a teacher tackle these seemingly insurmountable challenges? I believe the answer is an ongoing, lifelong commitment to reflective practice. If we ask ourselves how we can best educate tomorrow's children, we will find the answer in integrated education, where children are not made to set aside what guides their hearts. 



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Cross-Cultural Experiences of Mexican Immigrant Students in California Schools

Dr. Margaret Solomon, Ph.D.
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Immigrant students from various countries of the world make up a large number of our school population and schools face many challenges in serving their needs equitably. According to the 2012 immigration statistics, students from Mexico made up the highest number of immigrants enrolled (Census Report, 2012) in our schools. Among the Mexican immigrant population, there are many adult students entering U.S. schools as newcomers facing adjustment challenges related to its language, customs, laws, and lifestyle. Mexican immigration into the United States has continued uninterrupted for the past 100+ years and historically the number of immigrants who cross the Mexican borders into the U.S. keeps increasing year after year (Jiménez, 2007). Immigrant children and youth face immediate decisions about “who they will become,” with Mexican immigrants facing particular adjustment and adaptation challenges in these areas (Tong, Huang, & McIntyre, 2006, p. 203).

This article examines the cross-cultural experiences of immigrant students in California and the role of their cultural capital in the development of their cross-cultural identity. It begins with a brief review of studies on the challenges of immigrant students in schools and examines the cross-cultural experience of these students based on the evidence obtained from the interview data.

Cross Cultural Identity of Immigrant Students

Immigrant students face challenges in adapting to the new culture when they are not proficient in English. Besides, families struggle with economic insecurity or even poverty (Cummins, 2000, 2001), creating many other social and economic problems. They feel overpowered by the dominant mainstream culture and its sense of superiority because schools have a tendency to reflect the values and attitudes of the mainstream culture (Cummins, 2001). Also, the linguistic heritage and cultural knowledge that immigrants bring to schools are often overlooked or even dismissed as irrelevant. (Goodman, & Lee, 2003). On the whole, the situation that immigrant students face in school "is marked by severe social and economic stratification and drastically unequal opportunity structures" (Anyon, 2009, p. 31). It can be logically inferred that the negative view and disadvantageous situation of Mexican immigrants have negative effects on the formulation of their cross-cultural identity.

In reviewing relevant literature related to cross-cultural identity development of immigrant students, it is clear that we have to understand how self-identity and self-awareness of these children play into them integrating the new culture within their existing cultural capital. For immigrant students, the development of self-identity is a more complex process than it is for others because they experience more changes as a result of their migration, than those who have never had such an experience. Children who attend schools that value their cultural capital demonstrate superior academic achievement. (Friesen, 2013; Peterson & Heywood, 2007; Sommerfeld & Bowen, 2013).

Research Methods

The aim of this study was to examine the cross-cultural experience of Mexican immigrant students. Three research questions were addressed: 1) How did

the immigrant students talk about their cross-cultural experience?; 2) How did the cultural capital they brought with them change? 3) How did they describe the changes they experienced?

Interviews were conducted in two secondary schools in California. The sample comprised of 12 high school students, aged 14 to 18, who had emigrated from Mexico to the United States less than two years prior to the study. In-depth, one-to-one interviews, lasting approximately 45 minutes each, were conducted in Spanish and tape-recorded. Narrative analysis of their personal experience was used to construct their personal stories.

Findings

In explaining the findings of this study, stories of two of the twelve students, Maria and Jennifer, were selected. The narratives of their cross-cultural experiences were particularly rich in description and their experiences were also representative of those of the other immigrant students interviewed. More importantly, they used colorful metaphors vividly depicting their cultural journey to redefine their self-identity.

Maria's Story

Sixteen-year-old Maria was a 10th grader at a high school in California's San Bernardino School district. She was born in the U.S., but had gone back to Mexico with her parents when she was three years old. Two years prior to this study, her parents sent Maria back to the U.S., while they remained in Mexico. They believed it was better for her to be here, so Maria came to stay with her paternal grandparents who were living in a poor San Bernardino neighborhood. It was contrary to her life in Mexico, where her family enjoyed a middle-class status.

She likened her immigrant experience to swimming against many currents. "I am like a swimmer in a big river and staying afloat is a challenge because many things pull me down, like not knowing English, the learning difficulties at

school, poor living conditions and cultural differences I face everyday. I know coming to the U.S. was the right thing for me, but I am facing many difficulties, and a lot of times I feel like a swimmer against many currents that are pulling me down".

Maria had many difficulties to bear here: crowded living conditions, lack of English knowledge and inability to speak in English, lack of acceptance by peers, and the dislike expressed by the teachers were like the currents that pulled her down. Another "current" that pulled Maria down was the strangeness of the culture at her school. When she first enrolled in the school, she felt overwhelmed by the large number of African American and Asian students.

The cultural capital she had built in her home country gave her resiliency in her cross-cultural experience, but it was still tough. She recognized that, as an immigrant, she had to give up some of her cultural ways and adopt American culture. While she was building her new cultural capital, she recognized that there were some Mexican cultural characteristics that she would never forget and her sense of being Mexican grew stronger each day. She said, "the longer I stay here, the more Mexican I feel." In the acculturation process, Maria felt that she was swimming against currents caused by both social and cultural factors. The demands of the mainstream culture that dominated the school environment seemed too big for her to handle.

The best thing about her U.S. experience was the consciousness of the challenges she faced and the changes that were occurring within her, but she still felt a strong urge to hold on to her Mexican cultural identity. She was able to draw strength from her Mexican cultural capital, while building her American cultural capital. "When I left Mexico, I was sad to leave my parents, brother, and sister. I came because my future here would be better, but that doesn't mean I am going

to forget that I am Mexican. I will always be a Mexican!"

Jennifer's Story

Jennifer was a 14-year-old freshman at Arroyo Valley High School and had come to the United States with her mother and two siblings from Guanajuato, Mexico 15 months before this study began. Her father came earlier to find work and the family lived in a Mexican neighborhood in San Bernardino.

Living in the U.S. posed many challenges for Jennifer. Lack of English proficiency and cultural and lifestyle differences were obvious struggles in her immigrant experience. Her self-determination to overcome those difficulties was strong. Jennifer likened her immigrant experience to "an artist, creating a new painting" because she felt she was in charge of carving her path in the new culture. "Like an artist," she said, "I have to select the right brushes and colors to create my painting. I have to learn to choose the right tools and habits to make the best painting of my life in the United States". She was determined to make her mark on the American cultural tapestry.

Jennifer's Mexican cultural capital gave her inner strength to face the difficulties she encountered. A lot of times she was unable to fully understand what was going around her and was even once bullied by some students. In addition, some teachers were insensitive to her English deficiency and failed to help her understand the lessons, which made her cry. One day she was speaking in Spanish to her friends in the class, and an Anglo student got angry and said, "Shut up! Stop speaking in Spanish." She felt very sad about this, but made learning English a priority.

Another limitation she had was her lack of ability to deal with the cultural diversity in the school community. She realized that living in the United States meant getting along with people of different races and learning about their cultures. Developing a bicultural identity required her to adapt to mainstream U.S. culture, while also accepting multicultural perspectives and keeping her Mexican culture intact.


As Jennifer reflected upon the cross-cultural experience she had faced since coming to the United States, she realized that her sense of personal identity as a Mexican had not changed. However, she said she felt accepted by her friends who were not Mexicans and felt that her teachers were slowly beginning to recognize her abilities and support her. Jennifer's goal was to become a teacher and continue living in the United States. She likened her bicultural experience to painting a new portrait of herself. All of the know-how she had acquired helped her to become a bicultural person with Mexican and American cultural characteristics.

Discussion and Conclusion

Maria, Jennifer, and the other immigrant students involved in this study gradually became aware that they were engaged in a journey of learning, informed by their cross-cultural experiences and the struggle they faced in adapting to a new culture, language, and a way of living very different from their own. The cultural capital they had acquired in their home culture supplied pointers for their cross-cultural identity development. They showed self-determination to overcome the difficulties they faced. Another major theme was the feeling of being out of place. They expressed frustration, with an enormous sense of dissatisfaction, about their inability to speak English fluently and understand what was going on in their classrooms.

The theme of dealing with the diverse people in the school and community in the U.S. also came out. Coming from a monolingual, Spanish-speaking culture in Mexico and dealing with multiple ethnicities was very hard to handle at first. However, as they became more immersed in the school culture, they were gradually learning ways to overcome their problems of getting along with students who were not Mexican. In the long run, interacting with African, Asian, and Anglo Americans afforded them an opportunity to see themselves in a wider context and slowly helped them to expand their social boundaries.

Implications of the Study

This study has a number of implications for school leaders, educational policymakers, and teacher training institutions. Its findings support the supposition that the cultural capital that immigrant students bring to their schools should be recognized and supported. At the policy level, the rights of immigrant students must be adequately protected. It is necessary to develop policies to prevent any form of discrimination against these students and to proactively promote social justice and equity for them. At the teacher training level, training institutions must take care to instill teachers and school administrators with sensitivity to the cross-cultural needs of immigrant students. Classroom teachers must be equipped with the necessary multicultural skills to foster the cultural capital that these students bring with them and to help them to integrate that capital with their new social and cultural environment. The cross-cultural experience of immigrant students also needs to be addressed at the curriculum level, with culturally responsive curricula, pedagogies, and teaching strategies. Efforts to increase the understanding of the cross-cultural experience of immigrant students among all members in the schools must take a priority. Schools must become better equipped to develop their own practices toward becoming more inclusive and all parties in the school should play their role in achieving this important goal. 

LET'S GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Kelly Jensen, Principal
Manzanita Elementary School, Palmdale School District



How do you motivate English Learning (EL) students who need a little more help to give up a few days of their summer to focus on written and oral English communication skills?

This is a question that I, Kelly Jensen, Principal at Manzanita Elementary School, part of the Palmdale School District, wrestled with earlier this year. "We saw the need for enhanced services for our students and had the support of our district and superintendent. But how do you get the students to buy in and be enthusiastic about it?"

That's the trick, isn't it? The most wonderful lessons and beneficial programs available will do nothing without student buy-in.

Our team, energized by our EL Lead, Cindy Kaplan Gray, brought in two professionals to help us cultivate this student buy-in. First, we reached out to Elizabeth Jimenez Salinas, from CAFE Professional Development Services. Jimenez Salinas brought exciting ideas and renewed enthusiasm to our team. She also helped us focus on standards-based learning, helping us design highly effective curriculum for the program.

The second person we brought on, our secret weapon, was District Science Director, Jeremy Amarant. Amarant has a passion for science and loves sharing that passion with children, captivating them in the process.

Together, we crafted a 3-day program just before the 2015-2016 school year began. First, the team used CELDT data and invited 3rd through 6th grade students with CELDT levels 1, 2, and long-term 3's to participate. Science lessons focusing on states of matter were planned and used to not only develop academic language, but as a way to motivate the students. From root beer floats and popcorn to slime and home-made ice cream, students learned science concepts through highly engaging multi-sensory hands-on activities. The excitement and energy generated by these activities were then channeled into discussions and writing activities.

To be clear, we did not sneak written and oral English communication in the backdoor under the cover of activities that are more fun. Our team coupled the two together, offering students a more expansive curriculum in the program. By providing students with opportunities

to participate in the science experiments and activities, it gave them "something to talk about" as they practiced CELDT-style questions.

At the end of the first day of the ELD Summer Camp, we were met with student complaints of, "Why do we have to go home?" and, "Why can't we just stay here all day?" We had cultivated the student buy-in we needed for the program to be successful. The students' enthusiasm and positive attitude toward learning spilled over to the first day of school,


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Let's talk about it...continued

getting this year off to great start.

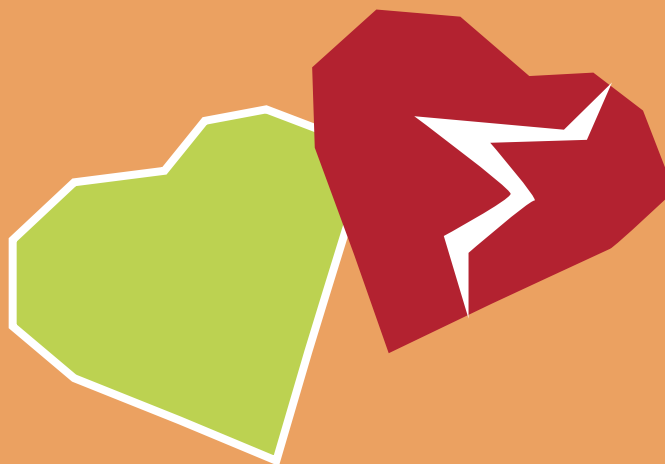
The formula for the success of this program was one of diversification. By bringing new members to our team and running with their ideas of a more diversified curriculum we developed a standards-based program outside of our norms and conventions. In the end, it took a science instructor to teach English and make school more exciting than summer.

We can all benefit by seeking out new ideas and new partnerships. We need only to take a moment and look at the many talented people in our lives – educators, community members and peers in our professional circles – and find ways to leverage our strengths together, for the good of our students. We should remember that no person or academic subject is an island, that everyone and everything is connected. Let's seek out those connections to develop new and exciting curriculums that lead the way to student success. 



Let's Give Them Something to Talk About

*Kelly Jensen, Principal
Manzanita Elementary School
Palmdale School District*



Where Does Love Fit into Our Teaching?

A Teacher Reflects on Two Very Different English Learners

Charlene Fried, Sierra Vista High School

Leonardo came to the United States from Mexico to live with his father and prepare for college. He entered my ELD class in the 12th grade and did not speak a word of English. He took the CAHSEE exam for the first time in October and was one of only three seniors in our school to pass it that time. When I found out he'd passed, I excitedly asked him what strategies he used, as he was an English learner at the emerging level of proficiency. He started to answer me in Spanish and Lucy (a 9th grade long-term English Learner, born and raised in the United States) shouted out, "Hey fool, you passed the exam. Speak English. This is America." He looked at me and said, "No puedo, miss." He said he could not explain in English how he passed the test. I told him to explain in Spanish. Relieved, he responded, "Utilicé mi capacidad de pensar críticamente, de razonar, y pensar de manera abstracta." Lucy shouted out, "I don't speak Spanish," and I translated what he said for her, "He used his ability to think critically, to reason, and to think abstractly." She responded, "I don't speak that type of English, either." This is how our school year began. Each time Leonardo, and others, would speak in Spanish, she would demand that they must speak in English.

In April, after Leonardo had been living in California for almost eight months, we were preparing to take the CST tests, and our school was offering free breakfast to all the students. When I forgot to send someone to pick-up the meals, Leonardo said to me, "Miss, would you like me to pick-up the break (he pronounced it "brake") fast for us?" Lucy shouted, "It's not break (brake) fast;

it's "brekfus," fool." I asked her to write the word breakfast on the board, and she wrote "brekfus" and proudly went back to her seat. Then, I asked Leonardo to write the word on the board, and he wrote "breakfast" and remained there, staring at the board. It was almost as though he were talking to himself.

Facing the board, he said that "break" was "quebrarse," and "fast" was "ayuno" in Spanish; then, he slowly turned to the class, looked directly at Lucy and said, "In Spanish, 'break' means 'quebrarse,' and 'ayuno' means 'fast.'" So, in the times of Shakespeare, the mothers must have awakened their children in the morning and said to them, 'It is time to break the fast, so let's eat breakfast.' He returned quietly to his seat.

For the past few years, we started our Saturday CAHSEE prep groups, called CAHSEE BLAST, in January. While most of the English learners, along with other students, joined our groups, Lucy refused to join. She said, "I was born here. I am an American. I don't need to study for the CAHSEE. I know English." She failed the test once in her sophomore year and two times in her junior year. She told me not to worry about her and explained that she had not tried, and could easily pass the test when she did try.

In her senior year, the students had five chances to take the test and Lucy failed the first three times. After the third fail, she came to me and said, "I think I need help." This was the first time I'd seen her humble at all. I invited her to our Saturday sessions, and she agreed to attend. Nevertheless, she did not pass the CAHSEE after two more failed attempts. Therefore, she did not graduate. After failing the last time, she asked if I would call her mom and tell her that she would not be graduating. I did, and we all cried.


In the meantime, Leonardo graduated from our high school and was accepted to CSULA. Four years later, he graduated with a degree in Engineering, while Lucy never tested out of ELD. In the fall after not graduating, she came back to see me. As we have a closed campus, the proctor escorted her off campus, and I did not see her again for a long time.

In the spring of last year, Lucy came to visit me again after school when I was working with what must have been fifty students inside the classroom. I was relieved to see Lucy and figured she must have returned home, but I did not have time. She used my phone to call her mom, talked for a few minutes, and left the room. I felt bad that I honestly did not have time to talk to her. She did this for six consecutive days.

Right before the end of this school year, another former student came to visit me. She was very sad as she told me that Lucy got caught with drugs and was in rehab. This is the last I heard about her. Leonardo graduated from CSULA and began his career. Lucy remains locked up in rehab.

I told this story to one of my university classes, and a student asked me what I would have done differently with Lucy, if I were given another opportunity to work with her. My immediate, and only, response was, "I would have loved her more." I feel that I did not understand her or give her a chance; instead I judged her. I preach that we must accept students for who they are and go from there, but because she was so arrogant and intolerant of others, maybe I did not give her a chance. If I had loved her more, might her academic life have turned out differently? If I had been able to show her more love, might she have become more humble and then might

she have accepted what she did and did not know, and might she have begun to work on what she needed to acquire to become successful, both academically and socially? Might she have been able to capitalize on her strengths and work on her weaknesses? Might she have been able to admit she did speak Spanish, and capitalize on this strength, rather than deny it? Might she have found a way to feel proud of her rich Latino heritage, rather than deny it? I think so.

The CAHSEE exam has been shelved and so have the CSTs, which will release the block that has kept many of our long-term English learners and others from graduating. As we begin to really implement the Common Core, and set up new tests, I just keep thinking about Leonardo and Lucy, both of them English Learners, but from very different backgrounds. I knew how to reach out to Leonardo, but I did not know how to reach out to Lucy. As we embrace Common Core, we must find the ways to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all of our students. I feel that I did not take the time to understand Lucy and her academic, social, and emotional needs. I did not understand the mask she needed to wear to hide her identity, nor why she refused to admit she spoke Spanish. I did not love and accept her as I should have. I feel that if I had accepted her and loved her more, maybe she would not be in rehab today. I am going to visit her. It is never too late. 



Charlene Fried
Sierra Vista High School

MULTICULTURAL:

MUCH MORE THAN A CLUB FOR STUDENTS THAT ARRIVE HERE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES



Elizabeth Maciel,
Library-Media Tech & Multicultural Club Advisor
Corona High School, Corona-Norco Unified School District

The school day begins, and with it, the nervousness that comes from feeling lonely and excluded in a strange place where it seems no one hears you, understands you, or even notices you. Many immigrant students arrive to this country feeling lonely, frightened, and perhaps even resentful towards those who brought them here to live—to a country that may be filled with promise, but none-the-less, is not a place of their choosing. They walk through the school hallways feeling lost and unnoticed. Some of these students, in an effort to escape their realities and to feel like they belong, become prey to others that do notice them, encourage them to join gangs, and introduce them to alcohol and drugs. And so it used to be for far too many of the newly arrived immigrant students at our school.

Some of these students tell us that they have been brought to the United States against their will. They report that their parents brought them here saying, “It’s for your own good and someday you will understand and be thankful.” In some cases, they are even sent alone to live with family members they don’t even know or have barely met. For many of these teenagers, it feels as though their world has fallen apart, as they leave behind their friends, their school, their

community, their way of life—and for some, the only thing that gives them comfort is the idea of going back home. With time, this loneliness and sadness can transform into anger and rebellion. They rebel against assimilation or acculturation. They rebel against learning the language, against advancing academically, and against any form of adaptation. Some say it is a way of sending a message to whoever sent them here, that they made a mistake.

Four years ago, Ms. Graciela Hernández and I decided to make a difference. We both experienced situations similar to those of our newcomer students and therefore, could understand their thoughts and feelings. We got tired of seeing so many students arrive shy and afraid at first, only to later end up becoming a distraction in class through the negative influence of others. Even worse, we would sometimes hear that they had become involved in gangs or drugs, often dropping out and never finishing high school.

And so we decided to start the Multicultural Club. In this club, we welcome students who have just arrived from other countries. The club’s purpose is to give these students support by guiding them through the labyrinth of a new school, letting them know that someone understands what



they are going through and has lived through a similar experience. We try to ‘pull’ them before some of the bad influences can get to them, as many are particularly vulnerable during this time of emotional, social, and academic adjustment.

We try to help with simple things also, like explaining school supplies (i.e., not knowing what tab dividers are or why the use of a binder and loose paper, instead of notebooks). Each club member receives a school spirit shirt for them to wear proudly, so that they feel more like they do belong. As a club, we participate in Homecoming activities, Back-to-School Night, carnivals, and school dances. This helps the newcomers, who often exclude themselves from school activities, to now participate and feel like they belong. For some, the club becomes a place where they find true friends, with whom they can talk about their feelings and ease their loneliness.

Most importantly, the club provides mentors who work to instill in them the “Yes, you can!” philosophy. We show them examples of other immigrants who went on to be successful citizens in their new country. We take them to visit places in the beautiful state of California where they can appreciate their surroundings. We have bon fires at

the beach and sadly, to our surprise, we learn that, for some, this is the first time they’ve seen the ocean. Their living situations and economic realities rarely allow for travel—even locally. Through the club, students visit campuses like UCLA and USC—thanks to the support of our Assistant Principal Dr. Antonio Gonzalez and our EL Director Sonia Amaral, who are both very passionate about helping our EL population. It’s so exciting to see members of the Multicultural Club graduate, most of them from our school, Corona High. Even those who moved on to other places, continued with their education and graduated from other high schools. Several moved on to college.

It is true that starting this type of club is a big responsibility and takes up many hours of free time, but there are also great satisfactions. The payback comes from knowing that the club has made a difference and from receiving the gratitude of students who look forward to the next club meeting—where they know they belong, are understood, and are encouraged to give their best, even during difficult times. I wish new immigrant students everywhere had the opportunity of this type of support system, which can have a positive impact, not only on their school experiences, but also, potentially, on the rest of their lives. ✎

CABE Parent Leadership Initiatives: Promoting Engagement and Equity

Maria S. Quezada, Ph.D., i3 Project Director, CABE, Project 2INSPIRE



BACKGROUND

As CABE celebrates over four decades of advocacy and support for English Learners, it is a good time to reflect on the efforts made to engage English Learner (EL) parents as knowledgeable advocates for their children. It's CABE's firm belief that parents are a child's first teachers and that EL parents can be strong partners with schools. It is with this belief in mind that CABE promotes its programs for parents. Forty years ago, bringing professional development and materials to our early bilingual program teachers was CABE's principal aim. Parents, in those early years, did not fully participate at the annual conference and in other events. Today, that has all changed with CABE's robust parent engagement and leadership program, Project 2 INSPIRE.

In the early years, the high need for advocacy on behalf of English Learners at the State level was a founding principle of the organization and this, along with professional development for teachers and para-educators, became high priority areas for the organization's limited resources. It was not until the late 1980's, as the organization grew, that programs for parents began to be part of the professional development offerings. One of the earliest steps taken was to include parents in the regional conferences that previously had only included para-educators. Sessions offered at the nine regional conferences provided parents information about bilingual programs and the importance of knowing how to advocate for their children. As more parents began to attend the regional and annual conferences, the challenge was and still is to offer sessions in their language, and with content that provides them an opportunity to learn the skills necessary to be equal partners in their children's education.

PARENTS INVOLVED IN CABE: TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

Those early years of involving parents brought a heightened sense and need for parental advocacy to maintain bilingual programs in schools. During the late 80's and early 90's, California passed several initiatives (Propositions 63, 87, 209 and 227), creating obstacles for providing services to language minority students and their families. Many parents did not speak English and did not have the knowledge and skills to be powerful advocates for programs that best meet the needs of their children. The CABE Board, at that time, saw the need to inform and engage parents so they could learn about effective strategies and programs for English Learners and how to play a more central advocacy role on behalf of English learners at both the local and state level.

In 1994, working in partnership with the CSU Long Beach Center for Language Minority Education and Research (CLMER), a special parent institute became part of the CABE annual conference. CLMER introduced a process for working with parents called Community Learning Theory, developed by Dr. Roberto Vargas and J. David Ramirez to create an environment where respect and personal power were central to the approach used to engage parents. Parents attending this two-day institute learned of their strengths and the critical role they play in the education of their children. They began to develop a sense that they could be strong advocates, and that it was up to them to be advocates, not only for their children, but for other English learners as well.

With CABE Board support and a vision to engage parents across the state, CABE supported many statewide and regional



efforts. Parent advocates came together at the regional and annual conferences every year, and a group of pioneer parents joined to develop an affiliate body of CABE, in order to build collective power for promoting bilingual education programs. The affiliate was named CAPBE (the California Association for Parents for Bilingual Education). Board members worked with parents to establish their presence at the annual conference by creating a CABE Parent Center. This center was later named the Rosalia Salinas Parent Center, in honor of Rosalia Salinas, a CABE president (1994-1996), who encouraged parents to be strong advocates and who also promoted the policy changes needed to increase parental involvement in CABE and at the conferences.

CABE parents (including members of CAPBE) were very involved during the Proposition 227 campaign in 1998 (an initiative to eliminate bilingual education). At the annual conference they held a march advocating for bilingual programs in our schools. They reached

out to other parents in the five regions to inform them of the pending disaster the initiative would cause for their children. Parent leaders worked with other parents from their region to advocate for ELs and bilingual programs. For example, the CABE Avance chapter began hosting an annual conference for women that over 150 women attend annually, called “Despierta Mujer”. In 2003, a group of parents in the Sacramento area fought to save their bilingual program—the only one in the district. Parents at this school requested training about bilingual education program models. When the school did not support this, birth was given to Padres Organizados Sobresaliendo con Optimismo y Liderazgo para la Educación Bilingüe (POSOLE) at a local library. Training was foremost on the POSOLE agenda. A bilingual education expert from the local CSU Sacramento campus clarified the research and benefits of various Bilingual models. This was the first opportunity in which the parents felt empowered to understand and champion the best program for their children. The parents then advocated for

the programs most successful for their students and prevented the school district from totally eliminating the program and maintaining a version of an Early-Exit Program intact. Their triumphs were due to their sheer willingness and strong commitment to community collaboration.

Following POSOLE’s lead, other CABE parents and teachers in Los Angeles County formed a powerful political network of allies in response to the violation of parent’s rights. One such group was the Padres Unidos de Lennox group, who eventually identified and successfully elected 2 new school board members to the school board in the November 8, 2005 election. These newly elected officials became advocates for parents’ rights to choose the educational programs for their children and of holding the district accountable for providing quality education for the 98% English Learners enrolled.

Parents in San Diego County also worked tirelessly to inform parents of their rights under the law to have a

Prop 227 waiver, so their children could participate in bilingual programs. One example is the parents who started a charter school, El Eje, where they could offer bilingual instruction for the children attending the school. El Eje Charter School received CAFE's Seal of Excellence Award in 2015 for their school—proving that the power of informed, powerful parents can not only make a difference for their children, but they can make a huge difference for their community and the children who have the opportunity to develop their bilingual skills and proficiency in two languages.

PARENT ROLES WITHIN CAFE

As these parent leaders emerged, the role of the Director of Community Relations on the CAFE board was redefined. Under Karling Aguilera-Forte's leadership, who held that position in 2004-2006, a new position—Director of Parent Relations was approved in spring 2006. Mr. Aguilera-Forte spoke to the board about the fact that if CAFE truly believed in parental engagement and believed that parents were in the best position to advocate for parents throughout the state, we had to have an actual parent on the board who understood the challenges faced in educating their children.

Experiencing diminished resources to fund parent activities, CAFE looked to other sources of revenue. The very first federal grant submitted by CAFE was a grant to fund a Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC). In October 2003, CAFE, in partnership with the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, received notification of funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement for Project INSPIRE—a program to develop parent leaders throughout the state.

One of the objectives of this grant was to conduct a statewide parent trainer of trainer's leadership program.

Project INSPIRE's Advanced Parents as Partners and Leaders in Education (APPLE) program was born and 25 parent leaders selected to participate. From Elk Grove to San Ysidro, the APPLE parent participants came from every corner of the State, they spoke at least four different languages and brought a wealth of diverse experiences to the group. They committed to convening for in-depth training sessions in different parts of the State each month throughout an entire school year and to providing information and training to other parents in their communities. This was an initial formal effort to bring needed resources to CAFE, specifically in the area of parental engagement. Besides working with the 25 parent leaders throughout the state, an additional 7,000+ parents were provided services at the conferences and through school and district presentations from 2003-2006 with funding from the PIRC.

A new competition for a statewide Parent Information Resource Center became available, and in September 2006 CAFE was once again notified that their grant application for the PIRC (2006-2011) was funded. This competition not only included providing services to parents throughout the state, but it also included conducting research on the program at 18 schools in 11 districts statewide. The program was conducted in partnership with the Alameda County Office of Education and the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. Each of the three agencies supervised six schools as part of the research project proposed in the grant on effective practices for parental engagement. Project


INSPIRE goals for the project included a randomized, quasi-experimental study designed to examine the relative effectiveness of the CAFE Project INSPIRE Parent Leadership Development Program that offered three levels of parental engagement and leadership—Awareness, Mastery and Expert. All three levels shared the same objective and goal: To increase parental engagement in their child's learning at home, school, and/or community; and thereby increase their child's academic achievement. Major accomplishments, including increased student achievement in treatment schools with higher achievement and English learning reached by children whose parents attended the sessions were realized in the project, as well as a) Improved organizational development within and across PIRC partners; b) Improved delivery of direct Parent Leadership Development services statewide for parents with children in schools; c) Improved delivery of indirect parent information services via radio/television; CAFE and its partners exceeded delivery of services to parents traditionally underserved: low-income, race/ethnicity, English Language Learners, and rural communities with over 55,000 parents (73% EL parents) reached during the five years.

The above statewide PIRC projects laid the foundation for the i3 (Investing in Innovation) \$3 million Developmental research grant that CAFE received from the USDOE Office of Innovation and Improvement in 2012 (funded for 2013-2017). This grant has currently allowed CAFE's Project 2INSPIRE to continue to grow and develop its Home, School and Community Engagement and Parent Leadership Development program to inform parents of all facets of schooling for their children and how to be effective

leaders, collaborators and partners with their children's school(s). CABE's Project 2INSPIRE i3 development research study, currently underway in three districts (Garden Grove, Ontario MontClair and Santa Ana), is designed to show the impact this program has on schools. Drawing upon the strong content in the four-level curriculum that has at its core the Community Learning Theory approach, as well as the guidance of the USDOE's Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School-Partnerships, (Mapp, 2014), Project 2INSPIRE is documenting how these schools change as a result of building their capacity for fully integrating parents into the school community to benefit, not only the students

and parents, but everyone at the school.

CABE is now seen as a leader in engaging families in the education of their children. Project 2INSPIRE creates the opportunity and conditions to support student achievement and school improvement by providing the necessary tools to schools and parents for meaningfully engaging parents and by cultivating a strong cadre of parent leaders at their schools. Alongside the research project on parental engagement and best practices, CABE has extended the reach of Project 2INSPIRE throughout the state through direct-service contracts. What we have seen and documented is clear—when parents are fully engaged in their children's education, student

success grows and the schools are better equipped to meet the needs of diverse background students and their parents. What started with a small group of dedicated parents is now becoming a statewide network with the skills, knowledge and capacity to be strong voices for building collaborative partnerships with schools. We invite you to make change happen at your school by learning more about Project2INSPIRE. Contact CABE at info@biligualeducation.org. Mapp, K. L. (2014). 

Partners in Education A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships. Austin, TX: SEDL.



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¿Qué deseamos para nuestros hijos? ¡Vence el temor! Participa en la escuela...

*Lettie Ramírez, Ph.D. California State University, East Bay
with parent leaders from Project 2Inspire:*

*Sandra Avendano, Adriana P. López, Olivia Michel Gallardo, Jenelle Rodas,
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***"Mis sueños no valen nada, mis planes son apenas polvo, mis metas son imposibles, no tienen ningún valor a menos que sean seguidas por la acción".
- OG Mandino***

En este artículo, mujeres que llegaron a los Estados Unidos de América en busca de realizar sus sueños, buscando una mejor vida o simplemente en busca del deseo de emprender un nuevo camino y ampliar sus horizontes, nos cuentan sus experiencias e ideas de cómo han logrado y siguen logrando sus metas, las cuales ahora ya incluyen también, los sueños y metas de sus hijos, nietos, bisnietos y generaciones por venir.

Sandra menciona, "uno siempre se hace la pregunta, ¿será posible que el sueño que mi hijo vaya a la universidad llegue a cumplirse?". Más que un sueño, "¡es un GRAN RETO!", contesta Elena, "el gran logro de llegar a este país sin conocimiento del idioma, de la cultura, del sistema y siendo indocumentada, podrían haber sido mis grandes barreras, pero nada de eso me detuvo para llegar al "NORTE" con el deseo de aprender inglés, formar una familia y ser MADRE". Dice Susana "Ahí, es donde el reto comienza, tomando la responsabilidad de criar y educar a nuestros hijos," El deseo de respaldar y apoyar su formación, inspirando e inculcando en ellos el deseo de superarse, ir a la universidad o lograr más que nosotros sus padres. ¡He ahí! La frase célebre de Alfred Lord Whitehead, "los sueños de los grandes no se cumplen, se superan."

Este artículo es una recopilación de testimonios de cómo se han roto las barreras, como se han hecho cambios y forjado nuevos sueños y metas, pero sobretodo como se han puesto en acción, integrándose e involucrándose directamente en el proceso educativo de sus hijos. Cada relato está escrito con la intención de inspirar y ayudar a otros padres a dar ese primer gran paso.

Adriana pregunta, "¿qué tipo de padres queremos ser durante la vida de nuestros hijos?" Verónica se une, "¿nosotros queremos ser los padres que ayudan a descubrir y explorar la verdadera personalidad e identidad de nuestros hijos?" Ana continua, "¿acaso no queremos que nuestros hijos sean más de lo que nosotros pudimos ser?". "o," dice Lupe, "¿queremos ser padres que trabajan tanto, que no tenemos tiempo para ayudar a nuestros hijos?" "O distintas combinaciones", termina Marcia.

Lo que es un hecho, es que todo padre desea la mejor calidad de vida para sus hijos. Soñamos que sean personas exitosas, profesionales, excelentes seres humanos y ciudadanos de bien. La lista de atributos que deseamos para ellos, puede ser aún más larga. Podemos desear que sean doctores, abogados, maestros o aquella

gran carrera que siempre han anhelado. Deseamos educarlos cada día para que sean independientes, responsables y que vivan una vida saludable y feliz. Lupe siempre remarca la importancia de la salud como parte de la labor de los padres, “si no tenemos salud, no podemos ayudar a nadie.”

¿Cómo ayudamos a nuestros hijos? Conociéndolos, hablando con ellos, comunicándonos, porque si no, alguien más lo hará.

¿Sabe Usted?...¿Cuáles son los verdaderos deseos de sus hijos? ¿Qué es lo que ellos piensan? ¿Qué es lo que ellos opinan? ¿Qué es lo que a ellos les gusta hacer? ¿Son niños de necesidades especiales y requieren apoyo especial? ¿Cuáles son sus talentos y áreas de mayor reto? ¿Cuáles son sus tendencias? ¿Cuál es su verdadera identidad? Si puedes responder alguna de estas preguntas es que va por buen camino, y si no, nunca es tarde para retomarlo. ¿Cuál es su color favorito? ¿Cuál es su comida favorita? ¿Cuál es su juguete preferido? ¿Cuál es el libro que más le gusta? ¿Cuál es su materia favorita? Le ha preguntado, ¿Qué piensa de Ud. como mamá o como papá? ¿Qué podría hacer Ud. para mejorar como padre? ¿Qué cambios les gustaría ver en sus padres o las personas que lo rodean?

Teniendo respuesta a la mayoría de estas preguntas, les podremos ofrecer a nuestros hijos la oportunidad de crecer en un mejor ambiente y así enfocarnos en explorar sus preferencias, sus habilidades y sus talentos para ayudarlos a desarrollar su máximo potencial, alcanzar mayores niveles de superación personal y crecimiento como seres humanos.

El futuro de nuestros hijos

El futuro de nuestros hijos está en nuestras manos, es algo que no lo podemos comprar con dinero, pero si se puede forjar con tiempo, amor, comunicación y dedicación. Participar en la educación de nuestros hijos es la pieza clave y fundamental para ayudarlos a obtener el éxito académico. Podríamos hacernos mil preguntas de cómo facilitar el cumplimiento de sus metas escolares y nosotros no tenemos las repuestas a todas ellas. Es por eso que participando en la escuela de nuestros hijos, podemos obtener respuestas a esas preguntas y también podemos obtener información relacionada con otros temas para ayudarlos; tales como, cursos de verano, programas especiales, ayuda financiera para que nuestros hijos vayan a la universidad, etc.

La proactiva participación de los padres es la clave principal. El establecer una relación cercana con los maestros de nuestros hijos, nos señalan las áreas en las cuales ellos requieren más ayuda y atención, no solo tenemos que visitar cuando las cosas vayan mal. Si que uno va antes, uno puede establecer la comunicación y su desempeño será mejor. Siempre hay que recordar ese famoso dicho que dice, “más vale prevenir, que lamentar”, especialmente con nuestros tesoros.

El participar activamente en la escuela es una herramienta eficaz y de mucho apoyo para los padres. La participación que uno tenga como padre es la llave que abrirá las puertas y nos ayudará a formar conexiones que nos acerquen más a lograr las metas de nuestros

hijos. Jenelle cuenta, “Yo tuve la oportunidad de estudiar en este país, pero a la vez tengo una gran nostalgia de recordar que mi mamá no pudo involucrarse al cien por ciento en mi educación. Sus prioridades tuvieron que ser el traer comida a la mesa para poder alimentar a sus cuatro hijos y darnos un techo. Ahora sé que las cosas pueden ser diferentes, que aunque los padres no hablen inglés, hay intérpretes, y también hay muchos maestros y personal que hablan español y pueden apoyarnos”.

Aprendiendo sobre el sistema educativo

Pasos que ayudan a participar en la educación de sus hijos.

1. Visitar la escuela, conocer a la maestra/el maestro.
2. Hablar con la maestra, dar a saber si hay problemas médicos. Ser voluntario en el salón de clase. Hay muchos trabajos que a veces se pueden hacer de casa y no perder el día de trabajo.
3. Participar como miembros en los comités que existen en las escuelas: tales como, ELAC (English Learner Advisory Committee), DELAC (District English Learner Advisory Committee), PTA, PTO, School Site Council, etc.
4. Asistir a talleres ofrecidos a los padres, ir a las reuniones y juntas, asistir a las demostraciones tal como “café con el director” que ofrecen varios distritos escolares y lo más importante atender las conferencias de maestros.
5. Visitar y obtener información en los centros de recursos para padres, socializar con el personal administrativo y docente de las escuelas y también del distrito.

Participar activamente como padre interesado en la educación de sus hijos es una tarea constante y la cual uno va aprendiendo poco a poco. Como vemos, hay muchas maneras de aprender e ir tomando un sentido de liderazgo.

El conocer el sistema, también ayuda a resolver de una forma consciente y satisfactoria los problemas que pudieran surgir en la educación de nuestros hijos. “En mi caso,” Olivia dice, “yo participé de voluntaria desde que mis hijos estuvieron en el nivel preescolar; aprendí y me di cuenta que es muy importante conocer el sistema e involucrarse. Yo estuve por muchos años en los comités de ELAC y DELAC y fue ahí donde descubrí mi sentido de liderazgo y me gustó aprender así como también ayudar a otros padres”.

Modelos a seguir

Es importante que nuestros hijos tengan modelos a seguir para que ellos vean que si se puede llegar a la universidad y que no se trata de personas con poderes mágicos ni nada por el estilo, que son personas como ellos, que han tenido obstáculos, que los han superado y siguen luchando día a día. ¿Dónde encontramos a estos modelos?

No en la televisión, en su mayoría, la televisión sólo les da mensajes inadecuados y malas costumbres a nuestros hijos. ¿Dónde? ¡En nuestra casa! Si, definitivamente somos los padres los primeros ejemplos y los más impactantes en sus vidas. Nosotros como padres tenemos que tratar de ser los mejores modelos para nuestros hijos, ellos son nuestros primeros imitadores. Por lo tanto, hay que tener mucha

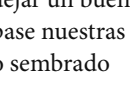
**¿Qué deseamos para nuestros hijos?
¡Vence el temor! Participa en la escuela...**
continued

precaución de lo que hacemos, de lo que decimos y de lo que opinamos. Si no fuimos profesionales o si no fuimos a la escuela, ¿por qué no ir a la escuela ahora? Podemos aprender inglés, o entrar al colegio para aprender algo nuevo. Nunca es demasiado tarde para empezar o continuar con nuestra jornada académica. De esa manera, entenderemos mejor a nuestros hijos. Seremos mejores modelos... y si nosotros, como inmigrantes, podemos ir a la escuela o al colegio, ellos automáticamente se llenarán de más motivación, inspiración y deseo para superar muchos más retos y lograr metas en sus vidas.

Otra actividad, que como padres no debemos dejar pasar por desapercibida, es la participación en programas de las universidades y en otros lugares públicos. Esto es muy importante para que nuestros hijos estén expuestos a diferentes ambientes y aprendan a relacionarse con diferente tipo de personas y así ellos tengan una visión más clara de ellos mismos, de sus opciones y puedan hacer mejores decisiones para un futuro más próspero. “Mi hija que cursa la secundaria, esta registrada en un programa de la universidad y desde que empezó, ella ha mejorado muchos aspectos sociales y está muy familiarizada con el campo universitario, lo cual la puede ayudar en el futuro. Este verano, ella estará tomando un curso intensivo sobre computación que la ayudará a definir cuál será su futura carrera.

Posiblemente la manera de como educamos a nuestros hijos es la única que conocemos ya que es la que nos enseñaron nuestros padres y lo seguimos aplicando día con día sin el conocimiento real; si está bien o mal, o si las consecuencias van a ser buenas o malas. También hay que recordar que siempre podemos y que normalmente hay que hacer cambios. Cambios en nuestros hábitos y en nuestras costumbres, especialmente si los cambios son con la intención de ser mejores padres, de ser mejores seres humanos y de dar un mejor ejemplo a nuestros hijos. Es ahí en donde empezamos a dar el primer paso, el más firme y certero para un mejor futuro para nuestros niños. Empecemos el cambio en nosotros mismos y recordemos día con día que ellos van a ser una copia corregida y aumentada de nosotros y que está en nuestras manos la decisión que sea un resultado final de éxito o frustración.

Lo ideal para todo padre es que nuestros hijos crezcan en un mejor ambiente, con menos necesidades y muchas más oportunidades; menos retos en su camino de los que nosotros tuvimos.

El resultado final de este gran proyecto de vida, es dejar un buen legado lleno de prosperidad y positivismo que traspase nuestras generaciones y no hay algo más especial que dejarlo sembrado en nuestros hijos. 

LET'S USE DATA LONG-TERM EN NOT JUST IDE

State lawmakers are happy to acknowledge problems in education, and they are finally recognizing that long-term English Learners (LTELs) are an epidemic. Unfortunately, political agendas and legislation don't solve the problem. To ensure schools are attending to these students, they are now considered a separate group, but it is what schools do with that information that will, or will not, make a difference. Districts and schools have to look critically at how these students came to be LTELs, particularly those that stay in the same district for their entire education. It's time to ask, “What can we do better?”

According to Olsen (2010), a large percentage of adolescent English Learners are long-term English Learners (ELs). This is a major problem; however, even more serious is the fact that most conversations are limited to what to do about these students. Educators must discuss how to help LTELs; however, schools must also consider prevention. In kindergarten and first grades, schools often identify children who are struggling with literacy because the gap is much smaller to close at those early levels, yet it isn't until a student becomes a long-term English learner that there is a focus on language interventions.

While research has shown that language proficiency in a second language takes 5-7 years or longer (e.g., Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1981; De Avila, 1997; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002), other research has proven time is not the only factor in language acquisition. The instruction that an EL receives during that 5-7 year period and beyond matters. In a synthesis of research on English

“WHAT CAN
WE DO
BETTER?”

TA TO PREVENT GLISH LEARNERS, NTIFY THEM



Carol Gallegos,
Hanford Elementary School District


Language Development (ELD) instruction, Saunders and Goldenberg (2010) found that there is a positive benefit to focused and instructed ELD. ELD should include intentionally structured oral interactions focused on communicating for real purposes. In addition, there should be a focus on both social and academic vocabulary and language structures and some attention to accurate usage.

Research has already demonstrated that primary language has an impact on developing proficiency in English (Olson, 2010). In the Hanford Elementary School District, this finding was confirmed in an informal data collection and analysis. The scores of 50 long-term English Learners and 50 successfully reclassified students were collected along with some scores for students who were reclassified, but still struggling academically. Out of the sampling of LTELs at grades 6-8, all but one entered with a score of 1 or 2 on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) test of primary language. On the contrary, all but two of the 50 sampled students who were successfully reclassified had scores of 3 or higher. In addition, students, who were successfully reclassified, made continuous growth in English as measured by the CELDT, whereas both LTELs and the students who continued to struggle in English literacy also struggled to make consistent and continuous growth in the English language as measured by the CELDT. For example, every LTEL still had at least one language domain (reading, writing, speaking, listening) on the CELDT in their third and fourth years of enrollment that was at the beginning or early intermediate level. Successfully reclassified students had no domains below intermediate in their fourth year of enrollment.

Another issue is that some students are reclassified before they are academically proficient leaving them to sink or swim, even though they still need those language supports (Gallegos, 2011; Gallegos & Wise, 2011). Early reclassification isn't likely to support student success. In their synthesis of research, Saunders and Goldenberg (2010) noted that ELs should receive ELD until they have achieved the early advanced or advanced levels of the CELDT. The data collected in Hanford Elementary yielded similar results. At least some

students reclassified with domains at the intermediate level continued to struggle academically. Early reclassification is a major issue because it likely serves to maintain the status quo with reclassified ELs still unable to compete academically at the same level as their English-only peers (Gallegos, 2011, Gallegos & Wise, 2011, Hakuta, 2000). On the other hand, successfully reclassified ELs in Hanford Elementary tend to outperform their English only peers across subjects on district assessments. Of course, it is not what is known, but what is done with that knowledge, that makes an impact. Hanford Elementary responded by ensuring that all teachers and administrators receive additional training on language development. Teachers who teach ELD receive training on both integrated and designated ELD. Teachers who do not teach ELD, such as math and science teachers, receive additional training on integrated ELD techniques. It is a system commitment. All English learners receive designated English language development (ELD) instruction daily at their language level. In addition, we have a dual immersion program for those parents and students who choose to take advantage of dual literacy.

These data patterns offer substantial evidence to identify students who are at risk of becoming LTELs early in their school careers. In Hanford Elementary, two early indicators have been identified: 1) ELs with limited primary language; and, 2) ELs who struggle to make consistent progress in English acquisition. Armed with this knowledge, these young learners can be identified early and can receive supplemental language tutoring outside the instructional day, in addition to the designated and integrated ELD they already receive. Data can be collected again to determine if the identification and additional services have the desired impact.

The focus on LTELs is long overdue, but the emphasis must be on prevention rather than on identification. Rather than trying to address what has already happened, schools need to focus time and energy on the identification of patterns and prevention. Only then will schools be ensuring all students have equitable access to the education and language needed to live in the 21st century. 

Creating a College-Going Culture for Long-Term English Learners

How one district's array of evidence-based supports is helping secondary Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) students and their families overcome the effects of poverty and reach a brighter future

Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D., Kimberly Hendricks, Lilia Villa, and Katie Sandberg,
Moreno Valley Unified School District

Graphic by ERCdata.com

See Fernando and the English Learner Families For College Program



Watch interviews with Fernando, Dr. Kate Kinsella and Lilia Villa in a program profile created by the Riverside County Office of Education video team.

The video is located on the Moreno Valley Unified School District YouTube channel at

<https://youtu.be/vDAN954k118>

Fernando Maldonado-Aguiniga was typical of many of the over 8,000 English learners in Moreno Valley Unified School District. A bright 5th-grader with a shy, thoughtful demeanor and the desire to be an engineer, you would assume upon meeting him that he was destined for a good college.

Yet dig into the data and you would see that, despite being born in the U.S. and attending U.S. schools since kindergarten, Fernando had not yet managed to break free from English learner status. Unless circumstances drastically improved, his path would have likely included losing out on the high school A-G courses that would open the doors to college and the fulfilling STEM career he so wanted; he might have even joined the ranks of the 23% of English learners who drop out of district high schools. “My English skills weren’t all that good,” Fernando remarked in a 2014 interview.

But, then an innovative program appeared on Fernando’s life path. His parents became aware of the district’s new English Learner Families For College Program and signed a contract promising that they and their son would participate in the initiative from 6th grade through the fall of 10th grade. Effort and sacrifice would be required. Family members would participate in a series of family academies; Fernando would devote his middle school elective time to English 3D, an academic language course.

Fernando and his family had joined the ranks of the English learner students who would soon attend the district’s six middle schools as part of the English Learner Families For College Program.

Things were about to change.



A LOOK AT MORENO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Moreno Valley Unified School District is located in the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metropolitan area, and serves over 34,000 students, who are 83% qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch, 69% Hispanic, 17% African-American, and 24% English learner. Historically, the district's percentage of English learner students proficient in English language arts dropped below 10% by 6th grade and below 5% by 11th grade.

In 2011, a new instructional leadership team took the helm of the district, determined to improve the educational experiences of all students. Dr. Judy White, Superintendent, and Dr. Martinrex Kedziora, Chief Academic Officer, began implementing a series of reforms aimed at improving student learning, with a special focus on underperforming subgroups such as English learners.

"Our reclassification rate had not been as great as we were anticipating it to be," said Lilia Villa, Director of English Language Learner Programs for the district. "Students had already come to [middle school] as Long-Term English Learners. They should have reclassified at the elementary level; they didn't. If we didn't provide them with the opportunity to develop their English language abilities at the middle school, they were not going to be ready for high school, and they were not going to be ready for the A-G coursework."

ABOUT THE ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES FOR COLLEGE PROGRAM

The nonprofit California League of Schools professional development association approached the district about becoming the partner LEA for a new evidence-based program for Long-Term

English Learners and Recently Reclassified Fluent English Proficient students. MVUSD accepted and the English Learner Families For College Program (FFC) was funded by a U.S. Department of Education Investing In Innovation development grant.

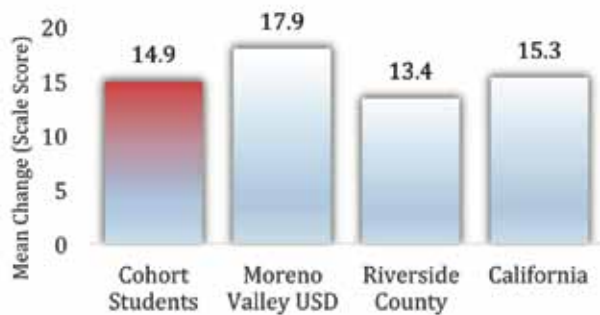
Grounded, in part, in the findings from Laurie Olsen's 2010 seminal report, "Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long-Term English Learners," the FFC program follows a core cohort of 325 English learners from 6th grade through the fall of 10th grade at six middle schools and four high schools.

In the fall of 2013, at the start of 6th grade, the program began providing an array of supports to develop the college-going culture and skills cohort students would need to access A-G courses, achieve, and graduate ready for college:

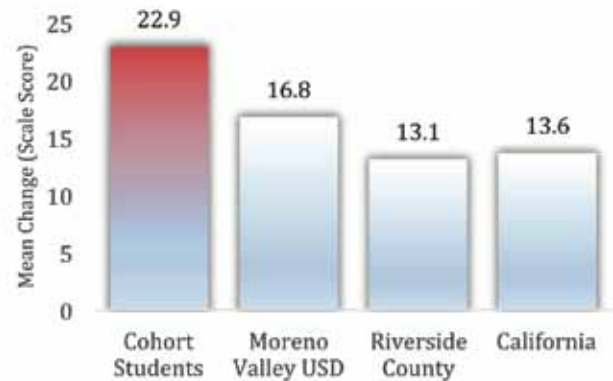
ENGLISH 3D - This academic language curriculum and course was designed for Long-Term English Learners by Dr. Kate Kinsella and is offered as a supplemental period to English-language arts. Explicit instructional routines ensure students practice academic language and associated "soft" collaborative skills while listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Ongoing professional development for the teachers delivering the English 3D curriculum has been critical to the success of the FFC program. Theresa Hancock, an educational consultant whom Dr. Kinsella has described as her "right-arm colleague in many curricular and district initiatives," has implemented a highly effective sequence in coordination with Dr. Kinsella that alternates training with instructional rounds and follow-up coaching throughout the school year, slowly building teachers' expertise and confidence.

Change in Mean CELDT Scale Score Between 6th and 7th Grade by Domain

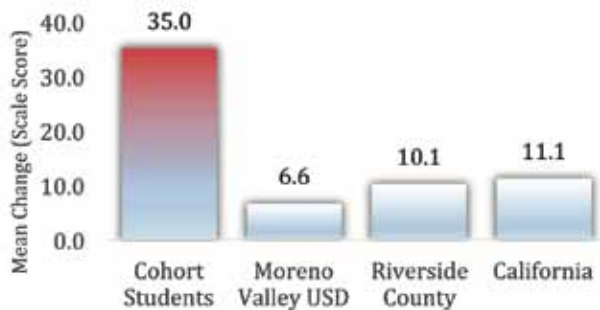
Listening



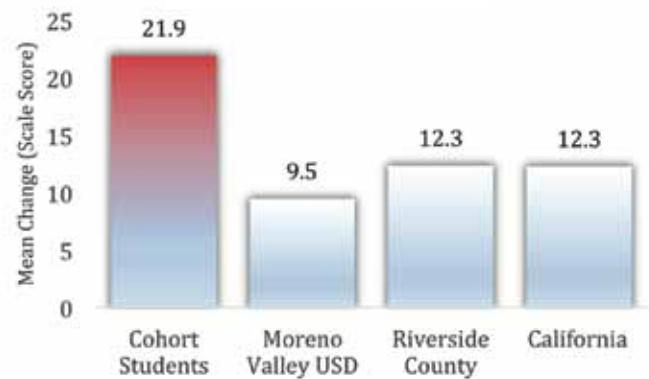
Reading



Speaking



Writing



This data presentation was designed by ERC, evaluators for the FFC Program

RESULTS SO FAR

To date, the academic results are highly promising:

- 43% of the students who started 6th grade as English learners reclassified as Fluent English Proficient by the fall of 7th grade
- CELDT score gains in speaking, reading, and writing significantly exceeded historical gains for the district, county and state
- Cohort students have won community essay contests and essay-based GEAR UP scholarships in open competition with students whose home language is English

FAMILY ACADEMIES – The nonprofit Families In Schools provides 5 family academies with 22 workshops from middle school through high school in the home language of Spanish to help parents become informed and engaged advocates for their children's education. Some parents also serve on school site Family Advisory Boards with administrators, front office personnel, English learner specialists, and cohort students to create more welcoming school environments for all families.

PEER MENTORING – Starting with digital mentoring over Chromebooks in middle school and extending to in-person mentoring in high school, 6th-graders are paired with a 9th-grade high-performing mentor to ease the transition to high school.

ACADEMIC PLANS – Each middle school year, students log their academic status (GPA, CELDT scores if applicable, prior and future API scores), enter the steps needed to either reclassify or

maintain a high level of academic performance, record their plans for college and career, and make a video for their parents describing what they have learned through the plan. These learning artifacts, along with reflective journal entries, become part of each student's digital portfolio.

The qualitative results are equally positive. According to English 3D teacher Rachel Quintanar, "Most of the students entered the program with no particular experience with speaking regularly in class and lacked the knowledge of academic language to feel confident speaking in academic settings. By the end of the first year, these students were confident and capable speakers of Academic English. They were performing at levels that rival their native English-speaking peers."

Parents have become empowered by the program as well. As Ms. Quintanar noted, "The family academies have also greatly benefited our parents and have helped to foster a college-going home environment. Parents have become well-informed advocates for their children. We have had so much confidence in the Transition to Middle School program that we used it with all our 6th-grade parents this past year. The parents were enthusiastic and thanked us for providing the workshops."

A survey by Families In Schools during the first project year revealed that:

- **92% of parents reported gaining confidence that they could help their child succeed in school**
- **95% of parents reported talking more often with their child about how they are doing in school**
- **95% of parents would recommend the program to other parents**

The FFC program has even begun to exert school-wide and district-wide influence. For example, at Landmark Middle School, principal Vicky Dudek asked English 3D class teachers to provide professional development on academic language to all teachers, expanded and improved ELD and ELL classes for all levels of English learners, appointed an English learner facilitator to support all English learners and teachers with clusters of English learner students, plus implemented digital portfolios and student-led conferences school-wide. "I had no idea that a program that began with two small sections, two teachers, and 60 students would evolve into something that would eventually shape the entire school's academic focus," she said. "But as I looked at the data, and saw the impact it was having with our students, it was an easy decision to spend the time and energy necessary to go in that direction."

Landmark Middle School has since been named a state and national School to Watch in part because of academic gains and

positive change associated with the FFC program.


Since then, another academic language tool developed by Dr. Kate Kinsella, the Academic Vocabulary Toolkit, has been deployed in all middle schools to help students meet the rigors of the Common Core State Standards. Families In Schools is providing family academies for all students at the two middle schools.

As for Fernando? He reclassified in his first year of the program, and in his year-end reflection at the end of the second year, he noted that he would be able to attend a four-year college of his choice instead of a community college. As he said in his 2014 interview, "If I wasn't in this program, I wouldn't be getting straight A's right now, I'd probably be getting B's because of the academic words I wasn't using."

Fernando's family recently moved out of the district, but he now is truly ready for his new school and a bright future.

Sometimes being a site administrator can be challenging when an ambitious initiative impacts your school. But as Ms. Dudek observed, "I have learned that the likelihood of a program's success increases when all stakeholders are involved. [FFC] is a perfect example of an initiative that was not top-down, but was collaborative, well-informed, well-planned, and data-driven. It has served as a wonderful example to me, as a newer principal, as to how to make successful change happen."

She continued, "My hopes for all of the students involved in the Families for College program, is that they continue to grow academically, that they continue to involve their family in their academic pursuits, and that they enroll in the college of their choice five years from now. I hope that families will remember our school as that special place where they were fully supported and where their dreams to attend college became a reality."

The district has also benefited in unexpected ways, as a result of the FFC program. Numerous offers to join additional grant-funded programs, as a result of exposure from this first grant, have resulted in the district receiving services as an LEA partner in three additional Investing in Innovation grants (school leadership, social and emotional learning, and math instructional strategies), three GEAR UP grants, an English learner/community dialect learner instructional strategies grant, a positive behavior interventions grant, and a STEM academies grant. 



*Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D.,
Moreno Valley Unified School
District*

Eradicating Learned Passivity: Preventing ELs from Becoming Long-Term English Learners

Elizabeth Jiménez Salinas, CEO
GEMAS Consulting



Introduction

In an era of data-driven decision making, administrators need to be clear that data is not the same thing as information. Data is only turned into information by applying our observations and asking questions. English Learner (EL) data is collected nationally on the number and percentage of ELs by grade level, by language, and those reclassified to fluent English proficient. Systematically overlooked is longitudinal data showing the length of time each EL remains at each proficiency level. This has obscured a significant group of ELs who enter US schools in kindergarten, but whose English acquisition progress becomes static, where they languish in and around the intermediate proficiency level.

Anecdotally, many EL educators noticed this trend and discussed it, sometimes referring to these students as “Forever LEP” and “ESL Lifers,” but specific data was not available, leaving the scope of the Long-Term English Learner phenomenon unclear. The category Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) came about because of the observations of EL educators asking questions about what the data didn’t reveal.

Researcher Dr. Jim Cummins, describes that it takes from 5-7 years to acquire the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) of a new language. Cummins states that while many children develop native-like conversational fluency within two years of immersion in the target language, it takes between 5-7 years for a child to be working on a level with native speakers, as far as academic language is concerned.

What is a Long-Term English Learner (LTEL)?

In 2012, California adopted an official, statutory

definition of Long-Term English Learners. This small but significant step was instituted to identify 1) this group and to further study the causes of their stalled progress, 2) what works to prevent them from getting stuck, and 3) what is effective in accelerating their success.

Statutory Definitions

Long-Term English Learner means an English learner who is enrolled in any of grades 6 to 12, inclusive, has been enrolled in schools in the United States for more than six years, has remained at the same English language proficiency level for two or more consecutive years.

English Learner at risk of becoming a long-term English Learner means an English Learner who is enrolled in any of grades 5 to 11, inclusive, in schools in the United States for four years, and scores at the intermediate level or below on the English language development test.

How can Long-Term status be prevented or reversed?

In the 2010 study *Reparable Harm* (www.californianstogether.org), Dr. Laurie Olsen explores a number of systemic causes of LTELs which must be remedied at the systems level, such as limited access to the full curriculum, LTELs being over-assigned to and inadequately served in intervention and reading support, incorrect placement in Newcomer classes, and inappropriate placement in the mainstream without a specialized program. The study also discusses one contributing cause that can be remedied in the classroom; the characteristic of *Learned Passivity*.

Unlearning Learned Passivity

Passivity is defined as the trait of remaining inactive; a lack of initiative. *Learned Passivity* is a learned behavior which can be prevented or unlearned through intentional, active engagement. The study examines how and why LTELs acquire this learned behavior and how we can prevent it from developing in young ELs and reduce the incidence of Learned Passivity in secondary English Learners.

A key remedy is to increase the engagement expectation, so students aren't reinforced to avoid participation and teachers can gather an accurate picture of student comprehension. Several critical techniques for engaging English Learners are:

- (1) providing primary language support, including through technology where students can preview the content of a lesson, or learn new material in English, using interactive strategies that scaffold through visuals, toggle to the primary language, and provide plenty of patient repetition;
- (2) designing response routines that support total participation, such as individual white boards, paired discussion using sentence frames, and structured cooperative groups;
- (3) teaching self-advocacy skills, such as initiating a request for a classmate to speak louder or repeat an idea, and teaching students to build on what other students contribute, rather than just listening as a few respond.

Eliminate Toxic Questions

Traditional classrooms in the United States share some long-engrained practices, traditions and routines that are culturally embedded and accepted. One is the expectation of individual responses to a set of traditional questions which tend to discourage participation. Replacing these toxic questions with healthy alternatives starting in the early grades, is an excellent prescription for eradicating *Learned Passivity*.



Three Toxic Questions

- 1. Who can tell me something about today's topic?**
- 2. Are there any questions?**
- 3. Does everyone understand?**

1. Who can tell me something about today's topic?

This question is often used to begin a new topic. Starting in elementary school, students quickly figure out that the teacher has a specific answer in mind, and is really eliciting that response. English Learners may hesitate while processing language to find the right words to answer. Other students may answer first reinforcing a sense of "why bother". Over time, frustrated ELs learn to passively wait while others jump in. Teachers report that when they ask, "Who can tell me __?", few students raise their hands. Learned Passivity is unintentionally reinforced when enthusiastic students offer an answer that is not exactly on point, to which the teacher acknowledges the attempt, ("well, that's interesting") but then selects another student to answer. The student with the "interesting" answer quickly realizes that they did not guess the response the teacher was looking for. Early on, this hesitation is repeatedly reinforced. Students who are unsure of their answer decide it is better to wait than take a chance.

Learned Passivity greatly increases when no one raises their hand and the teacher proceeds to give the answer anyway, reinforcing that there is no accountability for non-participation. Redirecting the class to quickly jot down their thoughts or share with a partner, can break the self-imposed silence and reduce passivity.



alternative is, "What kinds of questions do you have?" which conveys the assumption there are questions and invites them to be asked. Providing wait time, and not looking directly at the class, allows students to think about what they need to ask. If there are still no questions, teachers can ignite

engagement by challenging pairs to formulate a question they think someone else in the class might have.

The Healthy Alternative

When teachers ask, "who can tell me..." they are eliciting prior knowledge which is a solid strategy for differentiating instruction, but the question itself is limiting. "Who can tell me" implies that only one person should answer.

The healthy alternative reformulates the question and engages students in teams or partner discussion with, "What comes to your mind when you think of [the topic]?" The teacher can circulate to assess accurately their prior knowledge. In pairs, students may be less reluctant to answer.

In one second grade classroom the teacher asked, "Who can tell me something about fossils?" One student sheepishly volunteered, "is it a watch?" The class erupted in laughter, causing him to retreat. By slightly altering the question to "What comes to your mind when you think of fossils?," then directing students to pair/share, anxiety might have been reduced and wider participation achieved, allowing her to quickly assess their background knowledge. Additionally, the student who mentioned the watch, would not have been "incorrect".

2. Are there any questions?

This toxic question, is one used in a variety of settings – classrooms, staff meetings, etc. This yes/no question subtly implies that if students had been paying attention, there wouldn't be any questions. A more inviting


3. Does everyone understand?

The typical answer to this toxic question, is an affirmative head nod which causes some ELs to look around and potentially self-criticize ("Everyone else seems to get it, but I don't understand what the teacher is talking about. They must be smarter."). The healthy alternative is for students to demonstrate, write about or tell what they understand. They can explain to a partner, or answer on a white board, write an exit ticket, draw an illustration or diagram, or show their level of understanding using "fist of five," or other signal.

Healthy Alternatives to Toxic Questions

1. What comes to your mind when you think of ____?
 - a) What made you think of that?
 - b) What strategies did you use to arrive at those answers?
2. What kinds of questions do you have?
3. Show me (tell me, describe in writing,) what you understand.

Eliminating toxic questions and eradicating Learned Passivity

Increasing active, class-wide engagement and comprehensibility is critical to stem the development of LTELs. Eliminating toxic questions, using interactive technology with primary language support, and consistently increasing accountable talk are critical for eradicating Learned Passivity, reducing the creation of Long-Term English Learners, and for effective implementation of the Common Core with English Learners. 

Venceremos

Gather all my children
And take away my eyes,
I don't need them anymore.

I see them suffer in the **barrios**
And in the desert heat,
Scorched by resistance from so many.

They walk slowly at first,
Then hasten like spring winds
Toward dreams bright as the sun.

They labor, they sweat,
They contend with inequity,
With so much to live for, so far from home.

Still, they walk with pride:
familia, tradiciones, esperanzas
that won't melt in the fires of oppression.

Their skin shines like bronze,
With **pelo** as dark as the summer night,
Pride in the names they carry, **sus raíces**.

Freedom runs deep in their hearts,
The blood of warriors in their veins,
Even the ocean of fear cannot dampen their spirit.

Gather my children
For the new day is here,
Sing a new song for **la justicia y la paz**.

Gather all my children,
Let them be educated and wise .
Let them put out fires of inequality.
Let their voices sing with beauty and truth.
Let their songs echo in parched valleys.
Let them dance in rhythm to Aztec drums.
Let them soar like eagles **en el cielito lindo**.
My ojos will see it.

¡Venceremos!



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