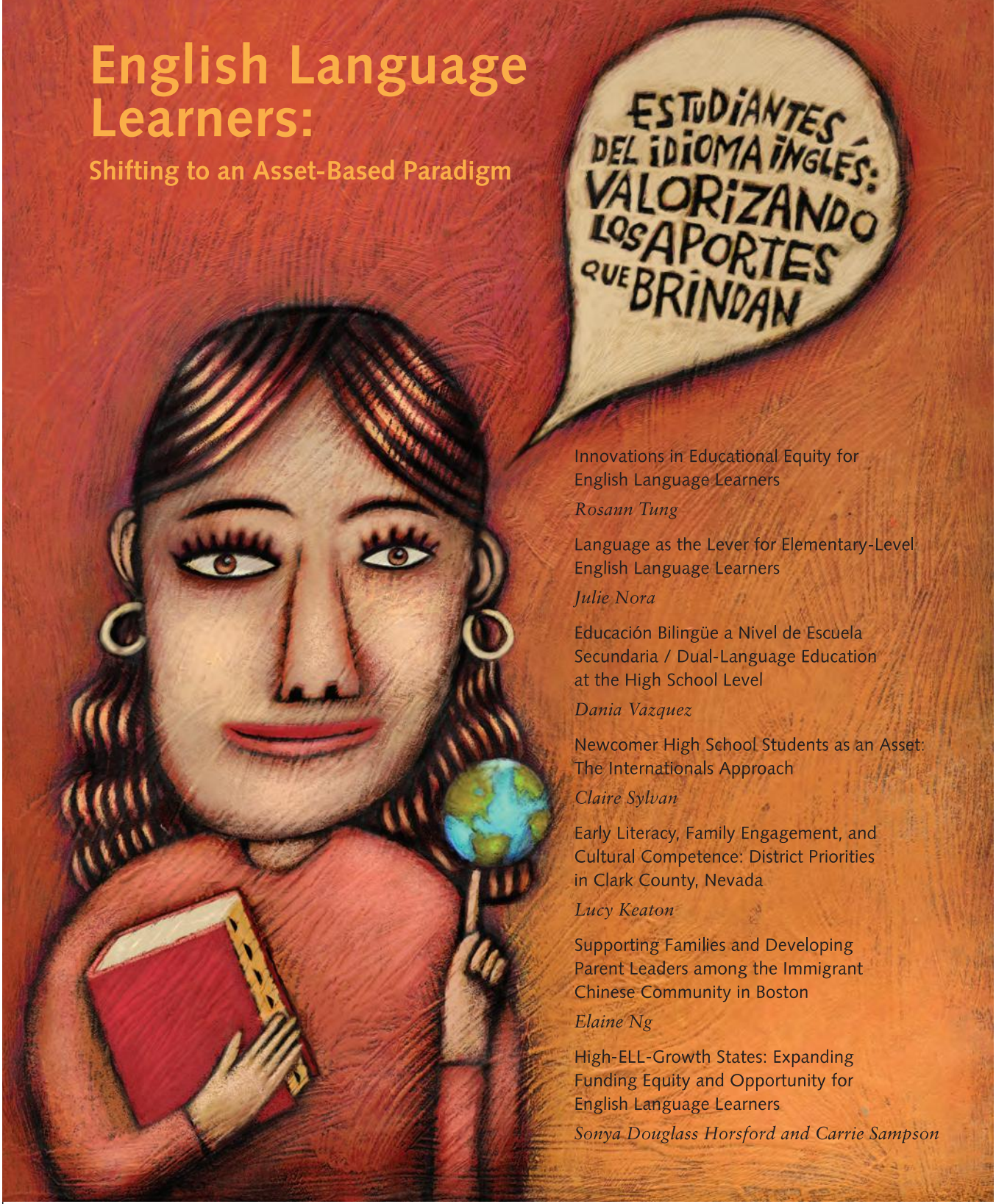
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VUE

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English Language Learners:

Shifting to an Asset-Based Paradigm



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Innovations in Educational Equity for English Language Learners

Rosann Tung

Rather than view educating English language learners as a problem, the innovative practitioners, scholars, and policy analysts writing in this issue of VUE urge us to embrace and value ELLs as bicultural, bilingual leaders of the future.

English language learners (ELLs)[1] are the fastest-growing group of students across the nation, not only in large urban districts, but, increasingly, in small urban districts and suburbs. Much is known about how best to educate ELLs from academic research. However, the research-practice gap is wide, and resources and political will are too low for promising practices to be systematically implemented in teacher preparation and development programs, encouraged in state and district policies, and enacted in schools and classrooms.

Most states and districts lack a vision for ELL education that builds on families' cultural and linguistic assets. They also mostly underfund ELL education and adopt primarily subtractive ELL approaches, in which students lose their first language and identity and are immersed in English-only environments. The role of the ELL leaders in most states and districts is marginalized rather than elevated and is focused on compliance rather than asset and capacity building. The national context that encourages neglect of ELL education includes the accountability movement, which emphasizes annual testing in English exclusively (e.g., the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001); the recent adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) by most states, despite the acknowledgment that there are no provisions in the CCSS for ELLs; and the adoption of explicit English Only legislation in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts.

Nor has higher education aligned its pre-service teacher education programs to foster understanding English language acquisition and linguistic developmental milestones. The teaching force has not received adequate professional development for educating the ELL students who are currently in almost all classrooms. All too often, as a result of this neglect, many ELLs languish for much of their K–12

1 *English language learners* are those students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of acquiring English.

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careers in separate classrooms, unless they drop out before graduating, as disproportionate numbers of ELLs do (Kim 2011; Uriarte et al. 2011).

Thus, we need to shift the paradigm by increasing the opportunities and choices for students and families to those that support the acquisition of academic English, while simultaneously developing the students' native language and teaching the students content. We need to create district and school cultures that celebrate and value linguistic and cultural diversity. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently acknowledged the need to maintain ELL students' first languages: "[It] is clearly an asset that these kids are coming to school with. . . . The fact that our kids don't grow up [bilingual] puts them at a competitive disadvantage" with other countries where students learn at least one other language (Maxwell 2013). In order to effectively teach English and maintain heritage language, we also need to adequately fund teacher preparation; innovative curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and research that leads to a deeper understanding of how and under what conditions students acquire a second language.

As a child of immigrants who were educated, but culturally and linguistically isolated, I learned English through immersion in public school. Consequently, I lost most of my first language, Mandarin, as well as pride in my Chinese identity, by the time I was in middle elementary school (I regained the pride in my identity in college). In my current research,[2] focused on immigrant parents of elementary-aged English language learners, this heritage language loss precedes the acquisition of academic English fluency. One immigrant parent explained:

> When my son gets home, he hangs out with friends in the neighborhood who are also Vietnamese, but they don't speak Vietnamese. They all talk to each other in English. In the car, I want them to talk in Vietnamese, but they don't want to. They turn around and talk in English.

As a result, children of immigrants not only lose the ability to communicate with family members, but they also undergo a period of not being fluent in either language (Portes 1998; Wong-Fillmore 1991; McLaughlin, Blanchard & Osanai 1995). Their communities, their academic learning, and their cultural identity suffer because of their language loss.

This issue of *VUE* examines different aspects of asset-based education for ELLs. First, three authors share unique aspects of their school models, which all highlight the value the English language learner students bring to their school communities. In addition, in the dual-language models, native English speakers learn how it feels to be language learners. Julie Nora shares examples from her dual-language elementary school, and Dania Vazquez from her dual-language high school. Claire

2 The author is a research fellow of the Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Sylvan shares elements of a successful school model for recently arrived high school students. In all of these exemplar schools, newcomer ELL students' languages, cultures, traditions, and ways of thinking enrich everyone's learning.

Two Perspectives sidebars highlight the kind of preparation and professional development that makes for effective ELL teachers. Sarah Ottow shares a community-based pre-service teacher preparation model that empowers bicultural, biliterate adults to become excellent teachers. Beth Warren and Ann Rosebery describe their in-service professional development model and research expanding teachers' views on their English language learner students. These two innovative strategies develop excellent, open-minded teachers who are also adult learners, constantly refining their practice as they learn from their students and their students' experiences. At the district level, two ELL administrators share their strategies for improving ELL education systemwide. Lucy Keaton shares her strategic plan for Clark County School District, which includes raising cultural competence among teachers, involvement among families, and early literacy strategies in elementary schools. Nicole Chaput Guizani focuses on how higher education partners in Nashville have built capacity in the district through professional development and ESL endorsement opportunities for current teachers.

Outside of schools and districts, community-based organizations and states are also grappling with the changing demographics in our cities, and federal policy has not caught up with the burgeoning ELL population. Elaine Ng shares her forward-thinking, community-based organization's efforts to meet its families' needs by teaching and empowering immigrant parents to advocate for their public schools. Sonya Douglass Horsford and Carrie Sampson expose the lack of federal and state guidance on funding and supporting ELL education, and therefore the wide variation in funding in the ten states with the highest growth of ELL student population in the last decade. Jaime del Razo describes some of the misperceptions about undocumented students, the assets they bring to their schools, and policy changes needed to address this underreported issue of college access for undocumented students.

Rather than write about ELL education as a problem, dilemma, achievement gap, or crisis, these innovative practitioners, scholars, and policy analysts shift the paradigm, reminding and urging us to embrace ELLs as the very community members who, when well educated, will be the bicultural, bilingual leaders who improve our city neighborhoods and help us participate effectively in the global economy. Strikingly, this diverse group of innovators shares one goal: to increase educational equity in opportunities and outcomes through practicing and promoting an asset-based view of our bicultural English language learner children. That they do so *in spite of* the context of federal and state policies that cast ELLs in a deficit framework is impressive and inspiring. We hope to deepen readers' understanding and increase the political will to provide resources and implement the best practices that research has shown to be effective for these vastly underserved students.

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Language as the Lever for Elementary-Level English Language Learners

Julie Nora

Bilingual education should be seen not as a remedial program for immigrant students, but as an enrichment program to help all *students, including native English speakers, to be competitive in a global marketplace.*

Improving the education of a growing sector of our school population – English language learners (ELLs) – is a pressing unmet need in our nation's current public education system (Gándara 1994; Genesee et al. 2006; Hood 2003). Another urgent educational need is to prepare students to live and work in an increasingly globally connected world. Our students should be able to engage in cultural exchanges across the earth, but schools in the United States are not keeping pace with this need (Suárez-Orozco & Sattin 2007).

Bilingual education can help meet both these needs. In this article, I will explain why ELLs should be viewed as an asset rather than a burden and describe how we do this through two-way bilingual education at my elementary school, the International Charter School in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Julie Nora is director of the International Charter School in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

OBSTACLES TO ELLS' ACHIEVEMENT IN TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Researchers cite many reasons that ELLs do not thrive in a traditional environment.

- A common reaction to less-than-fluent English is for teachers to expect lower-level cognitive performance (Chamot & O'Malley 1989). Teachers of Latina/o ELLs may consider their students to be slow learners (Moll 1988) and simplify or water down the curriculum (Gersten & Woodward 1994; Moll et al. 1980; Ramirez 1992). Studies have shown that the result of such pedagogy is a low level of student engagement (Arreaga-Mayer & Perdomo-Rivera 1996; Ruiz 1995), which ultimately leads to what Valdés (2001) terms *educational dead ends*.
- In the current era of education reform, there is an increased focus on student performance on standardized tests administered only in English and narrowly focused on math and reading. Although the stated intent of the 2001 federal legislation No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was to eliminate gaps between subgroups of students – including between native and non-native speakers of English – many argue that NCLB has hurt ELLs (e.g., Gándara & Baca 2008). NCLB places strong emphasis on testing in English, so ELLs are denied opportunities to use their native language, thus limiting their learning to basic skills with an impoverished curriculum (Gutiérrez 2001). We see this watered-down teaching in literacy practices in which teachers emphasize the acquisition of decontextualized skills such as vocabulary, decoding, and phonics instead of making these skills a part of a larger menu of meaningful activities in a literacy program.
- The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were created without consideration of second-language acquisition research and do not take into account language development. Educators of ELLs are being asked to have their students achieve at higher levels with little support, as this passage from the introduction to the CCSS reveals:[1]

> It is beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English language learners and for students with special needs. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post–high school lives. Each grade will include students who are still acquiring English. For those students, it is possible to meet the standards in reading, writing, and listening without displaying native-like control of conventions and vocabulary.

DUAL-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS: ALL STUDENTS BENEFIT

Developing language skills and providing access to academic content for ELLs is challenging without native-language support. Students learn best in bilingual programs in which they have native-language support while learning a second language. But some bilingual programs have a benefit for non-ELLs, too. When native speakers of English are paired with native speakers of another language with the goal of both sets of students becoming bilingual, all students are learning to become global citizens. A speaker of a language other than English should be seen not as a problem but as part of the solution. We need to change the mindset from one in which bilingual education is seen as a remedial program for immigrant students to one in which it is seen as an enrichment program to help all students to be competitive in a global marketplace.

1 See www.corestandards.org.

In dual-language bilingual education programs, students are taught in English and in a partner language with the goals of helping them to develop high levels of language proficiency and literacy in both languages of instruction; demonstrate high levels of academic achievement; and develop an appreciation for and an understanding of diverse cultures. Two-way immersion (TWI) is a form of dual-language education in which equal numbers of native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language are integrated for instruction so that both groups of students serve alternately in the role of language model and language learner.

The structure of TWI programs varies, but they all provide at least 50 percent of instruction in the partner language at all grade levels, beginning in pre-K, kindergarten, or first grade and running at least five years, though preferably through grade 12 (Hamayan, Genesee & Cloud 2013). TWI is an ideal educational response not only to the needs of ELLs but also to the need for global citizens because, in addition to academic achievement, bilingualism/biliteracy and cross-cultural awareness are goals of TWI programs (Howard, Sugarman & Christian 2003). It is a myth that students in bilingual programs do not learn English. Studies have shown that students in well-designed bilingual programs acquire academic English as well as and often better than children in all-English programs (Krashen 2005). Furthermore, they become proficient in two languages.

Students need to become cognitively and behaviorally engaged with the world. To be able to help students develop the skills, sensibilities, and competencies needed to identify, analyze, and solve problems from multiple perspectives, schools must provide opportunities for students to become curious, learn to tolerate ambiguity, and synthesize knowledge within and across disciplines. Today's youth need to be able to learn with and from their diverse peers, work collaboratively, and communicate effectively in groups. They will need to be culturally sophisticated enough to empathize with peers of different ethnic backgrounds and religions and of different linguistic and social origins. Dual-language learning facilitates the acquisition of such skills.

THE INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL

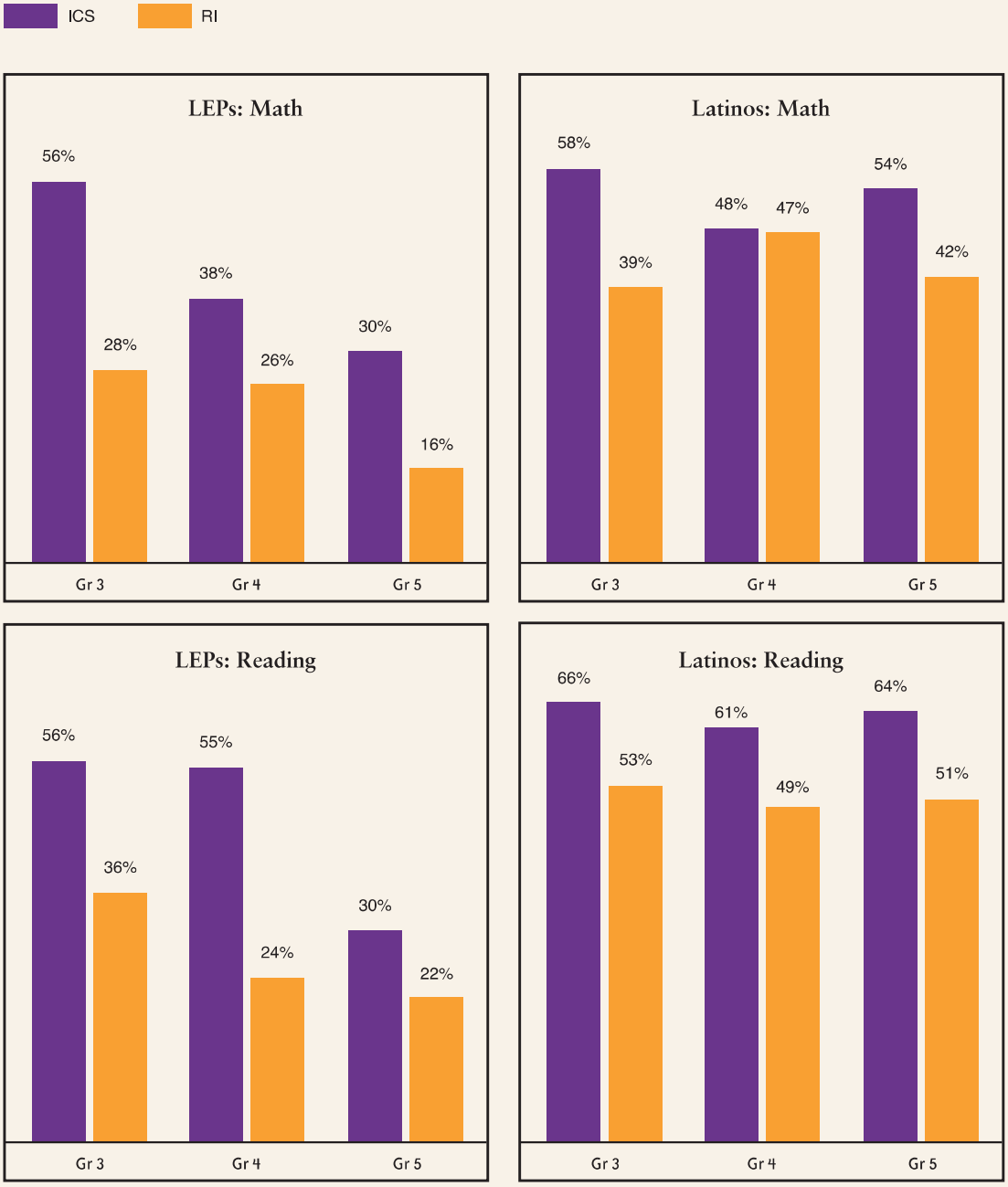
The International Charter School (ICS) is a dual-language public school of choice, offering linguistically and culturally responsive education to Rhode Island children and families.[2] ICS has two language strands: Portuguese-English and Spanish-English. Approximately 50 percent of ICS students are dominant in a language other than English, 60 percent qualify for free or reduced-priced meals, and 50 percent are Latino.

Academic Benefits for Both ELLs and Non-ELLs

By having access to high-level academic content in their native language, ELLs are able to access the core curriculum and engage in higher-order thinking. Nationally, ELLs and Latinos experience failure at a higher rate than other groups of students (NAEP 2011). In Rhode Island, Latinos score lowest or near last on national comparative assessments (NAEP 2011). Research supports well-implemented dual-language education as the best model for ELLs (Krashen 2005), and ICS is proof. ICS's Latinos and ELLs outperform their peers throughout the state (see Figure 1). And for native speakers of English, the ELL students are able to provide a native-language model that helps them learn the second language.

2 *School of choice* refers to the system by which any student in Rhode Island can apply to attend ICS and vacancies are filled by lottery.

Figure 1. Percent limited English proficient students (LEPs) and Latinos scoring proficient or above, New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), 2012



Data source: Rhode Island Department of Education, http://reporting.measuredprogress.org/NECAPpublicRI/select.aspx

The dual-language model also allows parents to engage with their children's learning and reinforce it at home. Parents are able to communicate with teachers in their native language. They are also able to engage with their children in their schoolwork. At ICS, we use a tool called "family message journals" (Wollman-Bonilla 2000), in which children and family members exchange letters regularly. Through these letters, families can keep up with what their children are learning in school and can witness the development of their writing. Parents can write in their native language, allowing them to participate fully and also to share their own childhood educational experiences. In contrast, in traditional schools, immigrant parents are often alienated because their experiences differ from those of the mainstream and are not valued.

For example, in the following letter, a mother responds to her son's letter, in which he describes a science experiment he did in school, by telling him about experiments that she did as a student in Colombia.

Lunes, 15 enero, 2007

Daniel

Nosotros en el colegio donde yo estudié tuvimos muchos experimentos.

1) Hicimos experimentos con bombillos pequeños y alambres para sacar luces.

2) Hicimos experimentos con plantas – sembramos fríjoles en lo oscuro y las plantas sin luz crecen mucho más, pero son muy débiles, pero fue muy interesante.

Nilda

———

[Translation]

Monday, January 15, 2007

Daniel

In the high school I studied, we also did many experiments.

1) We did experiments with small light bulbs and wires to create light.

2) We did experiments with plants – we planted seeds in darkness and the plants grew a lot, but they were very weak, but it was interesting.

Nilda

These letters also allow the parents to learn from their children. In another letter, a father responds to his son, who had written to him about a lesson on "-ed" endings in English.

Lunes, 5 de febrero, 2007

¡Hola Christian!

Me cuentas que aprendiste las reglas de agregar "-ed." Esto es para el pasado de los verbos. Me gusta y yo quiero aprender también, quiero que me enseñes.

———

[Translation]

Monday, February 5, 2007

Hello, Christian!

You tell me that you learned the rules for adding "-ed." This is for past tense verbs. I am pleased and I also want to learn, I want you to teach me.

Cross-Cultural Competence

Teaching our students cross-cultural competence is more necessary today than ever. However, increased globalization is coming at a time when the pressure for education to focus on reading and math as assessed by standardized assessments is making the learning goals related to language and culture less and less of a priority.

At ICS, teaching cross-cultural competence is achieved both informally and formally. Learning with peers who come from different linguistic and racial/ethnic backgrounds and countries of origin removes the barriers to integrating with those from differing backgrounds. Parents of native-English-speaking students have reported that although their children struggled at times learning academic content 50 percent of the time in Spanish, the empathy that their children gained for what it takes to learn another language and to be part of another culture was invaluable and something that could be learned only in a dual-language setting.

Cross-cultural competence is also formally included in the curriculum. Our social studies curriculum, which was developed by ICS teachers and administrators, prepares learners to meet national and local social studies standards as they explore and document the school's unique community of students and families. The resulting ICS social studies curriculum is structured around ten thematic strands, as defined by the National Council for Social Studies (Golston 2010). Two of the NCSS themes that are particularly relevant to teaching students to be culturally competent are the following:

- Culture: "A people's systems of beliefs, knowledge, values, and traditions and how they change over time"; and
- Global connections: "Globalization has intensified and accelerated the changes faced at the local, national, and international level, and its effects are evident in the rapidly changing social, economic, and political institutions and systems."

The curriculum follows a typical sequence of moving from the self to the outside world, with kindergarten focusing on the concept of "me," first grade on "family," second on "neighborhood," third on "community," fourth on "state," and fifth on "country." This framework facilitates students' development of cross-cultural competence by making their lives and those of their classmates central to their learning.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE: STUDENT AND TEACHER POINTS OF VIEW

Although my new school will not teach us equally in two languages, I will still be bilingual, a skill that few people have. . . . Other schools are sure to be places of great learning. But ICS in particular has given us the foundation of respect for many cultures, beliefs, and languages. And for that I owe a great thanks to all who have made that possible.

– Tomás, at his fifth-grade graduation

Our social studies unit, Documenting Cultural Communities, is all about their own culture and I think it is all connected – social studies, language, and culture. Students learn about their own background, where they came from, where their parents came from, and why it is important. They are very proud of documenting their own cultures, of being Brazilian, being Portuguese, being Cape Verdean.

– Silvia Lima, second- and third-grade teacher, Portuguese side

At every grade level, the cultural diversity of ICS makes up much of the content of the curriculum. As ICS Spanish-side teacher and curriculum developer Rosa Devarona said,

> When we talk about food, they bring in dishes special to their family. Instead of "In Mexico, people eat…," ICS students share what their Mexican family eats. After all, Mexico is a very diverse country. Students love talking about themselves and sharing their families' lives. They are learning and teaching each other. It's much more meaningful.

The focus of learning in third grade is "Community." The second unit for third grade, Documenting Cultural Communities, is designed to broaden the students' perception of community from one defined by geographical and physical characteristics to one defined by cultural characteristics such as traditions, language, food, dress, and so forth. Having our students and their families be the content of our teaching is only possible by having the diverse student population that a dual-language program facilitates.

LANGUAGE AS THE SOLUTION

In dual-language programs, all students are viewed as having assets – linguistic and cultural – that help them prepare to succeed and fully participate in the changing world. And, by providing access to learning for ELLs and their families in their native languages, they provide ELLs with high-level academic opportunities. In such a model, language is the solution, not the problem.

For more information on the International Charter School, see www.internationalcharterschool.org

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Educación Bilingüe a Nivel de Escuela Secundaria
Dual-Language Education at the High School Level

Dania Vazquez

A dual-language program at one high school aims to send the message: "We value all *of who you are – both languages are equally important."*

The guest editor of this issue of *VUE*, Rosann Tung, interviewed Dania Vazquez, founding principal of the Margarita Muñiz Academy, a Boston public high school offering dual-language education in Spanish and English. The first dual-language high school in Massachusetts, this Innovation School opened in the fall of 2012 with 80 ninth-graders and plans to eventually serve 320 students in grades 9 through 12. The purpose of the interview is to share the school's unique model and early successes with *VUE* readership.

AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q What are the advantages to offering a dual-language program to high school students in Boston?

A A dual-language school is an asset-based approach to educating students. It's ensuring that we bring forward, from multiple perspectives, all the assets that kids come with into the system. So I have to answer this question from the different perspectives of who I have in my school, and it's very nuanced, as I've learned this first year. We have the whole spectrum: native English speakers who attended dual-language elementary and middle schools, English language learners (ELLs), and heritage language speakers.[1]

Dania Vazquez is founding principal of the Margarita Muñiz Academy in Boston, Massachusetts.

The kids who have been in a dual-language program in grades K–8 need the opportunity and a pathway if they want to continue in that model. We are finding that the dual-language elementary and middle schools have to build the value for continuing in a dual-language school so that kids feel that bilingualism is an asset that they want to continue to hone. Since it is so new to have a dual-language high school, the elementary and middle schools are now also thinking about what a high school pathway means for their students.

This approach is probably most meaningful to the kids who are limited English proficient (LEP), because they're coming into the school and realizing, "Oh, both languages are important; and if I go to a school with a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program,[2] my English is the most important thing and my Spanish is being sort of let go." The dilemma there, which is quite interesting, is that kids want to speak English, because when they leave our building, they're surrounded with the idea that to belong in this society is to speak English. It's an interesting sort of back and forth for that group of kids, to see that Spanish is an asset, too. The messages they're getting from everywhere else is that what's important is English.

Then we have kids in the middle, who already speak English. Some are "formerly limited English proficient" (FLEP),[3] or they have never been labeled "LEP" in this school system, or they're no longer qualified for an SEI program, but they speak Spanish from the heritage language perspective. So they've let go of the academic learning in Spanish. They're in our school as heritage language speakers, and it becomes an identity question.

One young man said in the beginning,

> I was really resistant [to learning Spanish], and I didn't understand why Spanish was so important to learn. But now I'm really into it. I really understand who I am, and now I'm beginning to think in Spanish, too. In the beginning, it was really hard, because I didn't think learning Spanish was so important, but now I get why it's important.

It's very nuanced. A key part of developing language is the connection to cultural identity – who you are, who you represent. Culture is conveyed through language. We want to honor all of who you are and we can do that through language. You may know the language, and you may know how to read and write in that language, but do you understand that it's valued? Kids are not coming in necessarily understanding that speaking another language is an asset. The societal messages that are coming in at ninth grade are very profound: "Your Spanish language isn't all that important. You must give up that part of your self and your identity. Your English is key to being a valued member of the society. That's what counts."

Our model at Muñiz Academy intentionally will change that message. The message here is "we value all of who you are – both languages are equally important."

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1 *Heritage speakers* refers to bilingual students whose first language is the one spoken in their home, but who usually change their language dominance to English when they start going to school. Their vocabulary in their native language and their knowledge of their heritage culture may be limited.

2 SEI is the predominant approach to ELL education in Boston. This model relies on the use of simple English to impart academic content, using the native language only to assist students in completing tasks or to answer questions.

3 "FLEP" students are those who were once ELLs in the system but have reached a level of English proficiency deemed adequate to learn academic content in English.

Q How do the staff and the programming at your school get the students to see that being bilingual is an asset?

A Getting them to see that being bilingual is an asset is a very intentional and active daily process. For example, three days a week our community language is Spanish. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, whether in the hallways or outside of class, everyone speaks in Spanish, staff and students. Sometimes, it's hard to honor that because we all go back and forth, and we all remind ourselves "today is Monday, and community language is Spanish." We do everything in writing in two languages, and what comes up when you see our materials, like our website, is Spanish first. If you have a title of something, the top line has to be Spanish, the bottom line is English.

> "You need to hold on to your Spanish. It's who you are, and it's *all* of you that we want, and your being bilingual is going to get you a job and better opportunities."

It's also important to have intentional conversations with kids. I don't think there is a week that goes by that I don't say to some kid, "You need to hold on to your Spanish. It's important. It's who you are, and it's *all* of you that we want, and your being bilingual is going to get you a better job and better opportunities."

So it's a constant presence, a constant conversation, a constant "we value both languages, and you have to be proficient in both languages."

FEATURES OF THE SCHOOL

Q What are some of the design elements of your school, and why have you chosen them? How does it all fit together?

A Our elevator speech is that we're a dual-language college prep high school, and the three important anchors that help us get kids to college are Expeditionary Learning,[4] the arts, and technology. All of those connect and support the learning in both languages.

Expeditionary Learning is how we're trying to do the work with the kids. The idea is that you're learning through authentic opportunities. Our schoolwide theme is revolution. An essential question students are thinking about is, "What do you stand for?" For example, the Spanish teachers are starting an expedition taking it from the angle of the Cuban revolution. Students are researching the history of Cuba during that time period. The teacher is going to invite people who were actually immigrants from Cuba during Castro's revolution, so that the kids can interview them.

The arts are an integral part of our program. The arts are another form of language that can really help kids learn from a multi-disciplinary perspective while enlarging their view of the world. We offer a choir and have started elements of an orchestra. We also offer visual arts. In our first year, we've had

4 Expeditionary Learning is a whole-school reform model that organizes learning around an experiential, project-based approach in which students do original research and create high-quality products for audiences beyond the classroom (see http://elschools.org).

two concerts and exhibited student artwork. In addition, the music teacher has decided to do a mini-project on a play that the whole school is going to see, *In the Heights*. The play is about Latino kids in Washington Heights, with very similar life stories and aspirations as our students. Our music teacher and students are exploring the music and the lyrics. What happens in the arts can translate over to the academics. We want to have kids who are well-rounded leaders and citizens, an important part of our mission.

Our third anchor is technology: helping kids learn how to use a computer to learn and to enhance their learning. A lot of kids don't have computers at home or don't know how to use a computer well. So it's getting everybody to be on a level playing field around technology.

Those are the three design anchors, but there are a few other design elements. We're having kids travel by cohorts rather than hand-scheduling kids. So they travel with the same group of kids for their academic classes. Then when they travel for arts block, they travel in a different cohort of kids, because they're either traveling as students of instrumentals or students doing chorus. And then they are also grouped for crew, which is our Advisory.

The other design element for dual language is that you have humanities English and humanities Spanish. We're also figuring out math, science, and the other subject areas – how do you balance both languages, because there's not a math Spanish teacher and a math English teacher? So one teacher has to do both. I've allowed teachers to experiment this year with what works.

Q You use standards-based grading. Can you say a little bit more about that?

A We're not using letter grades and numbers like 100 percent. It is standards-based grading. We have academic learning targets. So every course, every quarter has a set of learning targets that kids have to meet, and those learning targets are assessed by certain products that teachers develop. So if you have to demonstrate the learning targets in writing, for example, then the product would be an essay or a poem.

THE NEED FOR RESOURCES

Q How can the district support your school or better support your school?

A It's a start-up school. It's a really tiny school right now, really complicated. As a district, we need to think about what it means to implement a dual-language high school model, considering funding for staffing as well as curriculum and resources. It would be terrific to see more language learning opportunities in middle school so that more students would feel they can consider a dual-language school. Finally, the district needs to think about professional development supports as we continue to grow our school as well as others. It's multi-layered. Boston Public Schools (BPS) is talking about opening more dual-language schools. We need to strengthen the current dual-language schools and create a strong network.

Apart from the questions about our specific model, we also need to think about how to best support start-up schools. We have a huge vision with a limited budget, so you have to make hard choices while implementing that vision.

Q Would you say that the greatest barrier right now to your school's success is lack of adequate resources?

A When you have such a wide range of kids, you need a lot of extra people to do the work. You need a lot of support systems and safety nets for kids. I'm learning that from my high school principal colleagues at other schools. I don't think this situation is unusual or related to our model. Our students are not as well prepared as they should be for high school.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Q Could you tell us about some of the successes you've had this year with your ELLs? How are the students with different levels of Spanish and English mixing?

A We intentionally group native speakers of English with the kids who are learning English heterogeneously in the same room. But we're also working with kids who are at the very beginning levels of learning English because they haven't been to school, or they have had limited schooling, or they are not up to grade level academically in their own language. We pull out beginning ELL students to do English as a Second Language (ESL) during the humanities time, so that they can get up to speed on the English and feel more confident. At the high school level, there is the social and emotional aspect; students don't want to speak in front of kids, because they feel more inhibited, shy, much more self-conscious. So it's been more successful to give them that intensive ESL support, while for all other subjects and experiences they are fully integrated.

Q How will you know your school has been successful going forward?

A We'll know we're successful when we've established a culture where kids understand that both languages are valued and they are valued as real people. We will be successful when students know that we value *all* of you – culturally, academically, artistically – and that you have to meet those learning expectations as well.

We'll know we're successful when kids are fully bilingual, no matter what point of entry they came in. And when we have figured out our model for dual language: How do you use both languages in subject areas in a way that makes sense for both teachers and kids? When we can see language and content learning in the context of authentic expeditions happening, we'll see the vision coming alive. We are at the beginning steps. We have a long way to go.

For more information on the Margarita Muñiz Academy, see http://munizacademy.org.



Newcomer High School Students as an Asset: The Internationals Approach

Claire Sylvan

In a practitioner-led high school model serving new immigrant students, all teachers simultaneously support both language and content, and students are taught in groups of heterogeneous English proficiency levels.

The last several decades have made clear that large numbers of immigrants still see America as a land of opportunity – and this influx of students has had a strong impact on the K–12 educational system. Most of the million-pupil increase in the public school population in the decade between 2001 and 2011 is due to the increase in English language learners, both those born in this country, whose home languages are not English, and school-age students who immigrate to the United States (Aud et al. 2012). In addition, the U.S. government has expanded the localities that serve as refugee resettlement sites (Patrick 2004). All of this population growth taken together means that more schools and school districts serve students with a variety of home languages and who are new learners of English.

Newly arrived immigrant students at the high school level, also known as *late-entry* students, present a particular challenge – in addition to learning English, they need to learn more

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complex content than younger students. But high schools serving late-entry English language learners also have a tremendous opportunity to build on the incredible resources that these students bring. Immigrant students come with global experiences and knowledge – a knowledge of life in faraway countries, varied perspectives on school and the world, and a variety of languages. These students are often very resilient. They've travelled across borders by plane, boat, car, truck, bus, and foot, with or without one or both parents. They may not have been the ones who actually decided to come to the United States, and so they may be filled with more than the normal teenage rebellion about parental choices that they had no part in, having left behind friends, family, and all that is familiar. Yet, they are also often eager to benefit from opportunities that were not available to them in their homelands – opportunities to live in peace, to study, to meet people from other cultures, and to become full participants in a democratic society.

THE INTERNATIONALS APPROACH

In 1985, a group of educators in Queens, New York, faced with the challenge of educating newly arrived secondary students, set out to create a new approach to educating immigrants in a new small school, International High School at LaGuardia Community College. Knowing that in the United States, immigration often carries a stigma, the school chose to name itself "International" to confer prestige on the students they serve. Since then, another sixteen small schools and one small learning community have re-created and built upon this approach.

The practitioners formed a nonprofit, Internationals Network for Public Schools, to leverage their work and share it with others. This approach to working with secondary newcomer students is based on a model that builds on the very diverse strengths that students from all over the world bring to their schools and provides them with a rich academic curriculum that prepares them for post-secondary success in college, careers, and democratic society.

This article will present some of the unique features of the Internationals approach. One especially important feature of the approach is that practitioners have led its development and continue to share and learn together across multiple schools, contexts, and geographies.

All Teachers Supporting Both Content and Language Learning

In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols* found that the San Francisco Unified School District had violated the rights of students by not providing them support in learning the English language, because the district had placed these students in academic classes without providing them sufficient linguistic supports to access and learn the academic content. Since that time, a variety of state and federal regulations have been developed to ensure that districts meet their obligation to provide linguistic support to students who are speakers of other languages and not yet proficient in English. Yet, despite a variety of regulations governing the education of these students,[1] they are often unsuccessful in school.

Virtually all programs provide linguistic support through English as a second language classes. In most programs, academic content is also taught in English (using a variety of approaches) and in some programs, academic content is taught in students' home language(s). Much of the debate in the United States has focused on the language used by the teacher, with

some states mandating "English-only" instruction in the aftermath of anti-bilingual campaigns in the late 1990s. But in the Internationals approach, rather than separating linguistic and academic development into different class periods with specialists in either language development *or* an academic discipline teaching the respective class, Internationals has *all* teachers support both the linguistic and the academic development of students[2] and supports students' use of home languages as well as English to do this.

It is crucial that all teachers take responsibility for newly arrived high school students' growth in both areas. To be college and career ready, immigrant high school students need to master academic content and develop proficiency in English. They have a very short window of time to learn all this: four years – or at best five or six, if they and their families can afford for them to stay in school and they don't get discouraged. It doesn't make sense for these students to lose their precious, limited time learning English in courses that don't accumulate the academic credits towards graduation that they need.

Researchers and theoreticians also are more and more indicating that the most appropriate place to learn language is in context – and in school, the context is the learning of academic content. Students need to be actively doing this work, not watching others or waiting to do it while learning English. For students learning English in a short period of time, it is especially important that they have the opportunity to actively use language throughout the day. No one learns to ride a bicycle by watching someone else ride it. You need to get up, ride, fall off, and get back on. Language learning is no different. You have to *use* a language to develop proficiency in a language.

In a class where the teacher talks and calls on individual students, even in a relatively small high school class of twenty students, each one would have only a few minutes to practice language. Understanding that the more teachers talk, the less students talk, the Internationals approach prioritizes small-group projects that foster language development alongside of content. Student activity guides direct the activity of students on collaborative projects, and the teacher moves among groups to facilitate their work and guide the process. Students actively speak with their peers, collaborating to complete a cognitively complex problem. They make linguistic choices. They move between using their own language to understand concepts or explain to a peer who doesn't understand in English to using English to communicate with other students who may not share their language or to prepare for oral presentations of their work in English.

"All Internationals teachers support both the linguistic and the academic development of students and students' use of home languages as well as English to do this."

1 Implementation of these regulations has been uneven.

2 See the Understanding Language project at http://ell.stanford.edu for a good explanation of the theoretical basis for this approach.

Grouping Students across Different Levels of Language Proficiency

In order to have students working on complex cognitive tasks, with activity guides prepared in English (in general), the student groups must be heterogeneous with students at different levels of English proficiency, so that they can support each other's learning. But in fact, this learning is enhanced even more when students are diverse on even more characteristics, such as academic proficiency, home language, or previous schooling. In virtually all our schools, students in grades 9 and 10 are mixed in classes and work on projects together in a two-year program, where they remain with the same team of teachers.

> Internationals' experience is that students learn *better* in heterogeneous groups, a fact confirmed by literature on how diverse groups often perform better and reach more optimal decisions than homogeneous groups.

Why have we decided not to stratify students based on their linguistic proficiency? In virtually every program serving English learners, for at least some part of the day, they are divided into groups based on their language proficiency. This grouping is done because educators believe that they can best tailor instruction to students who share the "same level" as their needs will be the same. The Internationals approach looks at this differently:

- Internationals personnel often ask skeptics, "What size class would you need to form a truly homogenous group?" In fact, the minute you level students on one characteristic, they will be different on another. No two people share all characteristics.
- The decisions about grouping students by language proficiency are usually based on an English language proficiency examination. Even if students scored the same on the test, inevitably they did not get all the same answers right and all the same answers wrong. So the students will differ on what they do or don't know about the English language.
- Even when they get the same answers right or wrong, the way that they think about the answers may well differ.

In other words, the only way to have a truly homogeneous class is to have a class of one!

Rather than attempt the impossible task of "leveling students" to create homogenous groups, the Internationals approach leverages diversity and heterogeneity. Across Internationals schools, students come from 119 countries and speak 90 languages. In any one school there may be up to 60 countries and 40 languages. Some students come in on grade level or above, from a strong school system, although they may not speak one word of English. Some of our students have never previously attended school. Others have been out of school for several years due to war or other situations. Still others come from countries where the school day is short (four hours or less) and sometimes there is no teacher. And students will combine on these and other characteristics in innumerable ways.

Internationals' experience is that students learn *better* in heterogeneous groups, a fact confirmed by literature

on how diverse groups often perform better and reach more optimal decisions than homogeneous groups (Phillips, Kim-Jun & Shim 2010; Page 2007; Boaler 2008; Kellogg Insight 2010).

The Internationals approach capitalizes on the heterogeneity of our students in multiple ways:

- making English the lingua franca in most of our classrooms and encouraging communication in multiple languages to aid in constructing meaning;
- promoting student interaction where students use both English and native language to grasp the content of their projects, to construct new understandings, and to help each other complete the project tasks;
- promoting language and content learning motivated by students' authentic desires to communicate ideas and solve problems and communicate with their peers.

We also leverage diversity by creating heterogeneous groups of teachers who take responsibility for the same group of students. At a minimum, a math, history, science, and English (or ESL) teacher share responsibility for a cluster of about 80 to 100 students. The heterogeneous cluster of students is divided into three to four strands (classes). Each strand sees the same four teachers for their classes, and the teachers see the same 100 students in the same groupings. The practitioners' main affiliation (unusual for high schools) is not their academic discipline but the interdisciplinary team. This team shares responsibility – overall responsibility for this shared cluster of students and their success, academically, linguistically, and affectively – for a collaborative project. Like the students, the teachers' diversity enables them to look at students from different perspectives – students that do well in math may struggle in history, and the fact that the class groupings are the same allows the practitioners to discuss how best to form small groups and pairs for class projects, to see students' strengths in one area in order to leverage them to support their growth in areas they are struggling.

To sum up, since heterogeneity is inevitable, valuable, and positive, rather than attempt to eliminate it falsely, the Internationals approach is to leverage it instructionally and structurally, both for teachers and for students. And for English language learners, this approach is unique, since virtually all other programs level students by proficiency level.

An Approach Developed and Maintained by Practitioners

As described on page 20, the Internationals approach was developed and continues to evolve based on the collaboration of practitioners. In each International High School, teachers work in committees to take responsibility for hiring, supporting, and eventually providing feedback to their peers. They collaboratively plan and lead professional development and serve on curriculum committees overseeing the courses of study, vertical alignment within academic disciplines, etc. The Internationals network supports continued cross-school learning.

Across the network of schools, staff from Internationals Network of Public Schools facilitate committees of faculty to support the opening of new schools, plan joint professional development across schools, plan inter-visitations across schools, and help to populate an online knowledge management system where over 500 curriculum units and additional resources are shared across the network. Educators from Internationals Network facilitate inter-visitations, leadership retreats, and a process to provide feedback to sister schools.

In one example of interschool sharing, a consistent structure in most of our schools now is the team leader meeting, where the principal meets with team leaders to support their growth and facilitate cross-team learning. Yet that structure was developed by the fourth school to open. Practitioners own and develop Internationals practices, even as they have agreed to hold firm to certain key design principles, which they themselves distilled over the course of two summers, based on more than twenty years of school-based practices. The network of schools remains strong as newer and older schools continue to learn from each other and develop their practices.

LEVERAGING THE DIVERSITY OF NEWLY ARRIVED STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Now in three states and eighteen schools, with additional supports provided to other schools in even more states, the Internationals approach holds great promise to provide immigrant and ELL students with real educational opportunity. These students and their families bring global perspectives and great optimism to the communities in which they live. Leveraging their diverse experiences and developing teacher capacity to integrate language and content in complex, rigorous projects, the Internationals approach guides schools and communities to welcome these students and open the door to the American dream for these newly arrived youth.

For more information on the Internationals Network for Public Schools, see http://internationalsnps.org.

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PREPARING TEACHERS TO EQUITABLY SERVE ELLS IN WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Sarah Ottow

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The Worcester Public Schools has the largest percentage of English language learners (ELLs) of any district in Massachusetts. And, like most districts across the country, it has an insufficient number of teachers trained to teach this rapidly growing subgroup. The Worcester ELL Teacher Residency (WELLTR) – a partnership between the Worcester Public Schools, Cambridge College, and the Center for Collaborative Education – was created to address this shortage. WELLTR will graduate teachers with a master's degree and teaching certification in English as a Second Language (ESL) in four semesters of coursework and residency hours.* The first cohort of twenty-one residents will graduate in December 2013, and the second cohort of twenty residents started the program in summer 2013 and will graduate in August 2014.

An Emphasis on Equity and Strong Ties to the Community

Equity is a guiding principle of the program. The goal is to ensure that all ELL students in the district are prepared to succeed academically – and also that the teacher graduates have a positive impact in their classrooms, schools, and the overall district well after they complete the program. The residents all are invested in the community. The bulk of the funding for tuition comes from federal Race to the Top allocations, so that each resident receives a 72 percent reduction in tuition and, in turn, signs a contract committing to teach for three years in Worcester Public Schools. Each resident was recruited from the pool of Worcester Public School (WPS) employees. Instructional aides make up 25 percent of the two current cohorts – others are content area and special education teachers. One-quarter are ELLs themselves, and therefore have experienced first-hand the challenges of learning a new language and culture, which gives them a deep sense of empathy and urgency as educators. One resident said:

> Because I was a refugee myself, I can understand ELLs' perspectives better and understand their feelings. WELLTR gave me that chance to become an ESL teacher and help the students who are like me. I would love to be a good influence in their lives.

Learning New Strategies and Applying Them in Practice

Application of new learning is at the heart of the WELLTR program. Many residents have ELLs under their care whom they previously did not know how to reach, and they are eager to learn new ways to reach them. One resident, speaking to the reality that traditional training programs often leave content teachers underprepared to work with the ELLs in front of them every day, explained:

> I wanted to join WELLTR because of my own insecurities when it comes to teaching ELL students. It pains me to watch them struggle with day-to-day tasks that so many mainstream students simply take for granted.

Under the support of a mentor teacher, residents consistently choose new strategies, based on the students' needs and the teachers' goals. They then practice these strategies in their classrooms and

* Residency consists of 300 total hours, 150 of which are instructing ELLs. The other 150 are flexible and differentiated for each resident. For instance, 70 hours might be in support meetings with a mentor, 35 observing others, and 45 in pre-practicum coursework. Each resident has an Individualized Residency Plan, developed in collaboration with his/her mentor and WELLTR staff. Many residents surpass the 300 required hours.

reflect on their continuous improvement. Also, residents are exposed to new strategies to add to their repertoire through coursework that requires teachers to try specific strategies and report back on them (see, for example, the list of strategies in the Sheltered Instruction Checklist at www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder835/19%20SIOP%20Checklist.pdf).

For example, one high school algebra teacher resident applied two new strategies: cooperative student grouping and writing in the content area of math. Having read about and discussed the value of interaction for ELLs (and all learners), he has employed cooperative groups more intentionally in his instruction. He has noticed a higher level of engagement and higher achievement on unit assessments. He also has more time during cooperative work time to circulate and formatively assess students, compared with his previous strategy of having a more teacher-centered classroom. He also now uses writing in his math class, having learned about the need to embed all four language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in every lesson. Students are asked to write about how they solved a problem, much like a "constructed response" question on a standardized test. He uses this task to assess students' understanding of the process they are learning (for instance, the mathematical concept of *slope*), as well as to build their academic vocabulary through writing.

Action Research: Addressing Real Problems, Developing Reflective Practitioners

The culminating assignment for residents is an action research project, in which residents use an inquiry cycle as a framework to examine an issue of equity in their own classroom, school, or district at large – and design a way to address it. The resident's choice must be backed by data or other evidence proving that addressing this issue will increase equity of opportunity for ELLs. The residents must also provide empirical evidence of whether or not the improvement effort made an impact. Action research, therefore, is both a vehicle for addressing an urgent problem and a tool for creating more autonomous, reflective practitioners.

WELLTR residents are still early in the process of developing action research projects, and the work so far has shown very encouraging results. One resident, for example, tackled the issue of misclassifying ELLs as special education students:

> I am frustrated about special education students and ELLs and the overall confusion between the two. Students who have been identified as having a disability may not actually have one and may be misplaced. I am trying to gather information and get answers about this issue.

This resident's action plan includes a set of recommendations for the district special education department so that it can be more culturally and linguistically responsive and prevent further misidentification of ELLs as having learning disabilities.

In another action research project, a high school teacher is creating a "best practices toolkit" for her vocational/technical high school, for the benefit of many of the teachers who come from vocational backgrounds and may not have been formally trained in pedagogy for academic subjects. The principal and the resident plan to roll it out across the school by having collaborative discussions and perhaps collegial observations around what strategies are working for ELLs (as well as for all students).

Another resident noticed that her third-grade ELLs often stumble over words with multiple meanings (e.g., *table* has several definitions). She is doing some short-term studies on teaching multiple-meaning words and their impact on reading comprehension and overall vocabulary development. She is using a variety of strategies, like graphic organizers, vocabulary notebooks, and games, to make explicit vocabulary instruction part of her daily routine. So far, she has seen students' awareness rise in recognizing multiple-meaning words, which not only increases their reading comprehension but is

also helping her see the value of metacognition in general. She is also sharing this work with her grade-level team members, and they are, in turn, swapping ideas for integrating vocabulary instruction across the curriculum more intentionally.

Creating a Powerful Force for Equitable Change

The influence of WELLTR in preparing teachers will continue after teachers' participation in the program ends. One resident shares,

> WELLTR brings together a group of people who offer their teaching experiences, personality, and ideas, which, when combined with the wealth of knowledge of our professors, creates a powerful force able to bring change needed for a fair and good education system.

For more on the Center for Collaborative Education, see www.ccebos.org. For questions on the WELLTR program, contact the author at sottow@ccebos.org.



STUDENTS' SENSE-MAKING: A SOURCE OF CREATIVITY IN TEACHING

Beth Warren and Ann S. Rosebery

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As part of a science unit on water conservation, Haitian middle school students were discussing ways in which water is wasted in a typical American home. Earlier in the year, in keeping with their school district's science framework, they had studied the water cycle. During a class discussion, one student, Markenson,* addressed a question to the teacher: "Ms. R, I need to know the difference: when I read in our book [the earth science text] about water, it said it's always the same amount of water as there was long ago. Then what makes this one [the water conservation curriculum] say water is wasted?" Another student, Jean Marc, jumped in to suggest that water is never wasted: "Even if it is used up it comes back again. It passes through some place that cleans it." Mirey then articulated some of the tensions associated with relationships between water resources, water use, water conservation, and water scarcity: "There are some people here [in the United States] who like to waste water. . . . There are other people elsewhere who can't find any. The amount of water on earth is not the amount of water for us to use." Keenon took up Mirey's line of reasoning specifically in relation to the distribution of water resources and water use habits: "People here and people in Haiti, there are places where they can't find water. Is it the places where they are wasting water that they always find more?" As the discussion continued, the students considered possible meanings of, reasons for, and consequences of wasting water, including water scarcity in its relationship to wealth, poverty, and environmental degradation in Haiti and the United States.

This kind of discussion does not take place often in middle school science classrooms, let alone those in which students are learning English. Markenson and his classmates freely expressed their thoughts to one another, elaborated one another's ideas, argued for and against particular framings of water issues, and joked with one another as they constructed arguments.

It was not Ms. R's plan to engage her students in analyzing relationships between different views of water they had encountered in school. However, in the moment, Ms. R, who is also Haitian, recognized that her students were employing a conversational style widely used among Haitian people to engage in highly spirited and focused debate of ideas. The practice is called *bay odyans* (Hudicourt-Barnes 2003). Aware of the deep meaning-making that can develop through *bay odyans*, Ms. R. decided in the moment to shift her curricular plan. She encouraged the discussion, allowing it to flow from student to student without filtering through her. In this way, the students explored varied meanings around an issue of concern to them and their homeland: water use and availability in the United States and Haiti, shaped by economic, political, and environmental forces. By approaching the curriculum as open territory for critical inquiry, Ms. R and her students engaged with water as an ecologically complex phenomenon – a perspective not accounted for by the curriculum.

At the time of this discussion, Ms. R was participating in an educational research project investigating intersections between students' community-based sense-making practices and those of science. The

* All student and teacher names are pseudonyms.

project was a partnership between teachers in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and researchers at the Chèche Konnen Center** at TERC in Cambridge. Co-founded in 1987 by the authors of this Perspectives piece, the Center collaborates with teachers to improve teaching and learning for students whose families speak a first language other than English and, broadly, for students from communities of color.

One of the Center's goals is to specify the varied sense-making practices that students learn out of school in their everyday lives and, through classroom-based research partnerships with teachers like Ms. R, to explore and demonstrate how these practices can be used to deepen learning in academic subjects. *Bay odyans* is one such practice. It is not viewed as an academic practice by either Haitians or non-Haitians. Indeed, Haitians think of it as a public form of entertainment not associated with school. To non-Haitians, the spirited nature of *bay odyans* can be misinterpreted as rude and combative, when in fact it bonds participants through performance, humor, language play, and exploration of ideas. *Bay odyans* is just one of many out-of-school sense-making practices that young people everywhere learn as they participate in the everyday activities of life – practices that have powerful potential for classroom learning and teaching.

Another goal of the Center is to create professional learning communities in which teachers can develop skill in understanding and responding to their students' varied sense-making practices as part of learning and teaching. A first principle of the Center's professional development work is that students are always making sense. This grounding perspective encourages teachers (and researchers) to consider possible meanings based on evidence they gather from listening closely to their students rather than diagnosing or evaluating their students against standard views. It also encourages teachers to experiment with classroom discussions and other instructional activities that invite, make visible, and extend students' ideas, experiences, questions, and perspectives on scientific phenomena.

Teachers who participate in the Center's professional development report that it changes the way they teach. They come to view teaching as ongoing inquiry into their students' learning and their own teaching. As they listen closely and expansively to their students' ideas, they grow in their appreciation of their students' sense-making and create meaningful, engaging opportunities to learn in science. As a result, their students learn important scientific ideas with depth, rigor, and feeling. Recently, the Center's work has expanded to designing and exploring a "studio learning environment" in which perspectives and practices from the arts, humanities, and sciences are being integrated to support youth in cultivating their curiosity, imagination, and engagement with complex scientific phenomena. Findings from the Center's research have been published widely in books and journals.

The Chèche Konnen Center's sense-making orientation is designed to work against longstanding deficit views in education and society of children and communities of color and varied language histories. We believe that teaching deeply and justly in U.S. classrooms entails attuning one's eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to students' sense-making as a source of creativity in teaching and learning. As we saw with Ms. R, when teachers are attuned to their students' sense-making repertoires, they can then draw on them to open up powerful opportunities for students to shape identities as engaged and critical scientific thinkers.

** Chèche Konnen means "search for knowledge" in Haitian Creole.

For more information on the Chèche Konnen Center at TERC, see http://chechekonnen.terc.edu. For more asset-based perspectives on teaching Science to ELLs, see Teaching Science for English Language Learners: Building on Students' Strengths*, edited by the authors of this Perspective piece, National Science Teachers Association Press, Arlington, VA (2008).*

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Early Literacy, Family Engagement, and Cultural Competence: District Priorities in Clark County, Nevada

Lucy Keaton

Engaged families and community members, along with culturally competent and data-savvy teachers and principals, are key goals in a district with a burgeoning English language learner population.

The guest editor of this issue of *VUE*, Rosann Tung, interviewed Lucy Keaton, appointed in February 2013 as the first assistant superintendent for the English Language Learner program at the Clark County (Nevada) School District (CCSD), which includes Las Vegas and contains more than half of Nevada's public schools. Previously, Keaton was principal of Hewetson Elementary School, cited by CCSD as a model elementary school for other schools to emulate.[1] The purpose of the interview is to share CCSD's approach to raising teachers' cultural competency, engaging families, and promoting early literacy in elementary schools.

1 See www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/feb/12/school-district-names-new-assistant-superintendent/#axzz2X81MwNBX.

Lucy Keaton is assistant superintendent for the English Language Learner program at the Clark County (Nevada) School District.

HEWETSON ELEMENTARY: A SUCCESSFUL MODEL

Q Can you tell me about the success of the English language learners in Hewetson Elementary School when you were principal?

A My school had a total enrollment of 950 plus students. It was a K–5 school, and we were about 87 percent Hispanic. Of the 87 percent Hispanic population, approximately 70 to 75 percent of those were ELL. The majority of our students came to us with very few literacy skills. They had to learn English.

All the teachers on campus required a lot of training on how to deliver instruction that was meaningful and comprehensible for each individual student. I spent a lot of time training my teachers in literacy. I had a lot of parent involvement, because I knew that was another key piece for school improvement. I also did a lot of training with cultural competence and worked at eliminating existing biases relating to second language learners. I wanted to make sure that we knew exactly where the students were and what they needed, so we were very data driven on a weekly to monthly basis.

As a staff, we needed to learn how to analyze and interpret data. We started by looking at the current information and identifying effective interventions to meet the needs of every child. Another critical component was ensuring that every child's progress was consistently monitored to confirm effective instruction. All of those pieces were very, very important to turn our school around from below 10 percent proficiency in reading up to 80 percent proficiency in reading. In math we also demonstrated significant gains, increasing from 50 percent proficiency to 90 percent proficiency in third, fourth, and fifth grades.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS) IN NEVADA AND CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (CCSD)

- Nevada is the state with the highest percentage (31 percent) of children whose first language is not English.
- From 1998 to 2008, the number of ELLs in Nevada increased by over 200 percent, nearly four times the national average.
- Nevada is one of only eight states that do not fund ELL education.
- Immigrant families of Nevada's children are 73 percent from Latin America, 21 percent from Asia, 4 percent from Europe, and 2 percent from Africa.
- Of Nevada's 626 public schools in 2010-2011, 341 are in CCSD; in 2011, CCSD served 71 percent of Nevada's ELLs.
- More than 30 percent of CCSD students are identified as ELLs.
- In February 2013, CCSD identified 94,771 ELL students, with 53,073 actively enrolled in services.
- Eighty percent of CCSD's ELL students are from the United States.
- In 2011, only 42 percent of CCSD's third-grade ELLs and only 10 percent of eighth-grade ELLs met the standard in reading.

Source: S. D. Horsford, C. Mokhtar, and C. Sampson, *Nevada's English Language Learner Population: A Review of Enrollment, Outcomes, and Opportunities*, Las Vegas, NV: Lincy Institute, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (2013). Available at www.unlv.edu/news-story/research-report-nevadas-english-language-learner-population-review-enrollment-outcomes-an.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR ELLS IN CLARK COUNTY

Q In your current role as assistant superintendent of the English Language Learner (ELL) program, you've been going through a strategic planning process for the district. What are your top priorities?

A My first priority, obviously – if you look at our numbers and you look at the way that our ELLs are achieving throughout the district – is to start from the very beginning, with early literacy, just like we did at Hewetson. At this point I am thrilled that at both the state and district level, they, too, support the importance of early literacy and have allocated additional funds for Pre-K and full day kindergarten programs at schools with high ELL populations.

I would also love to have summer language camps that prepare students and families for the new school experience. The idea is that students identified as entering critical transition grades such as kindergarten, sixth, and ninth grades, would be required to participate in a two- to three-week session that could proactively address possible difficulties faced during these transitional years. The program would focus on equipping ELL students and their families with the tools and expectations they need to increase student achievement. The camps would help families get better acquainted with our school system by establishing a mandatory home-school connection that would promote less frustration and anxiety, often experienced by students, parents, and even teachers over the course of their schooling.

Another priority for the department is to strengthen core reading and math instruction in schools. Our focus will be to teach teachers how to integrate strategies that will help students simultaneously develop language and learn content subject matter. Our department will provide highly qualified ELL instructional coaches who will assist schools' capacity to increase academic achievement.

Instruction: Literacy and Alignment

As I said earlier, our key to success at Hewetson was concentrating on literacy. First, we provided training to ensure delivery of intense core instruction. Next, we created a wide reading program that encouraged students to read, read, and read. Each child read, probably, an average of a hundred books a year. We provided students with books of different genres from fiction to nonfiction, from your typical easy reader to chapter books, to increase fluency. Some of our fifth-graders were leaving our campus reading at ninth- or tenth-grade level, at least. We identified a measuring tool that was an essential monitoring piece. Eventually, our math scores also improved as a direct result of the gains in reading.

I was able to lead the teachers into creating a professional learning community (PLC), making sure that it was all about children. All of our decisions were made based on the premise that if it was good for kids and everybody agreed on it, we would all do it consistently. Ultimately, through the work of the PLCs, all grade levels were all in alignment and instruction and interventions were consistent. Anything that we did was always from first to fifth grade. We were making the right decisions for all children.

Family Engagement

Q You mentioned parent involvement as being key. Can you say more about how you engaged families in the school community?

A At the beginning we had to work hard to make the parents feel welcomed and reassure them that it was a safe environment. We communicated the message that we were there to

educate all the children, and we needed them to be part of that process. We hosted several special events to try to draw the parents into the building. We held literacy night, math night, and science fairs, where we encouraged and taught our parents strategies to use at home.

Having a better rapport made it easier for the parents to see the urgency of the academics. The parents would make sure that the homework was completed and that nightly reading was accomplished.

Cultural Competence

Q What surprised you in your transition from school principal to the central office?

A What was surprising to me is how vocal the stakeholders were regarding the urgency and the need for our ELL students to achieve. The political part of it has been a learning experience for me. Also, the training that urgently needs to happen with cultural competence. I feel it's of utmost importance that we start changing that sensitivity toward the ELL students and that these students have immense potential.

Q So there is cultural competence training in your strategic plan?

A Yes. That would probably be our first priority. Naturally, we need to start working on the early literacy and the parent involvement, but it's so hard to prioritize, because they're all so important to start the trajectory of success.

When I started at that school, I had many, many teachers I had to talk to about, "These are your children." A lot of the attitudes were, "Well, they can't learn. The parents don't care. They never come to school. They've got so many problems." One of the things I emphasized was that we were going to start changing teachers' mindset and all students would be held to the same high standard and expectation.

Q What kind of cultural competence do principals need?

A Principals need to understand the distinct needs of English language learners. The site administrator sets the tone and the culture in the building, therefore a positive attitude starts with the principal.

SCHOOLS CAN'T DO IT ALONE

Q There's an increasing recognition that districts and schools can't do everything alone – who are your major current and future partners?

A There are quite a few community members who are saying, "Lucy, we want to support you in any way that we can." One of the things that would be most helpful is for outside community people to really advocate for parents and families to get involved with their child's education. Within the district, we have taken the stance of shared responsibility in the education of our ELLs. Our department has formed many partnerships and has started to collaborate with key stakeholders in an effort to increase student achievement.

We try to communicate throughout our community the importance of being in touch with what's going on with your child at any level. Where might they be struggling? Learning about possible tutoring available before and after school or during the summer or something on a Saturday – it depends on what the schools are offering. It's really about giving parents information, because once we can get a lot of parent involvement, I think it just gives the principal that much more support and ability to communicate what the expectations are on their campuses.



IN-SERVICE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NASHVILLE

Nicole Chaput Guizani

Nicole Chaput Guizani is executive director of the Office of English Learners, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, Tennessee.

I met Kue Paw* in November of 2007 when her family was being resettled by Catholic Charities in Nashville, Tennessee, from a refugee camp in Thailand. I was working in the Office of English Learners of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) as an English language development specialist, after five years of teaching in Massachusetts. Educating English language learners (ELLs) was not new to me, but Kue Paw and her family were some of the first refugees I had ever met. Her case manager brought her and her family to our district's centralized assessment intake center for non-English speakers, and Kue Paw and her four younger siblings entered our new International Newcomer Academy. When she entered one of the district's zoned high schools the following year, we kept in touch.

In May 2011, she needed to pass two more online courses to graduate. She asked for my help, and we spent afternoons together working on Algebra II, among other things. She was very smart, and a quick learner – but after four years, she still only scored at the beginner level on the state English proficiency assessment. Although she made great progress, I felt four years was not enough time for her to learn English and academic content at the high school level. However, with additional tutoring and a string of good teachers, she was able to pass and graduate. She went on to a state university to study nursing. Kue Paw is an amazing person who has faced many challenges and hard times, and who calls my sixteen-month-old daughter her "sister."

What about the others – the 12,093 students currently classified as Limited English Proficient in our district, who are expected to meet grade-level content standards while learning English? Do the teachers in our 143 schools know how to best meet the needs of ELLs in their classrooms? How can we improve? What do our graduates who are English language learners look like? Are we preparing them for college and career?

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) is home to approximately 80,000 students. Twenty-four percent of our students speak a first language other than English. They speak 131 languages and come from 146 countries. On average, the number of new students who speak a language other than English entering the district has increased about 5 percent each year over the past five years. Nashville has been an active resettlement site since 1975. Our oldest immigrant communities include those who arrived in the mid-1970s speaking Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian. Our newest arriving communities in the 2000s include Somali, Burmese, and Bhutanese refugees. During the years in between, Nashville has welcomed others, like Kurdish, Spanish, and Arabic speakers.

MNPS has ELLs who were born here to families who have been in Nashville for years, live a pretty average life, and begin school with us in kindergarten. We also have ELLs who enter our district as high school students, have no native language literacy, have had no prior schooling, and have experienced atrocities that most of us only see on the nightly news. We know many ELLs and their families face linguistic, cultural, and financial struggles that we must consider in our classrooms. The instruction for each English learner is unique and must be well-crafted. To serve Nashville's ELLs well, we have an ongoing need to increase the number and effectiveness of ESL staff.

* Kue Paw is a pseudonym.

In 2009, Dr. Jesse Register joined MNPS as the director of schools and initiated a reform effort known as MNPS Achieves to raise student achievement across all subgroups of students, including ELLs. In mid-2010, when I became executive director of the Office of English Learners in MNPS, I jumped into action, leading the MNPS Achieves Transformational Leadership Group for the Achievement of English Learners. One of the first initiatives that this group of district employees, community members, and parents established was ESL Endorsement Partnerships.

These partnerships, funded through the U.S. Department of Education competitive grants, have been essential in meeting the need for building instructional capacity. As teachers of ELLs know, ELLs' academic achievement is dependent on the strength of the teacher's cultural responsiveness and ability to differentiate instruction based on factors like language proficiency level, background, and learning style. To best serve our students, we must know about native language literacy, education history, life experiences, and English skills. Once we have that information, teachers of ELLs must use their knowledge of second language acquisition theory, linguistics, curriculum design, best instructional practices for ELLs, social emotional learning, culture and community – not to mention ESL standards and grade-level content standards – to facilitate instruction that best meets the needs of the students in their classrooms.

We looked to our local universities for collaboration, and we found three dynamic partners:

- *Belmont University*. We collaborated on a program of professional development for middle and high school content-area teachers. Our goal was for current MNPS middle and high school teachers to become more effective in teaching English learners within their content area; the professional development consists of language and culture; Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (see http://www.cal.org/siop); structure of the English language; literacy across the secondary curriculum; and English language learners. In 2011-2012, forty-five teachers participated and in 2012-2013, seventy-five.
- *Lipscomb University*. We collaborated to create an ESL endorsement program of study in which participating current MNPS elementary classroom teachers earn twelve graduate credits. Courses are: culture, communication, and community in the ELL classroom; theory and practice in second language acquisition; grammar for ELL teachers; and curriculum design and instruction in the ELL classroom. In 2011-2012, 125 teachers participated and in 2012-2013, 70. In 2013-2014, 140 teachers are projected to start the program.
- *Vanderbilt University*. The first goal of this partnership was to create more effective ELL teachers at the elementary level. Participating teachers earn fifteen graduate credits and an ESL endorsement. Courses are: foundations for ELL education; educational linguistics/second language acquisition; methods and materials for ELL education; assessment of ELL students; community immersion project; and classroom mentoring. In 2012-2013, ten teachers participated, and in 2013-2014, eighteen teachers are projected to start the program. Vanderbilt leaders will also collaborate with us during the partnership to put together a sustainable plan of professional development for use after our five-year grant term.

We have completed two years of our Belmont and Lipscomb programs and one year of our Vanderbilt program. Our first cohorts of teachers (2011-2012 school year) have just completed their first year of teaching with their new knowledge; we have not yet received English proficiency or achievement test results for the 2012-2013 school year. But the shift in the district and Nashville community is apparent. Teachers in our district are eager to participate in the program, because they want to be better teachers to ELLs in their classrooms; they also realize that the ELL population in the United States is growing and that adding this endorsement will make them more marketable in the field. Pre-service teachers in and around Nashville are also recognizing this need and want to be prepared to teach the

students sitting before them when they enter their first classrooms. They are asking their deans of education for ESL Endorsement opportunities in their undergraduate programs of study. Institutes of higher education have responded to this request and have rewritten their elementary education undergraduate degree programs to include ESL courses leading to an ESL endorsement. School administrators and district recruiters are actively seeking teachers from around the United States who are dually endorsed and already have experience and the know-how to teach ELLs.

Our school district serves one-third of the ELLs in our state. We must lead in best practices and solutions for the education of our multilingual students and continue to work together with community organizations for more support for our immigrant and refugee families. Nashville is changing to welcome and better serve our growing immigrant population. By continuing partnerships with key organizations in our city, MNPS hopes to reach many more students like Kue Paw so that all English learners have the opportunity to receive excellent language instruction and rigorous, high-quality content.



Supporting Families and Developing Parent Advocates and Leaders among the Immigrant Chinese Community in Boston

Elaine Ng

A community organization provides integrated services to immigrant families, grounded in their culture and language, to help parents build on their strengths and support the family's education, health, and social needs.

Nationally, many resources are spent on programs to ameliorate poor educational and economic outcomes for our children and families, in particular for urban and immigrant families. Programs like the federally funded Head Start, Community Development Block Grants, and thousands of nonprofits across the nation provide out-of-school-time academic and non-cognitive skill development programs for children. However, most programs focus on individual children, without considering the context in which children live – the family and their communities.

The long-held tendency of social service programs to work with individuals rather than families has created uncoordinated and siloed prevention, intervention, and treatment programs and has failed to move families out of poverty and improve educational outcomes for children. To counter this siloed approach, organizations like the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) are, increasingly, providing services for whole families within the context of their communities.

Elaine Ng is executive director of the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN BOSTON

The fragmented approach to social service delivery is especially detrimental for the most vulnerable urban neighborhoods – those with high poverty, communities of color, and immigrant residents. In greater Boston, the Asian American community fits all three categories. As the fastest-growing population group in Massachusetts with a 46.9 percent growth from 2000 to 2010, the Asian population is 5.3 percent of the overall state population, with growth driven by immigration rather than birth (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). And although a small percentage immigrate to the United States as high-skilled workers, many Asians immigrate through family reunification and arrive with little to no English – a factor critical for newcomers to achieve economic stability in the United States. In 2009, 31 percent of Asian Americans in the greater Boston area lived in poverty – a rate that is not significantly different from the 1990 Census – compared with 19 percent for all Boston residents and 9.5 percent for White residents (Boston Foundation 2011).

This high poverty rate is masked by the bimodality of the Asian American population's demographics. At one end of the spectrum are the majority: the high-need, low-skilled, low-income, and poorly educated immigrants who come for economic opportunities and family reunification. At the other end are the minority: highly educated, high-skilled, and moderate- to high-income immigrants who come for academic and economic opportunities. This bimodal construction fuels the Asian "model minority" myth while concealing the poverty and risk for a large number of Asian immigrants.

Furthermore, more than 68 percent of Asian Americans in Massachusetts are immigrants, with eight out of ten speaking a language other than English at home. Older immigrants report a higher rate of speaking English not well or not at all (Institute for Asian American Studies 2012). This limited English fluency not only has implications for supporting children's English acquisition but also impacts access to educational, social service, and health supports, unless they are provided in the parents' native language (Hernandez, Marotz & Takanishi 2009).

THE BOSTON CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM

The Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) addressed these issues through designing a family-centered approach grounded in culturally and linguistically competent social services. BCNC began experimenting with program models from the mid 1990s to the 2000s through a series of federal demonstration grants and is now integrating this strengths-based approach as the backbone of the organization's theory of change. As a community-based social service organization that provides intergrated, multigenerational programs, BCNC's mission is to ensure that the community's children, youth, and families have the resources and support needed to achieve greater economic success and social and physical well-being.

Out of this history grew BCNC's Family Services program. Evolving from BCNC's work in developing parenting components for its children and youth programs, the Family Services program is designed to provide comprehensive, holistic support for parents in the community as well as parents of children in BCNC's early education, out-of-school time, and youth programs. BCNC's coordinated parenting support, integrated with programming that supports children and family outcomes, ranges from special education support and case

POPULATION SERVED BY BCNC

BCNC has served the community for forty-four years. Its core constituency is Asian immigrants, primarily ethnic Chinese with high needs, low income, and limited English proficiency. BCNC serves more than 2,000 people a year from age four months to seniors, the majority on a weekly, if not daily, basis. Of those, 33 percent are engaged in multiple BCNC programs or services, and 23 percent have one or more family members also attending BCNC programs. For children and youth, the average length of engagement in BCNC programs is six years, with a small minority attending over ten years. For adults, some are engaged daily over three years while learning English, with some in family services engaged over eight or more years. Demographics of BCNC participants are as follows:

- 77 percent do not speak English as a primary language at home
- 52 percent have been in the United States for less than five years
- 45 percent are children under the age of nineteen
- 73 percent of all children and youth receive free or reduced-price school lunch

management, counseling to parenting workshops, nutrition and cooking, and leadership development. (See sidebar for demographics of the population served by BCNC.)

AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Grounded in family systems theory, BCNC's Family Services program model is based on the tenet that families comprise a system or unit with individual components that both interact with one another and are interdependent on each other to function as a whole. With this interdependence in mind, programming is developed to support parents (95 percent of whom do not speak English) in identifying their own needs, bolstering their ability to draw on their strengths to parent in a new cultural context, and developing the skills to help their family progress.

The parents bring a number of strengths based on their experience, knowledge, and beliefs. Eastern and Western parenting practices are very different. Therefore, our program draws on cultural norms and expectations and uses these as a starting point to teach new bicultural norms – in order to introduce new skills, but also to reduce parenting (and child) relationship stress. Some of the strengths we build on and the differences we explore are:

- *Expressions of love*. Asian parents tend to express affection through fulfilling children's basic needs, like providing food, shelter, and clothing. We build on parents' desire to demonstrate affection by introducing the ways that different expressions of love, including verbal and physical expression, can nurture family relationships.
- *Discipline*. Asian parents expect children to have self-discipline, and they believe that a child's good behavior is a reflection on the family and the quality of parenting. We build on parents' desire to have well-behaved children by teaching the fundamentals of child development and behavior modification strategies that reinforce positive parent-child interactions.

- *Concept of self*. Asian parents value family, group, and community systems and value family priorities above individual priorities. We build on the desire to impart strong family values and explore the different "concepts of self" with parents in order to increase understanding of individual differences and build understanding within the family.

Staff work with each parent to understand what his or her personal strengths and values are – it could be as simple as a desire to provide opportunity for his or her children. Through coaching and training, staff help the parents understand how they can accomplish this by integrating new skills into their toolkit, including listening to their children and understanding their struggles in a new culture. Part of the strengths-based approach is that we believe parents know their children best and that most parents want to provide the best opportunities for their children. Therefore, parents set their own goals in the program, and staff support the parents in gaining the skills, knowledge, or confidence they need to attain their goals.

We also utilize the Parenting Journey curriculum,[1] which helps parents understand how they were parented as a tool to help them think concretely about the impacts on their own parenting style and values. Our immigrant parents (or even our second-generation parents) grew up with very different parenting styles than the Western ones that are dominant in our culture. They have challenges with disciplining their children because American culture is more "permissive."

1 Parenting Journey, offered in partnership with the Parenting Institute of the Family Center, Somerville, Massachusetts, is a strengths-based, twelve-week curriculum. For more information, see www.thefamilycenterinc.org/TheParentingJourneyTrainingInstitute/OurTrainingContent.html.

We build on the positives of the cultural norms that parents bring and help parents understand when those norms might have negative impacts.

This asset-based approach is grounded in the developing field of parent education and parent training programs that positively impact child behavioral and conduct outcomes (Ho et al. 2012). But there is a lack of research on programs developed for ethnic immigrant communities and the impact of culture on parenting expectations. In particular, the Chinese immigrant community has not been adequately represented in parent training research (Lau 2011), with the exception of programs based in Hong Kong – but these programs, though culturally competent, cannot address the issues related to immigration. The stress of immigration, and working in and learning new societal norms while parenting in a new cultural environment, is a challenge for the increasingly large numbers of immigrants to the United States. These immigrant communities are in need of programs that support the assets they bring to parenting in this new environment while also teaching new skills.

Supporting Parenting Goals

BCNC's Family Services program was developed to fill these gaps. Designed and managed by bicultural staff trained as counselors and therapists, the program addresses parenting concerns and family issues within the context of supporting children's outcomes. A common concern is that immigrant parents do not understand why their children are not listening to them or behaving well. Typically, the older the child gets, the more challenging the bicultural disconnect can become. Staff understand the issues at play: parents are used to the traditional, hierarchical, group/family-dominated relationship where children are expected to follow

> Our approach is to identify the family members; work with parents to identify their strengths; get all family members enrolled in appropriate programming; and work with the parents to achieve their goals as individuals and as a unit.

the wishes of the parents and to not challenge or question authority. On the other hand, the children grow up in American society and are exposed to individualism, expected to have self-direction, and encouraged to be creative and self-expressive. Generally, children adopt American values, and parents want their children to keep Chinese or Asian values.

Understanding this dynamic, BCNC's children and youth programs are designed to support home culture while exploring American culture and ultimately integrating both. The Family Services program does the same for their parents. Family outcomes are achieved by meeting the individual needs in a coordinated fashion.

For example, an eight-year-old boy is in our afterschool program, his thirteen-year-old sister is in our youth program, and their mother is in parenting workshops in our Family Services program. The family has been in the United States for four years. The daughter stopped eating lunch because she was embarrassed by the Chinese lunches that her mother packed. The son was overweight and his pediatrician wanted him to lose weight. Both children were unhappy at mealtimes, and it was causing stress in the family, because their mother believed in the cultural norm that well-fed children are well-loved children. So she bought fast food to make her children happy.

Our Family Services staff became aware of the issues (either through parent, BCNC afterschool and youth program staff, or a referral from the pediatrician) and invited the mother in for an update on her family. We identified the mother's goals for her children: healthy eating habits and a better relationship. The mother enrolled in two other activities that Family Services offers: "Rock Your Body," a program designed for young children who are overweight, where her son can engage in physical, fun games with other children; and "East Meets West" cooking class, designed to teach Asian parents nutrition and how to cook healthy versions of American food focused on plant-rich, whole-grain, low-sugar recipes. The daughter received support from BCNC's youth program and engages in workshops and activities designed to build self-understanding, an understanding of Asian American history, and youth development. The son enjoyed the activities introduced to him in "Rock Your Body" and has begun to slim down. The mother learned about balanced nutrition, how to cook Western recipes that the kids love, and how to modify her expectations of equating food with love.

In this example, the presenting issue was food and nutrition based, but we see everything from domestic violence and mental illness to gambling addiction or special needs like autism spectrum disorders and Down's syndrome. With all cases, our approach is the same: identify the family members, work with parents to identify their strengths (in the example those would be love of her children, desire to have them be well-nourished, and desire to have a good relationship with them); get all family members enrolled in appropriate programming; and work with the parents to achieve their goals as individuals and as a unit.

Developing Parent Leaders and Advocates

Since many of BCNC's programs are grounded in education, the organization has developed close working relationships with the schools serving the majority of Boston's Chinese ELLs, delivering programming in the school during the school day and after school. The relationship blossomed to the Boston Public School (BPS) district, through a partnership with the Office of Community and Family Engagement and BPS's Parent University, which adopted BCNC's Parent Solutions I (PS-1) curriculum introducing immigrant parents to the American education system and Boston Public Schools. Part of a four-part curriculum series, the Parent Solutions curriculum focuses on topics of importance for parents new to American education, such as how to navigate the education system, the special education process, school expectations of parental support, how to support children's learning, and monitoring Internet usage and screen time (see sidebar on this page).

In 2010, because of our deepening work with individual schools and the district, the Family Services program developed a fourth curriculum (PS4) to support parent peer leadership and mentoring, with the goal of developing parent advocates and parent leaders for the community. Since the organization believes in an asset-based approach and has both formal and informal mentoring, the Family Services program incorporates both these elements into their model. Parent advocates are trained in the parent education component of our program, but it is not unusual that these parents have taken part in all three of our program components, because most of the families we see have multiple needs.[2] (For an example of how a participant in other programs became a community leader and advocate, see the sidebar on page 44.)

2 BCNC's Family Services program's three major components are parent education, family- and child-based health and wellness education, and family-based stabilization and short-term case management.

THE PARENT SOLUTIONS WORKSHOP SERIES

This workshop series consists of four curriculums designed to bring parents from basic introduction to Boston Public Schools to parent advocacy and engagement. Our core belief is that educated and knowledgeable parents are their own best advocates, and our curriculums are designed to provide parents with the information and understanding of each issue so that they are knowledgeable and can speak their minds. Each curriculum series spans four to six weeks and targets Chinese-speaking parents (although BCNC has developed an English version of PS1 to use with all parents). Parents may attend some or all four of the series. Our goal is to have parents enter PS1 curriculum and go through all four curriculums, which takes about one year.

PS1: *Introduction to BPS and the American education system*. Goal: knowledge and confidence talking to school administrators and teachers.

PS2: *Understanding Special Education*. Goal: knowledge and confidence working with teachers to best support their child's learning. In many cases, parents in PS2 work with BCNC staff to put an IEP in place. They also learn the skills to monitor the implementation of the IEP.

PS3: *How to Support Children's Learning*. Goal: knowledge and confidence to use technology and other strategies to support child's learning.

PS4: *Parent Advocacy and Engagement*. Goal: knowledge and confidence to affect systemwide policies. They also learn to share their own stories as learning tools for other parents.

MRS. WU BECOMES A COMMUNITY LEADER AND ADVOCATE

Mr. and Mrs. Wu (names have been changed) enrolled their one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Lily in BCNC's bilingual early education program, Acorn. The family had been in the United States for a year, and they also had a six-year-old son, Will. Neither parent spoke English. Mr. Wu worked in a restaurant and was only at home on Mondays, leaving Mrs. Wu as the primary caretaker. Within a couple of weeks, Acorn staff identified Lily's challenge with speech and language, referred her for an assessment, and identified her as hearing impaired. Acorn staff put together early intervention services for Lily, helped Mrs. Wu understand what was happening, and referred her to our Family Services program for additional support.

For the next year, Mrs. Wu was a regular visitor to our Acorn director's office to get help translating letters and learning how to navigate the education/health/special needs system. She was constantly frustrated and angry, or crying and desperate. The Acorn director offered to help her enroll in English classes to communicate with Lily, who would begin to learn American Sign Language. Mrs. Wu disclosed to BCNC staff that she and her husband were illiterate in their native language of Chinese. The Acorn director encouraged Mrs. Wu to enroll in BCNC's newly developed Parent Solutions 1 curriculum, and she became one of BCNC's first parents to attend the training.

In year three, Mrs. Wu enrolled her oldest son Will in BCNC's afterschool program and had a third child, John, who was also diagnosed with hearing impairment. Mrs. Wu continued to attend the Family Services workshops as they were developed and began helping staff identify gaps and areas that could improve. Because of the family's multiple needs, their goals were continually updated to reflect Mrs. Wu's growth and confidence, but staff always accompanied Mrs. Wu to school meetings as interpreter and advocate.

John entered Acorn at one and a half years old. Will, now about eleven years old, studied American Sign Language and began to act as the interpreter between the younger children and the parents. In the Wus' fifth year of engagement with BCNC, Mrs. Wu was a parent volunteer and actively engaged with the Family Services program, recruiting parents and helping facilitate the Parent Solutions workshops. Family Service staff told Mrs. Wu that having Will as the interpreter for his siblings was not healthy and convinced her to enroll in BCNC's adult English as a Second Language program, placing her with a tutor to provide extra support. Will enrolled in BCNC's youth program. Eventually, Mrs. Wu began learning some American Sign Language, and both Lily and John received hearing implants.

Now, thirteen years later, Mrs. Wu has intermediate-level written and oral English skills, knows American Sign Language, and is still an active parent leader and volunteer. She has joined her children's parent council, served a term on the Boston Public Schools Special Needs Parent Advisory Council (SPEDPAC), advocates for her children within their school, and continues to recruit for BCNC's Family Services program and help train parents in the community. She also has started advocating for other non-English-speaking parents in the community and is a vocal supporter of the rights of language-minority special-needs families. Her children are doing well. Will graduated high school, completed BCNC's youth College Access Program, received a $1,500 stipend for college, and just completed his first year of community college. Lily and John attend a public school for the hearing impaired, and both children are active learners and meeting their academic goals; Lily is entering ninth grade and John is entering sixth grade.

Over the years, Mrs. Wu's goals have changed from learning about special needs to organizing special-needs parents to have a voice. Personally, she has grown from a parent who regularly came to staff in tears to a strong advocate for her own needs, her children's needs, and the needs of the community. And her family has grown from one with a lot of anxiety and yelling to one in which the children are supported and heard.

The development of the advocacy and leadership curriculum was timely. With the overwhelming majority of BCNC's Family Service parents relying on BPS to provide a quality education for their children, parents were eager to find a forum to use their skills and express their needs, hopes, and wishes. Though small in number, these parent leaders develop their skill as peer advocates and work as volunteer peer mentors to support the forty parents who regularly participate in ongoing programming. With six parents trained as advocates, BCNC joined the Boston United for Students coalition, and parents engaged with the City in the latest Boston Teachers Union contract negotiations – providing an immigrant parent perspective to the process.

BCNC also partnered with the BPS Office of Community Engagement & Circle of Promise to ensure the community's parents had representation and voice in the City's External Advisory Committee (EAC) process. The mayor charged the EAC to develop a new school assignment process, but parents (including ours) also wanted to develop quality in our children's schools. Through this process, staff and the trained parent leaders organized and recruited over 130 Chinatown parents to participate in a series of meetings with BPS officials about the school assignment process, as well as access and quality issues in general. The overwhelming majority of these parents do not speak English, and seldom have the opportunity to speak with district level representatives about their concerns. With BCNC staff and parent leaders facilitating small and large group discussions in their native language, parents advocated with the district for their own children as well as for the community.

Though district representatives may have been at first unfamiliar and a bit uncomfortable with conducting reverse translation meetings (meetings were held in Chinese dialects and reverse translated into English via live translation), parent confidence was visibly bolstered by the ability to speak in their native language. The results were heartening and motivating. Once an under-represented group in making district-level impact, Chinese-speaking ELL parents became one of the largest and most vocal parent groups in the EAC process. For the parents and parent leaders, exercising their right to voice their opinion and question process is an invaluable and empowering step in becoming an active and engaged participant in American society.

The key concerns the parents raised were:

- The district must focus less on the transportation issue and more on the school quality issue. Parents want good schools, no matter where they are.
- Parents want a safe neighborhood for the school, and they want accessibility. Not all parents drive.
- Parents want someone at the school who speaks their language, so they can communicate with staff. They also want information sent home in their native language.

The EAC process was not designed to address parent concerns, but the parents succeeded in getting the district to hear their voices. In addition to completing the EAC's original goal of developing a student assignment plan, the district also created a School Quality Working Group to take up the parents' charge to look at school quality as well as student assignment.

LOOKING AHEAD: REPLICATING THE MODEL FOR OTHER IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

BPS is serving an increasing number of ELL students as Boston's demographics continue to change. And though BCNC's Family Services program is primarily serving Chinese-speaking Asian immigrants, we have hopes to partner with other immigrant communities to replicate the model and create opportunities in all immigrant communities so that parents can actively foster and voice their own needs and advocate for their families, as well as the communities they live in.

For more information about the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, see http://bcnc.net.

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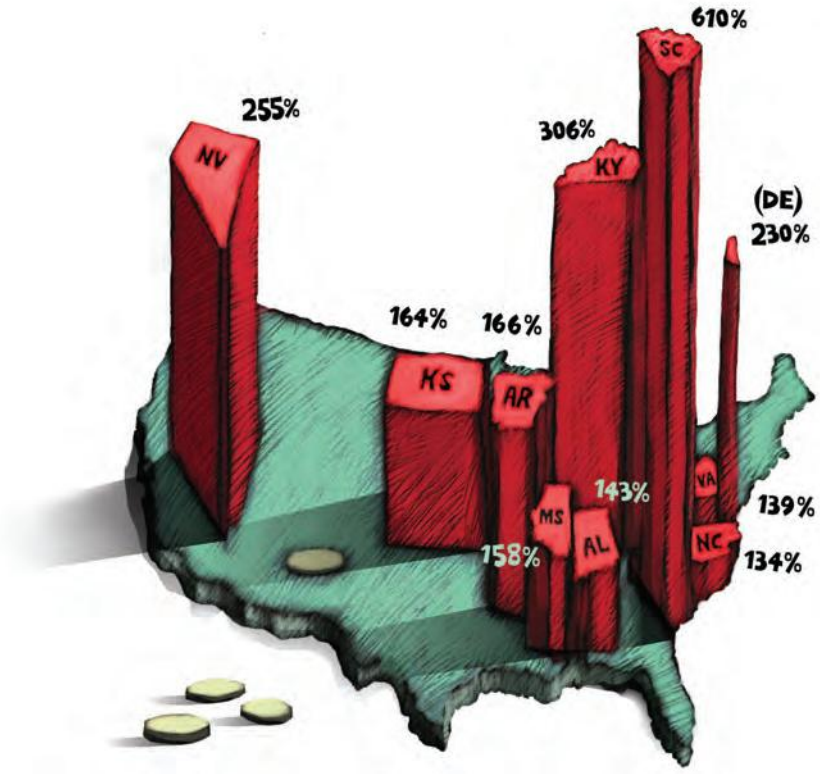
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High-ELL-Growth States: Expanding Funding Equity and Opportunity for English Language Learners

Sonya Douglass Horsford and Carrie Sampson

The growing numbers of English language learners across the country provide an opportunity for state policymakers and education leaders to invest in and reap the benefits of a well-educated, culturally competent workforce.

An essential component of the "American dream," the U.S. public education system carries the considerable responsibility of preparing a richly diverse student population for academic proficiency, economic mobility, and life success. Given the dynamic and evolving nature of the nation's racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, it should not be surprising that many American schoolchildren speak a language other than English at home. Nearly one in every ten public school students (roughly 4.5 million of 50 million total students) were classified as English language learners (ELLs) during the 2010-2011 school year (USDOE 2013a.)

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While states such as California, Texas, Florida, and New York benefit from the experience of serving large numbers of ELL students, a growing number of states are only more recently considering and learning what it means to serve this unique population of students adequately and equitably. For many states, this learning has occurred in the face of judicial battles. In fact, every state except five[1] has had at least one finance equity lawsuit filed against it (National Access Network 2010). Confronted with explosive increases in ELL enrollment and diminishing state budgets, the funding of ELL education at the state level presents a serious education policy challenge that requires immediate action, given its implications for educational equity and opportunity. For example, Nevada's growing yet underfunded ELL population has attracted the attention of both the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, which are considering suing the state for its violation of equal educational opportunities for marginalized students, including the lack of financial resources available specifically for ELL students (Doughman 2013). Although each state is different, insufficient human capital and funding capacity at the state level, coupled with the lack of a clear vision for ELL education nationally, creates huge challenges for schools and districts seeking to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for their ELL students.

In this article, we review state-level ELL funding for the ten states experiencing the highest ELL population growth between 2000-2001 and 2010-2011. These high-ELL-growth states are South Carolina, Kentucky, Nevada, Delaware, Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, and North Carolina. While the U.S. ELL population has grown 18 percent from 2000-2001 to 2011-2012, which is a significant increase, these states have experienced ELL growth ranging from 135 percent in North Carolina to an astonishing 610 percent in South Carolina. These dramatic figures underscore not only the massive extent of this demographic reality but also the great opportunity such cultural and linguistic diversity represents for states eager to invest in and reap the benefits of a well-educated, culturally competent workforce.

MONEY MATTERS, BUT HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH, AND WHERE SHOULD IT GO?

In many ways, our recent work in Nevada serves as a useful starting point for examining both the complexity and the opportunity associated with funding ELL education at the state level. As co-authors of the report *Nevada's English Language Learners: A Review of Enrollment, Outcomes, and Opportunities*, we were struck by the dramatic variation in how states calculate, define, fund, and otherwise support ELL education (Horsford, Mokhtar & Sampson 2013). To some degree, these differences are understandable, given the great diversity within ELL populations in and across states. At the same time, such variation makes it extremely difficult to establish a clear sense of what works and, in the case of ELL funding, how much money is enough. The evidence is limited.

Since 1990, there have been only four costing-out studies conducted in the United States that focused exclusively on ELLs (see Arizona Department of Education 2001; Gándara & Rumberger 2008; New York Immigration Coalition 2008; National Conference of State Legislatures 2005). And because each state's needs, educational infrastructure, and funding mechanisms are so drasti-

1 Delaware, Hawaii, Mississippi, Utah, and Nevada.

cally different, determining how and where ELL funds should be allocated is difficult. Although most studies have concluded that ELL-specific services remain woefully underfunded, the amount of dollars to be allocated and where they should be spent remains less clear. Yet this information is precisely what policymakers want to have in order to decide whether or not money used to fund ELL education will result in a return on state investment.

This underfunding was certainly the case in Nevada. Policymakers have finally acknowledged the need to fund ELL education at the state level in Nevada, a Mountain West state outpacing the rest of the nation in population growth, immigration, and increasing ethnic and linguistic diversity. Although the level of funding is still being debated, what has been shown is the pivotal role states can play in expanding equity and opportunity for what will continue to be a growing share of American public school students. Although our research to date has been exploratory and it is much too early to infer any direct relationships between state-level ELL policy and funding and student-level outcomes, efforts to compare Nevada with other high-ELL-growth states have further revealed the disparate nature and fragmentation of ELL policy and funding at the state level.

ELL ENROLLMENT AND FUNDING IN HIGH-ELL-GROWTH STATES

When it comes to funding ELL education, states that elect to fund ELL-specific services do so in different ways and at varying levels, including block grants, additional per-pupil dollars, weighted formulas, or unit or general "lump sums" (Horsford, Mokhtar & Sampson 2013). To illustrate this point, Figure 1 describes ELL enrollment, growth, funding, and allocation in the top ten fastest-growing ELL states (respectively): South Carolina, Kentucky, Nevada, Delaware, Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Although these ten states vary widely in their ELL enrollment, they have experienced extreme growth in their ELL populations in just one decade. Collectively, they reflect the great variation in how states approach ELL education.

Dollars spent per ELL student beyond a state's regular per-pupil funding expenditure level varied greatly based on both funding mechanism and level. In order to provide some comparison of how states funded educational opportunities for their ELL students, we collected per-ELL-pupil funding figures as reported directly by states, as well as calculated figures for nonreporting states by identifying that state's total budget for ELL-related services and resources and dividing that figure by the state's ELL enrollment count for the corresponding year as reported by NCES. Some states base their budgets on specialized formulas, which we used to arrive at an estimated average per-ELL-pupil figure (see Figure 1, sixth column). Although these figures reflect publicly available budgets and data for ELL students, it is difficult to compare state ELL funding levels due to the variations in how states collect and report ELL data (with figures that are also different from what are reported in national databases), and due to variation in approaches used to fund ELL education. This exercise in coming up with comparable ELL spending figures reiterates the need for more transparency and equity in funding ELL education.

Figure 1. ELL Enrollment, Growth, and Funding in the Top 10 Fastest Growing ELL States from 2000 to 2010.

STATE	ELL ENROLLMENT 2000–2001	ELL ENROLLMENT 2010-2011	% CHANGE IN ELLS FROM 2000-2001 TO 2010-2011	TOTAL STATE ELL-SPECIFIED FUNDING IN 2010-2011 (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)	DOLLARS SPENT PER ELL STUDENT BEYOND REGULAR PER-PUPIL FUNDING 2010-2011	STATE FUNDING MECHANISM/ ALLOCATION
U.S. TOTAL	3,707,689	4,371,553	18%			N/A
SOUTH CAROLINA	5,121	36,379	610%			No state funding.
KENTUCKY	4,030	16,351	306%	$5,900,000	$375	The state total and per-ELL-pupil dollar amounts are based on the 2011-2012 school year ELL count of 15,720 students used to allocate a specific state grant for ELL services.
NEVADA	23,488	83,352	255%			No state funding.
DELAWARE	2,081	6,858	230%	$1,336,143	$195	Funding is based on the number of qualifying students (including ELLs), which are calculated into units used for instructional salaries. Units can also be cashed out for other services. These dollar figures are an overestimate, because students cannot be counted more than once for unit-based funding.
ARKANSAS	11,847	31,537	166%	$9,240,341	$293	Funding is distributed to school districts per identified ELL student. In FY2012 the state changed funding to $305 according to Arkansas General Assembly Act 1039 of 2011; was $293 from FY2008-FY2012.

STATE	ELL ENROLLMENT 2000–2001	ELL ENROLLMENT 2010-2011	% CHANGE IN ELLS FROM 2000-2001 TO 2010-2011	TOTAL STATE ELL-SPECIFIED FUNDING IN 2010-2011 (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)	DOLLARS SPENT PER ELL STUDENT BEYOND REGULAR PER-PUPIL FUNDING 2010-2011	STATE FUNDING MECHANISM/ ALLOCATION
KANSAS	14,878	39,323	164%	$18,435,000	$469	Funding to local school districts is based on ELL instructional hours. These hours are converted into full-time equivalent hours and multiplied by 0.2, which is the ESOL amount determined by the state (changed to 0.395 for 2013-2014).
MISSISSIPPI	2,176	5,620	158%			No state funding.
ALABAMA	7,226	17,559	143%	$2,288,011	$130	State allocations are provided according to the ELL student count in the prior year.
VIRGINIA	36,802	88,033	139%	$38,885,716	$442	Funding is based on a formula of 17 teachers per 1,000 ELL students multiplied by 1 minus a composite index. Supports instructional positions for ELL students to be shared among local schools.
NORTH CAROLINA	44,087	103,249	134%	$76,536,814	$741	Funding through categorical programs used to hire personnel, provide services, or purchase supplies. Funding varies based on the number of ELLs and the concentration of ELLs in local education agencies (LEAs).

Notes: Dollar figures are rounded to the nearest dollar. Ohio was not included due to inconsistent figures. California, North Dakota, and Tennessee did not report ELL numbers to NCES for one or both years.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2012; USDOE 2013, n.d.; Verstegen 2011; Kentucky Department of Education 2012; State of Delaware 2012; Arkansas Department of Education 2013; Kansas State Department of Education 2008; Alabama Legislative Fiscal Office 2012; Virginia Department of Education 2012; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2011.

Of the states highlighted in Figure 1, South Carolina reflects the largest share of ELL population growth between the 2000-2001 and 2010-2011 school years at 610 percent. Ironically, however, like Mississippi and Nevada, South Carolina does not provide any state dollars to fund ELL education. In contrast, North Carolina and Virginia, which have each seen their ELL populations more than triple over the last decade, provide $741 and $401, respectively, per ELL student. And as noted in Figure 1, some states do not fund ELL education at all, relying mainly on federal funding that averaged $180 per ELL pupil in 2010-2011 (USDOE n.d.). Despite being a high-ELL-growth state and having the highest density of ELL students of any state in the country, Nevada counts itself among those states that do not fund ELL education, further illustrating the severe inability of the state to meet the evident needs of nearly one-third of its overall student population.

FUNDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY

Sadly, the fact that states have focused for more than thirty years on standards and accountability absent the resources and investments needed to achieve those standards and to sustain success reflects a major flaw in state-level education policy. The result is a system adept at labeling failure but incapable of doing anything about it. As noted in our comparison of high-ELL-growth states, funding levels, mechanisms, and allocations vary widely, making it difficult to determine who gets what and whether or not funding translates into improved student achievement. Perhaps most important is the fact that a much-needed focus on equity in education policy, and particularly on state funding equity (USDOE 2013b; Baker, Sciarra & Farrie 2012), reflects the pendulum swinging back to what the Elementary and Secondary Education Act originally intended – the provision of increased federal resources for underserved schools and students and an emphasis on access to equal education.

In Gándara and Rumberger's (2007) costing-out study of linguistic minorities in California, the researchers utilized a definition of adequacy that they described as *reclassification and maintenance of academic proficiency*, which moves students from ELL to Fluent English Proficiency status while providing resources until all students receiving support become proficient in other academic content. The schools in their pilot study were included based on high levels of ELL academic achievement, location, and curriculum. The study identified five areas that require investment for ELL success:

- A high-quality preschool program;
- A comprehensive instructional program that addresses both English language development and the core curriculum;
- Sufficient and appropriate student and family support;
- Ongoing professional support for teachers with a significant focus on the teaching of ELL students; and
- A safe, welcoming school climate.

Although these recommendations are not very specific, they do offer insight into how states can approach an ELL costing-out study that defines adequacy in ways that go beyond test score data and how they can target investments in areas that go beyond staffing. Any costing-out analysis must also recognize the diversity among the ELL student population, as their needs vary based on their "linguistic, social, and academic backgrounds and the age at which they enter the U.S. school system" (Gándara & Rumberger 2006, p. 3). Studies to develop funding formulas should include the opinions

of ELL experts, leaders from schools or districts with high-performing ELL populations, highlights of ELL best practices, and ELL-specific indicators of engagement and outcomes (Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper 2012).

CONCLUSION

State policymakers and education leaders should not regard such demographic and educational trends as a challenge or a problem to be solved but rather as an opportunity to modernize their states' approaches to educating our nation's diversifying student population. Funding ELL education is not merely another expense but rather a human capital investment essential to the development of successful citizens and thriving state economies.

At the national level, we agree with the U.S. Commission on Educational Excellence's observation that "In an increasingly global economy, these young people could be our strategic advantage" (USDOE 2013b, p. 13). Seizing this opportunity requires more research on the best ways to educate each and every English language learner – not only for the sake of students who speak another language but also for that of the nation's equity and excellence agenda overall. It is critical that state and federal education policies stay ahead of this trend, and to do so requires close attention and immediate action at the district, state, and federal levels if these students are to receive the equitable, high-quality education they deserve.

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"I SPEAK ENGLISH": DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

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The invention of language has had both beneficial and detrimental effects on our human society. Our ability to communicate with one another to share ideas, thoughts, plans, and dreams has contributed greatly to the development of the human race. But language has also been used to discriminate, oppress, and single out populations whose language does not conform to that of the dominant group – an experience to which many immigrants can attest. In the United States, the priority of learning English has been and continues to be instilled as the most important tool that immigrant populations must acquire. This assumption is considered to be especially true when we consider the population of undocumented students.

But there are dangers in generalizing all undocumented students as English learners and assuming that English is the most important issue for their success. For one, many of them already know English, having grown up in the United States. This generalization also distracts us from the more urgent issues that they are facing, like funding their college expenses, securing employment before, during, and after their college education, and living with uncertainty, since they are under the constant threat of removal from the United States.

The undocumented population is a diverse group, and many undocumented students were brought to the United States at young ages (Pérez 2009, 2012; Pérez & Cortés 2011; Passel & Cohn 2009; Olivas 2012). Many undocumented students have grown up in the United States, and they are, as President Obama said, "Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper" (Preston & Cushman 2012). Though some can be classified as English learners, many entered our public school system in the early grades and acquired English as their primary language. Yet many are incorrectly classified as English learners because of their immigration status.

Undocumented students live with the constant threat of deportation from the only country they have ever known. They face enormous hurdles, paramount of which is financing their college education (Perry 2006). Recently, some undocumented students have been granted work authorization under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, but many still do not qualify for this two-year work permit, resulting in the continued postponement of important contributions this group of students could and want to offer. As the current Comprehensive Immigration Reform senate bill continues to be debated and amended, DREAMers, as many undocumented students are calling themselves,* all across this country wait for that opportunity to be legitimized as full members of a society that they helped and will continue to help create.

DREAMers have made significant civic contributions to our society and challenge the popular media's negative, parasitic portrayal of the undocumented population. Chicano Organizing & Research in Education (CORE) has been one of the few scholarship providers specifically providing funds for college-bound, undocumented students.** To date, CORE has awarded ninety-two scholarships totaling $46,000 across the country. These scholarships have been funded by grassroots fundraising events in which the average donation is approximately $25.

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* The name "DREAMers" comes from the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act, a bill introduced in Congress in 2001 that would grant conditional permanent residency, under certain conditions, to undocumented high school graduates who came to the United States as minors. Some states have adopted versions of this legislation.

** For more information on CORE, see www.ca-core.org.

The students CORE members work with consistently challenge the negative stereotype of undocumented people. Two samples from our 2010 application pool exemplify the resiliency of these students:

> Reflection and time has allowed me to see opportunity and realize that I am here for a reason, I have a lot to contribute to society, and pursuing a college education is my first step.
>
> – Sindy

> I want the chance to use my life and my knowledge to help someone somewhere, and, no matter how small, begin a ripple effect in my field that will bring help to those outside of my reach.
>
> – Chiara

These undocumented students, though deprived of many educational resources like federal student aid and most scholarships, still dream of "giving back" to the society they belong to and consider this country their home. Policy-makers should prioritize some of the issues that undocumented students find most pressing: a path to citizenship; the right to work; and access to college public funds that they and their parents have contributed to via their taxes. By supporting immigrant rights legislation at the national level (e.g., federal DREAM Act) and state level (e.g., state DREAM acts) and by using the power of language to change the anti-immigrant narrative that is so pervasive in the national dialogue, we can begin moving towards an educational environment that is welcoming of all students who live, work, and study alongside us and our children. In doing so, we live up to the highest promise of education that promotes educational opportunities for *all* our students and eliminates systemic, academic barriers that historically have plagued our growth as a nation.

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- 1,787 gallons of wastewater flow were saved.
- 389 pounds of greenhouse gases were prevented from forming.

