

# Making the Right Investments: Strengthening the Education of English Language and Bilingual Learners

Research Symposium Proceedings

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## Introduction: Making the Right Investments

There is an increasingly significant role for research-based and evidence-based decision-making in improving outcomes for children. Through varied efforts, schools and communities are working to employ effective cross-system programs and services that emphasize academic achievement, strengthen school accountability, and increase parental involvement.

Drawing upon cutting-edge research, effective instructional and curricular practices, policies, models, and programs have been identified that reflect research-based theories and principles. There are also effective principles for service – individually-tailored, child- and family-centered, community-based, strength-based, culturally sensitive, holistic, and seamless – that are currently integrated across a variety of education and human service disciplines delivered with very positive results.

Simultaneously, at the program level, there are evidenced-based educational programs and instructional models for English language and bilingual learners (e.g., Sheltered Observation Protocol [SIOP], Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach [CALLA]). These programs and models have been effective in helping schools and community providers produce positive results.

Finally, a number of processes have been linked to creating better services and systems thereby improving student academic performance and achievement for English language and bilingual learners. These include many systemic reform processes (accountability for results, leadership development, skill-building and staff development) and techniques for change (parent and youth involvement in curricula design, parent participation in educational decision-making). But how to integrate these principles, processes and instructional techniques into all existing and new

educational programs and service models is a challenge currently facing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A number of university-based and free-standing research centers, as well as individual researchers, can provide the academic and research expertise to create a common foundation of knowledge and resources to guide Pennsylvania in meeting the educational needs of English language and Bilingual Learners. The presentations in this publication tackle issues about the efficacy and effectiveness of programs, models and actions necessary for Pennsylvania schools and their communities to “make the right investments” and integrate theory and research into practice that will improve student performance and increase student academic achievement.

The presentations were part of a special Research Symposium in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, co-sponsored by Pennsylvania State University - Harrisburg and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in partnership with the Center for Schools and Communities.

This symposium brought together national and state experts to explore how public systems can become more culturally responsive, implement approaches that strengthen and support educational programming for culturally and linguistically diverse students, and identify strategies to secure funding that are essential to student success. Through their presentations the invited researchers

addressed a series of questions

What guidance can be provided to schools and community service providers in drawing from the research literature on best practices and research-based service principles? How might this knowledge-base be used to produce reforms within educational systems that incorporate these practices? How can the effectiveness of such programs and services best be measured?

What gaps currently exist in the research-based program field, (for specific populations or specific types of approaches or for specific outcomes) for which there are not yet research-based models that have shown success and for which new models need to be developed?

What guidance can be provided to schools and community service providers in replicating proven, “evidenced-based” educational programs/instructional models for English language and bilingual learners and what guidance can be given to assure ongoing model fidelity and successful results?

The symposium was conducted in Harrisburg on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, and was timely because of ethnic and cultural changes occurring within the Commonwealth’s population and the state’s leadership, as well as a history of investing in evidenced-based instructional practices and resources.

**KimMarie Cole, Ph.D.** led off the symposium by identifying the pressures and promises found with the main stream classrooms and how classrooms can’t be separated from the school, from the community and from larger society. She further spoke to the important role of high stakes testing and presented a model focusing on a reform effort in a subject matter classroom and what happens as it moves out through the school, to the community and into the societal level.

**Catherine Collier, Ph.D.** offered a perspective on working with diverse learners with special needs and addressed the disproportional denial of services because of student differences, as well as misidentification. She furthered articulated how research has guided Response to Intervention (RTI) models to help students reach their achievement goals.

**Socorro Herrera, Ph.D.** shared how literacy policies and practice for culturally and linguistically diverse students can lead to academic success. She also offered how research and professional development of educators can determine the most appropriate course of action in working with the knowledge and culture of these students, beginning with the student and ending with the curriculum.

A panel of Pennsylvania respondents - **Margaret Chin, Karl Girton, Martha Strickland, Ed.D. and Marian Walters, Ph.D.** - offered their perspectives on the implications for state policy and practice.

The moderator for this research symposium was **Clemmie Gilpin, Ph.D.**

## Chapter 1: Pressures and Promise in the Mainstream Classroom

### KimMarie Cole, Ph.D.

I am here to talk to you a little bit about the pressures and promise in the mainstream classroom; what a close look at talk tells us. One of the things that I think is really important—and I would like to just take a moment to discuss—is this relationship between our English language learners and where they are in our curricula, in our schools and in our districts.

I'm sure that's different here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The issues that you face may be very different than the ones that I have researched. But I think that one of the things that we are seeing as a national trend, is more and more students in places that we haven't seen them before; that is English language learners in schools and communities that may not necessarily have had to deal with those populations, the language issues and the cultural models that those students bring with them and what to do with all of that. While there are still arrivals in traditional gateway cities, like Philadelphia for example, there are new pockets of families arriving in smaller towns. There may be a small number of students for whom English is not the first language, and like earlier generations of immigrants, they often have quite variable levels of literacy in their first language.

I think that that all becomes really relevant in a time when there is significant differences in what people are asking of education. I think that these differences become especially relevant in an age of competing discourses in and around education. Those two things that I'm going to spend some time talking to you about, the details are testing, high stakes testing and how the societal implications of those tests can filter down into classrooms. Then I'm going to flip that idea on its head because there's also a really strong reform movement. There are many reforms in education, initiatives about things that we can do differently, do

better, moving toward some models of what we might call best practices. Taking a close classroom look at one example of a reform situation can give great insights about what's happening in classrooms, and the pressures faced there by both teachers and students.

What I'm hoping to do in the time that I have is to take those two ideas of high stakes testing and how this model of best practices end up competing for our time and attention—and sometimes in ways that are pretty detrimental to our students.

As I began to prepare this presentation today, we had a phone call with a group of us and I said, what are the issues that Pennsylvania seems to be facing? Dr. Lisa Buenaventura answered that the major priorities include developing a focus on literacy, numeracy, and engagement in a civic process. If you think about those ideas and those words, those are important concepts that are big ideas, and who couldn't get behind them? Of course, we want our students, all of our students, to read and write and to be able to calculate and use the number systems that they'll need in their everyday lives and beyond. And also, to be able to engage in the civic and democratic—with a small d—process that we all have a right and responsibility to be a part of.

Those are huge challenges; they are wonderful goals and aspirations. And as I thought about them, I thought there are

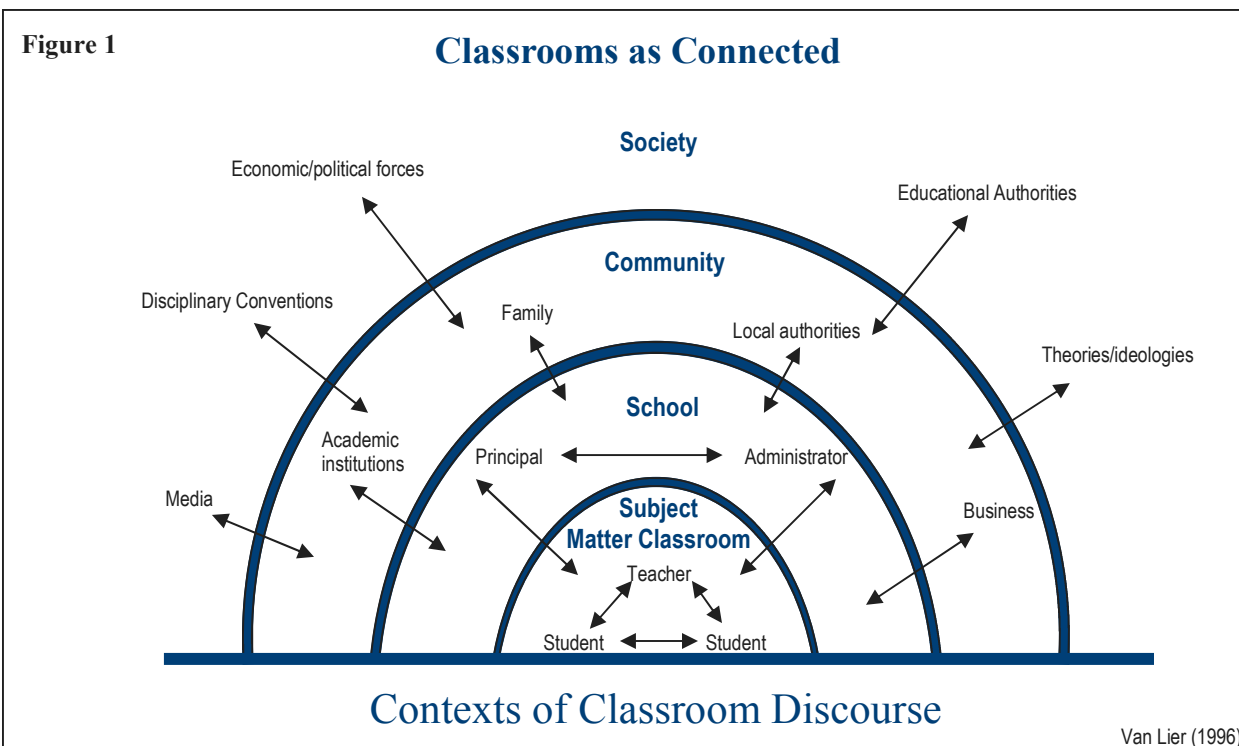
some things going on in schools that sometimes get in the way of achieving those. And so while I would love to be painting a rosy picture about lots of success stories, instead I am going to offer a cautionary tale today.

To ground this discussion and situate the points that I'm making, I'd like to present you with a visual image. This looks very much like an igloo, and you could consider it and "igloo of influence." Standing outside in the snow is cold. Building a structure of snow and ice allows those inside to be relatively warm and protected from the elements. But, they are still surrounded by snow. The same principle applies here. Classrooms can be warm and protected places where the teachers and students in them work effectively together. But, they are never really separated from the elements beyond the classroom walls. They also have a strong influence on what happens beyond the classroom as well. (see Figure 1 below) Leo van Lier (1996) offers a version of this model. He talks about the ways that what happens beyond the classroom walls affect

in meaningful ways what is possible within the classroom.

Examining the layers of this model is worth the time it takes. I would like to use a couple of current examples to highlight how it can be used. Currently, in the news there is the "immigration" debate taking place. Lawmakers at the federal level are working on a policy that may change the legal status of some of our students—depending on whether or not amnesty is part of the plan. If a points system is used to determine visas rather than family ties as is currently the situation, some of your students' families may have a harder time being reunited. While that topic may not be relevant to the chemistry or math problems you discuss with your students, its presence in our common dialogue resonates.

A second example, certainly relevant to the rest of my talk this morning is high stakes testing. This phenomenon was decided on far beyond the walls of your classrooms but makes a big difference in what teachers do each day. It makes a



difference in what kinds of activities are encouraged by administrators and school districts. For example, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts test in New York, where I work, does not include any literature. A principal in a district with a large number of English Language Learners recently told me that he has instructed his teachers to limit the amount of literature they use in their classrooms since it is not a focus of the test. He recognizes the limitations of his position. He acknowledges that the students may be at a disadvantage when they take the 11<sup>th</sup> grade test that is full of literature. But, his focus and therefore the one he requires of his teachers is to get the students to score better now on the test they have before them.

If you look at the term media in the model, you might wonder how it could possibly affect our classrooms. Well, there is a recent Budweiser Light commercial that shows an ESL class “learning” how to ask for a beer. The teacher actually shows some linguistic sensitivity, highlighting how linguistic forms vary depending on the region one enters. East Los Angelinos ask for their Budweisers differently than do people in the south or New York. Then, he tests the students on their knowledge of how to respond to a request for a Bud Light—“no speak English” they all enthusiastically parrot. Some might find this funny; others offensive. The “pronunciation drill” at the end, highlights one particular vision and version of what the English language is and should be, in direct opposition to the “regional variation” taught just a few frames before. The learners are stereotypes in their accents and appearances. They are all men and all apparently over 21! This commercial and others like it show us some cultural expectations and paradigms about teaching and learning English. So, our classroom walls are more permeable than we think, and we need to remember that.

Beyond the importance I place on this notion of permeability, another key element about my research and the body of work I draw on is its close focus on talk, on what people say to one another. I audio tape and video tape classrooms and then I painstakingly transcribe everything that's said and then I look at what's been said.

For me and the work that I do and how I've started to think about it, the classroom can't be separated from the school, can't be separated from the community and can't be separated from the larger society because there are a lot of interrelationships there. And those interrelationships show up in the talk that teachers and students use. Even when they are not consciously aware, they too deeply understand the connections.

I think we can't talk about learning or we can't talk about our programs and what's going on, without at least acknowledging what we mean by learning. The socio-cultural model that I adopt places great importance on the relationships between people. Learning could be considered the permanent, or semi-permanent, personal appropriation and use of knowledge, skill or activity. This is a broad and not all-inclusive definition. But this way of looking at learning highlights some important aspects of the phenomenon we call learning. It is not simply the transmission of information from the knower to the learner. Rather, with a joint focus or what has been called intersubjectivity (Rogoff, 1990) people engage meaningfully with concepts, materials and language. Without this shared focus, nothing much happens. Secondly, there must be a stage where the learner appropriates, or takes as her own, the material. Again, Rogoff (1990) describes this concept in detail. Brandt (2000) also gives some excellent examples of how learners' take on new literacies when they find a reason and purpose for them in their own lives, beyond the

purposes of the classroom or workplace where that form of literacy is introduced.

And, finally, learners in this socio-cultural model must find the identity as learner a valued one. As they consider themselves, their futures and their possibilities what is being taught must resonate. Learning of any kind is hard work. Hanrahan (2005) demonstrates that learners must have both a sense of identity development and commitment for it to happen. So another piece in the learning puzzle involves these identities that learners are allowed or empowered to develop, because a part of learning is seeing oneself as someone who does something. A learner has to imagine herself as a speaker of English or find value in that identity to want to become a speaker of English, for example.

With these main ideas on the table, I would like to show through two extended case studies how these competing ideas I described above play out in the classroom. Initially I will give the testing example and talk about how things happen out at the society level and how those filter down into the talk of the classroom. Then I will present a model that starts with a reform effort in a subject matter classroom and what happens as that spins out through the school to the community in the societal level.

This first example, as I mentioned is related to the language of test making and politics. I am in the business of training teachers. In that role, I am in schools and classrooms quite often. In that context, I encounter a lot of discussion about state and national tests. Teachers and administrators are quite concerned about them, for many reasons.

People who are sophisticated in test development, as I think many of the people who are involved in both state and national high stakes testing are, know that tests are valid for specific purposes; they are designed to measure specific

competencies or knowledge; they exist to tell us something particular, and when items and tests are designed carefully we can have some assurance that they, in fact, do what we want to believe that they do. However, this high-level, technical expertise is not what makes it into the news or into the public domain very often. And, when those ideas are not presented fully and not presented within the rich context of their design, strange things begin to happen.

If you think about how high stakes testing is talked about in your context, it is very rarely in terms of the kind of skills that students possess if they achieve a certain level on a test. It is very rarely, in terms of the language that they know. It is most often about the cutoff marks and then what happens—and that may be perfectly fine—we have students achieving ex-level of proficiency, or in the state of New York where I am, students receive a score of three on their Regents.

That is fine. But what happens then—and if you think about that—we are now talking out at the societal level in the van Lier (1996) igloo—that gets brought into a community. Then realtors start talking about the value of homes based on what the students in the schools in a particular community are scoring on the state tests. Now again, people who write tests would not say that their tests are valid measures of what houses are worth. That is not an appropriate use of those measures. But that is often the conversation that happens at the community level.

Then what happens is that we move down to the school level, and the administration and the principal are getting pressure from people in the school board and in the business community to raise those test scores because they don't want to be the place that has low property values because, of course, that's not good. Again, you can see where I'm going with this. Think of the example I gave earlier of

the principal who is cautioning is English teachers against using too much literature because it might not help students on the test! Think of that comment in light of Dr. Buenaventura's assertion that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has literacy as a goal for all of its students.

Now, once the conversation in a school building turns in the direction I described, something peculiar begins to happen in the classroom. In the specific language that teachers and students use with one another, the tests become the focus of the activities. They move to the center of the curriculum in patterned ways. Teachers begin to explain the relevance or purpose of materials and activities, not in terms of learning but in terms of state or national testing. When students ask "why" they have to do something, they are told that it's for the test. And again, I am not saying that everyone teaches like that but I am saying that there is a wash back effect where this language trickles into our classrooms and if we do not fight against it, what we end up telling our students is, "you have to learn well so that your test results make homes in this community more valuable."

If you position these ideas against the requirements for true learning that I mentioned above, we are not encouraging our students to learn for learning's sake. We are not showing them that the identities that they have available to them in this situation are valued because of their literacy, their numeracy or their position in civic engagement. We are sending them the message that they are blips on a chart and I submit to you, would you want to be a learner in a classroom where your results on the test are the underlying focus. If you would answer "no," then you can imagine how difficult it is for intersubjectivity to be created and maintained within any lesson. And, more troublesome for the long-term impact of this kind of thinking, there is very little likelihood of true appropriation.

So, with these three elements in jeopardy, there is less likelihood that true learning will take place. And that, I submit is a dangerous place for us to be when the goals of educators within the Commonwealth are literacy, numeracy and civic engagement. I will return to this in just a moment after I finish my other example.

In this second example, I am taking a more focused look at a single project rather than a type of discourse (Gee, 1996) that is more wide-spread, like that of testing. This case comes from research I did as part of the Project on Academic Language Socialization (PALS). In this situation the teacher decided to try something new and novel with her students. So, in terms of the igloo, we're starting at the core and moving out. I would like to add that this project has been studied quite extensively by a number of discourse analytic researchers in a volume edited by Cole and Zuengler (2007) that is due out in October.

The reform language around science at the time was that science projects needed to be authentic and community based. The more that teachers could do that was real science, the more that students could do that was in the community, the better off learner outcomes would be. The thinking, developed quite fully in Lynch (2000) is that students are getting to be scientists, not students of science. While the distinction might be technical for some, it is really relevant in terms two aspects of the learning model I presented you earlier. First, there is the identity development and commitment required for learning according to Hanrahan (2005). And secondly, in these kinds of projects, the possibilities for appropriation and intersubjectivity are enhanced since everyone is focused on the same, real questions and problems. So, theoretically, this project is one that is likely to result in learning.

The teacher partnered with a medical clinic in the neighborhood to study asthma in the community. The students developed and conducted a survey and participated in a community forum on asthma. The students prepared multi-lingual material for the clinic. The students were, if you will, budding scientists.

But what happened in the course of four months that the students were working on the project? If we move out from the classroom level on the igloo (refer back to Figure 1), where this project makes sound theoretical sense, and we get to the school level we see some ways that the waters are muddied considerably. The school calendar really compressed the amount of time and attention the students and teacher were able to devote to this project. Instead of being able to look at their data very carefully, they had to churn through it in a matter of weeks because of some delays that I'll mention in just a moment.

Now, anyone who has done large scale survey research knows that it can quickly become overwhelming. Now, imagine being a ninth grader in a biology class and encountering all this complexity for the first time. There are tables and calculations that take a long time to create and then a longer time to analyze. Finding relevant patterns and interesting threads to follow requires that the researcher be able to devote long stretches of uninterrupted time to the project. In this case, the school day was broken into 48 minute periods. In that time, the students could barely get their desks arranged, take out the survey and tabulate a few items before they had to clean up, put things away and rush off to the next class before the bell rang. For expediency sake, students were looking at the calendar and looking at what they were doing, and then what happened is their project got farmed out to other people; other people started looking at the data; other people started telling them what the results meant. The

students' ability to achieve and maintain intersubjectivity with more knowledgeable adults or even with their peers was compromised.

There were some other significant challenges to this project as well. We can see them at play if we move out to the district level of figure 1. In this case, while there were English speakers in the school community, a sizeable number were Spanish speakers and there were Hmong speakers in the school. The students initiated and had completed translations of the survey in English, Hmong and Spanish. The district took the translations and retranslated the Spanish translation. And, certainly, districts have the right and the responsibility to have authorized translators doing the work of the translations that are done.

However, when discussing authentic, community-based and personal Science, we have to think about the impact on students of this kind of policy. When they saw the translation come back and it was not the one that they had completed, they were devastated. There was still a Spanish translation, however. The Hmong translation did not make it back to the school. There was a policy that unless there was a district translator who prepared the materials they couldn't be used, and the district apparently did not have an official Hmong translator. Again we can understand that policy or the need perhaps for that kind of policy, but when we ask our students to get involved I think then we have to start making some moves to suspend policies or communicate them clearly with students before they invest huge amounts of time and energy into things that will never see the light of day.

Moving again out another layer in the igloo to the community, we see yet another piece that created problems for the student learning in this project. The clinic was indeed a local clinic, but it only served students who lived within the boundaries

of its service area. About half the students in the class were living outside the clinic area so their families and family members could not participate in the services, the educational programs or receive the materials that they had developed on behalf of the clinic for this project.

The outcome of this project was negative for the students, and therefore negative for their learning. In the excerpt from the classroom transcript printed below, you can see for yourselves how the students responded to the overall project.

2SC45BUE, 5/11/98

Ms. Belmontes: Our fellow colleagues, they want to present (.) as a matter of fact, (.) the clinic said they want to use the (.) webpage to connect to the clinic. but then [there are also- there are a couple more things that need to be (.) in it. ok?

Shavonne: [just use our stuff.  
Melissa: Tell them they've got to pay us for it.  
Shavonne: (xxx) (the same). just use our stuff.  
?Fs: Let's get a patent.  
?Fs: labor.  
Miguel: labor,  
Ss ((laughing))  
?Fs twenty five [(xxx)  
?Fs [child labor.  
Ms. Belmontes [((laughing))  
Herlinda: twenty five?  
?Fs [a minute.  
Ss ((laughing))  
?Fs She said twenty five dollars a minute.  
Ms. Belmontes: anyway, uh  
Shavonne: You've got to pay to use stuff on the internet, they should pay us for using our stuff.  
?Fs Yeah, (.) they should .

The students are talking with the teacher about the project—specifically about additional work that someone has asked them to do. The teacher says, “our fellow

colleagues they want to present—as a matter of fact the clinic said they want to use the web page. The students developed the web page to connect to the clinic. But then there are also a couple more things that need to be in it, okay. So now they have to do more work.”

And here's what we see—the students' response to this authentic material: “Tell them they've got to pay us for it.” “Let's get a patent; it's our labor”. “It's child labor.” That's a really, really important transition. It's one thing to labor; labor is work. Child labor does not have the same positive kind of associations in the English language and these students knew that. So they're reframing this project child labor. The students are raising the stakes— \$25 a minute. *One student says “\$25 a minute, the teacher, anyway you've got to pay to use stuff on the Internet, they should pay us for using our stuff. Yeah, they should”.*

By this point, the students in this case were completely disengaged. I can cite pages and pages of what we saw come from that, but I don't think I need to because I think the students' words are pretty powerful, in and of themselves. Learning in this case has been horribly compromised. Despite the great intentions, the wonderful design and the initial excitement, when the external layers of the igloo are superimposed on the work, we see that what comes of a good design is something less than desirable.

With the few remaining moments, I would like to highlight some reforms that might resolve some of the difficulties uncovered by both of these examples. If we begin out at the layers farthest from the classroom, we clearly need a shift in public perception. Particularly when it comes to testing, those who create and talk about the tests need to keep the focus on the stated purposes and goals of the assessment measures. We really need people to not think of tests as something that have anything to do with their

property values. Moreover, we need flexibility in administering tests, reporting the results and using them, not as a way of punishing districts but rather of informing instruction. Certainly, we can debate at length what role accountability plays in the whole equation. But, we must agree that students must receive the message that what they are in school to learn matters because it is important content, because the ideas or skills are important, and because they are valued members of our broader communities for themselves not for their test scores.

I think we need careful planning at the district level about models of content delivery, sheltering or mainstreaming and where we're asking our students to do their learning. With increasing numbers of students in schools where there has been little diversity and no history of programming, budgets, expediency and lack of knowledge about language and literacy development may pose challenges. Sometimes early mainstreaming for small numbers of students seems like a good idea. However, there is too much research out there, let me simply refer you to Cummins (1986; 1996) that points to the need for additional support for students. The best practices in this case are not the least expensive. And, they are often required by students who have few advocates. It is up to us to be those voices, to work in our local districts and share our expertise. While I think that volunteerism is quite positive, I am not suggesting that teachers simply take on more work. I am, however, suggesting that there is more work to be done. Additional training or professional development is needed in the areas of language learning and cultural differences for all teachers, not simply those licensed to work with language learners. And, clearly there can be quite creative connections between university and school partnerships.

When teachers take the initiative to

undertake novel projects, they need to do them with their classroom doors open. From the beginning, they need to engage with their administrators and troubleshoot and problem-solve up through all of the layers. And, there needs to be some recognition of and flexibility for these kinds of projects.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share these ideas with you. I recognize that these tiny examples are snippets, but they are real snippets of what is happening in districts and classrooms. They represent the lived experiences of students and teachers. I ask you to consider the extent to which similar things happen or could happen in your own schools or districts. And, I encourage and challenge you to find ways to ensure that all learners are engaged and that they have opportunities to learn meaningful ways to be active in their communities.

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## Chapter 2: Diverse Learners with Special Needs

### Catherine Collier, Ph.D.

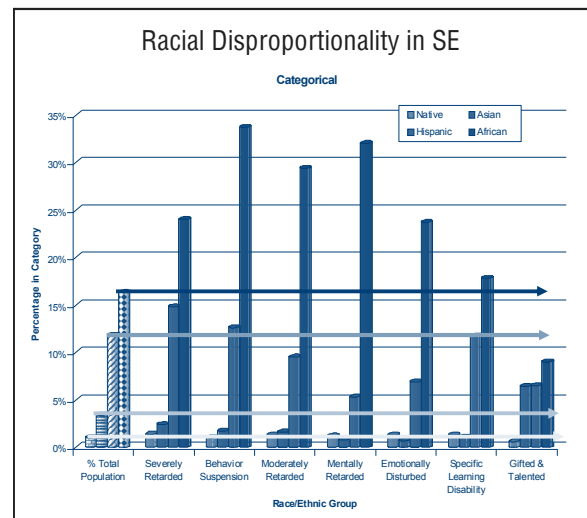
I absolutely concur with KimMarie Cole about these issues and the danger of the very real disengagement that we are seeing among students as well as teachers and administrators. A lot of districts are feeling terribly frustrated about things. KimMarie was telling us about practice and some of the things we're learning about practice nowadays. I want to expand upon this from a perspective of some key issues that you would think had been resolved in our work but haven't gone away.

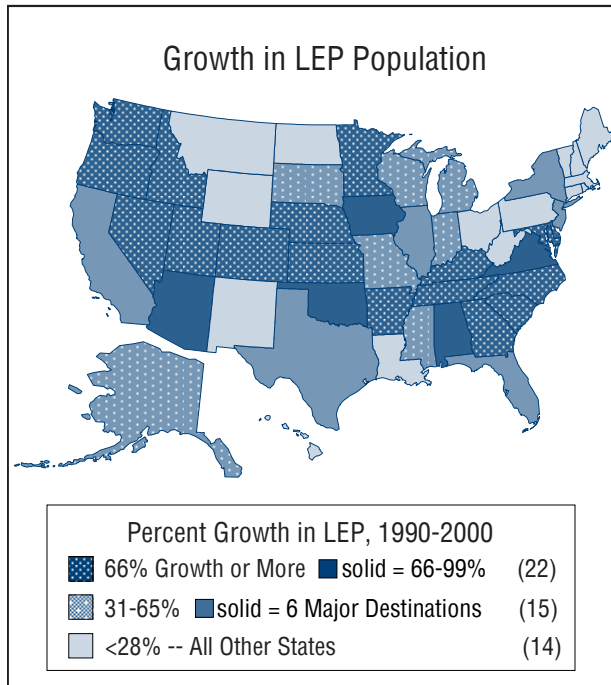
The reality is that we still live with aberrant disproportionality in our school systems. We are still disproportionately identifying and serving children of color in various areas. We are still disproportionately identifying and serving children from varied language and culture backgrounds. We are disproportionately separating kids into “normal” and “not normal”.

School administrators are frequently asking me to make sense of what the federal law says about the role language may play or not play in assessment and placement decisions. This is a critical service issue as the law says that we cannot identify as disabled -and rightly so - if language is the factor.

Instructional and service planning which is compliant with current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guidelines can be very challenging with the wide range of student learning and behavior issues facing today's school personnel. As illustration, please look at these slides (Living in Poverty, Racial Disproportionality in SE, Growth in LEP Population, Native Born LEP).

Living in Poverty in the U.S.		
Group	Millions	Percent of Group
White	25.4	11.7
Black	10.2	30.6
Latino	8.4	30.7
Indigenous	0.6	30.9
Asian	0.9	14.1
Elderly	3.7	11.7
Female– Hd Family	14.4	38.6
Under Age 18	15.3	21.8

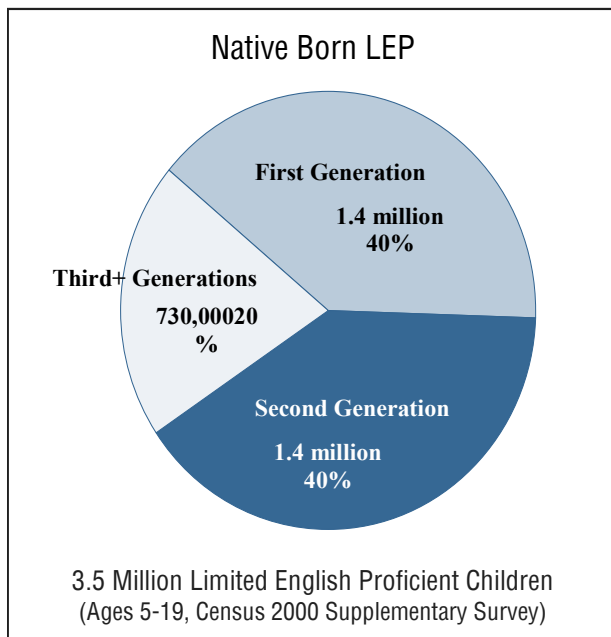




- Poverty remains a challenge for all racial, ethnic groups in our country.
- Within racial issues, we still have disproportionality in the identification and placement of children in special education services. Black students in particular are disproportionately served.
- When we look at limited English proficiency we see a mosaic of concerns much like the map here. This is the context within which a decision of whether a degree of language acquisition is normal or not occurs. And misunderstandings that this is an immigration issue as noted in recent news items frequently prevail.
- As you can see in the slide to the left/ bottom, most limited English proficient students are native born Americans.

It has taken us years to realize that just because somebody speaks a language other than English it doesn't mean that that score, when they were tested in English, is valid, or that cognitive score or that mobility score has any validity whatsoever because the test was a test in English of a non or a limited English speaker. You would think by now that we had solved that. In some schools that has happened but in most we still have immense areas of disproportionality. The interesting thing is these areas of disproportionality have swung across the continuum and now we have disproportional denial of services, denial of services because the student is different, as well as continued misplacement, misidentification because of language or dialect difference.

These issues frequently appear in school settings as questions asked by concerned school personnel: "He has been here over two years, so isn't his lack of academic achievement a sign of a possible disability?" "Is this communication problem a language difference or is it a language disability?" "She was born here, so can't we rule out culture shock and language development issues?" Although



illustrative of the good intentions and heartfelt concern about these students by education professionals, it is more productive to ask what information do we need and how will we use the information to resolve these questions.

For example, there is still disagreement in the field about what constitutes a difference versus a disorder and it is not a simple matter to answer the questions “Is it a disorder if he hasn’t achieved proficiency after 2 years, 5 years?” “Is it a difference in rate or type of acquisition?” Some education professionals try to be on the safe side and figure that it's all difference and therefore, stop and go no further when a student is an ELL still receiving ESL services. But that is feeding the disproportionality. It's feeding the compliance issues. Thus as I said, we need to be asking the right questions and finding resources to answer them in the most instructionally meaningful manner.

So, what information do we need? I reference the handout *What Every Administrator and Educator Should Know* (See page 55). It provides a more in-depth context for our discussion. The information to be gathered answers specific questions critical to separating difference from disability (SDD) considerations:

**Education** - Has the student been in school before? Are there gaps in the student’s education experiences? Is there sufficient intensity of instruction?

**Home language** - Are languages other than English spoken in the student’s home? What languages other than English does the student speak? Is the student maintaining an ability to communicate with his/her family members?

**Language proficiency** - What is the student’s language proficiency and literacy? Is the student developing the home language at a normal rate?

**English** - Does the student need assistance with learning English? Is the student acquiring English at a normal rate?

**Achievement** - What is the student’s level and rate of academic achievement? Is this normal for the general student population in your district/school, for the specific population of the student?

**Behavior** - Is the student’s emotional stability developmentally and culturally appropriate? Are there individual or family circumstances that may explain the observed behavior?

**Adaptation** - What is the student’s level of acculturation? Is the student at risk for culture shock? Is the student adapting to our school at a normal rate?

So once you ask these focusing questions it points you to the appropriate and most useful information. Information about students is not valuable if it is not instructionally meaningful and does not lead to a course of action for the student’s benefit. Here are some examples:

#### Education

Prior experience in school, whether in the US or other country, facilitates transitional instructional models. Thus knowing that the student has received schooling elsewhere tells school personnel they can focus on transition from one academic language foundation to English academic language. If the student has never had a formal education experience, school personnel must start by building an understanding of school culture, rules, expectations, and basic school interaction language in the student’s most proficient language before transitioning into English. *SDD concern*: if the student shows little progress with adapting to school expectations and continues to struggle with acquiring school interaction language in their home language, they may have an undiagnosed disability and need to be referred for a full evaluation.

Home language: Students, who are raised in homes where English is infrequently or only one of other languages used, come to us with unique strengths that can become the foundation of instruction. Research shows that they have cognitive and linguistic capacities that can facilitate learning. Additionally, psychological well-being is built upon quality family communication and interactions. *SDD concern:* If the student has not acquired a developmentally appropriate proficiency in a language other than English, it may be due to family circumstances (see discussion under behavior & adaptation) or the presence of an undiagnosed disability. In either case this can delay their English acquisition. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in the primary home language would show whether the student has the ability to develop language and communication. If the student's communication does not improve under intervention then a referral for a full evaluation would be warranted.

#### Language proficiency

The student's proficiency and background in a language other than English assists in deciding the most effective instructional communicative models. It is critical to assess to the extent possible the student's proficiency in their home language / communication mode. As there are not standardized tests available for every language or communication mode, alternative measures are frequently needed. These can be structured sampling and observation, interview, interactive inventories, and other analytic tools. Rubrics for interpreting these tools are available. *SDD concern:* a student may score low on a standardized test in their home language because they have never received instruction in the language and have only an oral proficiency. Thus low primary language and low English may look like there is some language disability. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in the primary language, including

basic phonics and literacy readiness would serve two purposes, profile the student's proficiency and establish whether the low score is learning based rather than something else. If the student makes little or no progress in the RTI, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary.

#### English

The student's language proficiency in English is directly related to eligibility and entry level for English as a second language instruction. There are many tools available for determining whether a student needs assistance with learning English. For initial services in English Language Learning for limited English proficient speakers (ELL/LEP), school personnel should select instruments that are quick, non-biased, and focus on speaking and listening skills. Including literacy screening would be instructionally meaningful only for students who have received prior instruction in English. *SDD concern:* some students speak enough English to not qualify for ELL/LEP services but have such a limited classroom language foundation that they look like students with learning disabilities. Thus English screening for ELL/LEP services must include screening for cognitive academic language proficiency and not just social language. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in English, including basic phonics and literacy readiness would serve two purposes, profile the student's proficiency and establish whether the low score is learning based rather than something else. If the student makes little or no progress in the RTI, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary. Additionally, if the child has a disability and is receiving special education services, and is an ELL/LEP student, the IEP should list the ELL/LEP accommodations as part of related services. This could be bilingual assistance or SDAIE within the special education setting or some other appropriate monitored intervention with

specific objectives related to acquiring English. In many cases, the disabling condition is such that it seriously impacts the acquisition of English and thus special education personnel and ELL/LEP personnel must work together on realistic outcomes. These modified language outcomes need to be included in the IEP.

### Achievement

All children can learn but they learn at different rates and in different manners. All children can learn but they enter and exit at different points. A challenge of today's standards based education models is that students that do not fit the scope and sequence of a particular school system are frequently placed in alternative instructional settings that may or may not be appropriate to their needs. *SDD concern:* if a student is not meeting the benchmarks established by a school system even when given learning support, they may be referred to special education as having a learning disability of some sort. Sometimes special education is the only instructional alternative available in the building. It is not appropriate to place students who do not have a disability in special education even when it is the best alternative instructional setting available. We recommend restructuring all programs to include differentiated instructional environments where any student can enter a lesson at his/her entry point and learn to the maximum of his/her abilities. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in fundamental learning strategies would establish whether the low score is learning based rather than something else. If the student makes little or no progress in the RTI, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary.

### Behavior

Family and community events can be a contributing factor and it is critical to effective instruction to explore both school and non-school environments and their relationship to the student's presenting

problem. Whether the behavior problem is due to an innate disorder, biochemical dysfunction, or a temporary response to trauma or disruption in the student's home or school environment, the student needs effective and immediate intervention and assistance. *SDD concern:* although the student needs assistance with managing or controlling his or her behavior, special education is not the appropriate placement if the etiology of the problem is culture shock, an event or chronic stressors in the student's home or school environment. An intensive instructional intervention (part of an RTI) which facilitates self-monitoring and control within a supportive and safe environment should be always be implemented first. If the problem does not appear to decrease in frequency or intensity, or if the student makes little or no progress, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary.

### Adaptation

The level and rate of acculturation, and accompanying degree of culture shock, must be addressed within the instructional environment. All students must adapt to the school environment whether they speak English or not; students who come into your school from homes or communities very different from the school will experience greater degree of culture shock. *SDD concern:* the manifestations of culture shock look a lot like learning and behavior disabilities and unaddressed acculturation and adaptation needs can concatenate into serious learning and behavior problems later in the education experience. An intensive instructional intervention (part of an RTI) which mitigates culture shock and facilitates adaptation and language transition should be always be implemented, particularly for newcomers. Most students will respond within weeks to this intervention. This positive response does not mean that culture shock may not reappear as culture shock is cyclical and a normal part of our

adaptation to anything strange to us. However, a positive response to acculturative assistance lets school personnel know that the presenting problems are due to a normal adaptive process, acculturation, which responds over time to instructional intervention. Students should have their level of acculturation measured at entry into your school system and their rate of acculturation monitored annually to assure the student is making normal progress in your school. If the student's rate of acculturation is not within normal range, it is an indication either that the program is not adequately addressing his transition needs, or that there may be an undiagnosed disability of some sort that is depressing the rate of acculturation.

So how do we use the information we have gathered about our student of concern? How does this inform our provision of services?

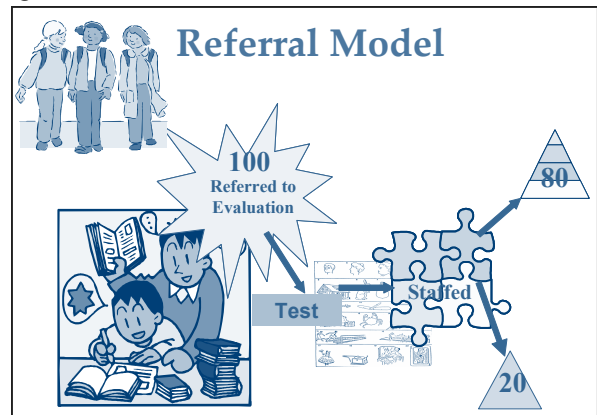
Our recommendation is through an integrated instructional service model which moves from differentiated support within the mixed classroom to intensive instructional intervention within the mixed classroom to focused assistance as needed in as inclusive a setting as possible. Disproportionality issues remain but generally speaking are more easily dealt with in integrated settings in my experience.

Some of the remaining issues to discuss in implementing these programs are: How do you account for criterion specific, authentic assessment when you're being held to some kind of state-based, standardized screening? How do you make it real with what's in the classroom and not lose 50% of the meaning of what you're doing, the effectiveness of what you are doing? The kids along the way are going to become disengaged, be frustrated, end up with high dropout rates, huge increases in dropout, especially as we hold district's feet to the fire about how they

account for dropouts. But for this panel I do not have the time to address more than the immediate question of appropriate and effective, research based, intervention models.

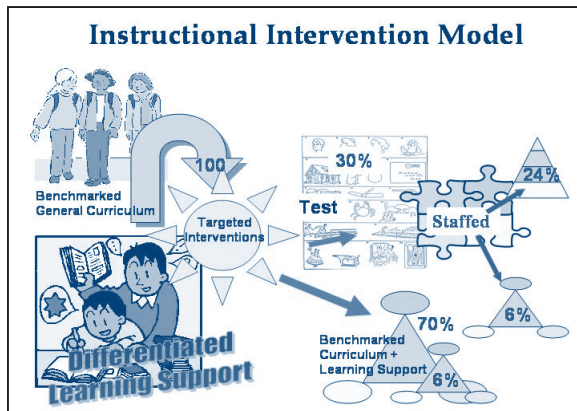
Let's look at some service models and structures. In the first slide we see a typical referral model.

Students enter our general curriculum, get into classrooms and someone notices



they have problems. The teacher, generally, refers the student to the Child Study Team (CST). The CST or Multidisciplinary Team evaluates the extent of the student's problems and makes a service or placement decision during a staffing. Research (Ysseldyke and Algozzine) tells us that about 80% of referred students in this model will end up in Special Education.

In the second model, used by many school districts but not all, the student enters the general curriculum but receives individualized learning support of some sort, possibly differentiated instruction or Title I support. Again after someone notices a student having problems, they are referred to a team. However, in these models the team is composed of teachers and other instructional personnel, not the specialists of the CST. The difference here is NO Psychologist, NO special educator, and rarely an SLP is involved at this point. A targeted intervention is tried for six to eight weeks and only after that, if the problem is not resolved, is the student



referred to the CST or MDT for evaluation and staffing. In these instructional intervention models, research (Baca, Ortiz, Chin) tells us that 70% of students receiving targeted intervention get their learning needs met and do not return to concern or consideration for evaluation. Only about 25%-30% need a more in-depth evaluation and need to be formally referred to the CST.

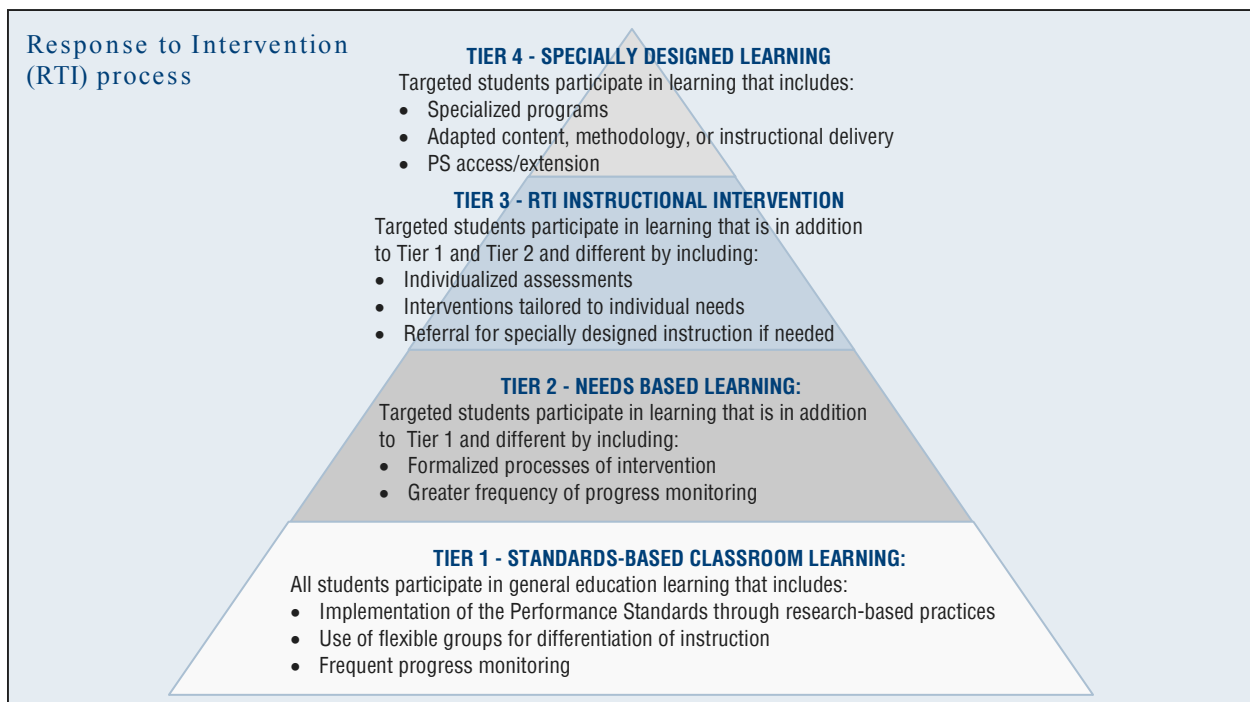
A recent variation of this intensive instructional intervention model is the Response to Intervention (RTI) process I referred to previously. Below is a slide illustrating those models.

RTI models generally have a tiered

approach as shown; some have three, some have four. You begin with the base of services to the widest range of students and move up through the tiers as you narrow your focus and as an individual student does or does not make progress.

As districts begin to implement these models they have to be clear about what they are trying to accomplish. That's part of the movement to reform in all of the states and at the national level. It's part of why I wouldn't toss out No Child Left Behind. I think there are good elements in NCLB and one is the conceptual construct. Behind it is something that we have been fighting for decades: to get people to shift off of the bell curve where you automatically ascribe the outer limbs to the netherworld where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. Conceptually, No Child Left Behind has forced a national dialog and a reconstruction of that Bell Curve thinking which is long overdue. The movement is toward seeing that ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN no matter what their learning and behavior issues are. I only part ways with this in regard to setting unrealistic outcomes for all these kids.

I worked with severe and profound kids. I



worked with kids that are never going to walk across this room; that are maybe not going to live past their twelfth birthday. I am absolutely rabid about the fact that every one of them can learn. Absolutely, every one of those kids can learn. They probably can't learn algebra, they can't learn everything that all of you know, but they can learn, and they have an absolute right to learn, and there is a moral obligation on our part to make sure they can learn to the best of their capacity and ability. That's really what No Child Left Behind stands for, in its construct, that everybody has a right to make progress.

Now the catch, though, is what do we want to accomplish? What are acceptable benchmarks for diverse learners? What are livable, achievable criteria? What is accessible to all of our learners?

It does not make any sense to hold ALL students to the same benchmark and then punish them and their teachers for not achieving the benchmark when many of these students are the most challenged and most diverse of the diverse learning population. I worked with everybody. I worked with gifted and talented, I worked with severe and profound, and I worked with really behaviorally disordered. I worked with non-English-speaking. I worked with non-literate. I worked with all the kids.

I've worked with all and I could no more say in any degree of honesty and faith, that I could ever hold all of those kids to one level of achievement. It's just simply not possible, though I do think we need to have high expectations.

I had high expectations for my kids. I expected them to be able to hold a spoon and feed themselves. That was a pretty high expectation for some of those kids. I expected some of those kids to be able to become completely fluent to the capacity of their communicative structure, to be able to get their needs across and to

survive in a real authentic world situation. That didn't mean that they were going to make a speech to the U.N., by any means, but they were absolutely able to communicate their needs and contribute to society, participating and engaging in a civil life in the world, and in the community.

In my sessions previously today I discussed the legal and structural background behind these points. Please go to my website, [www.crosscultured.com](http://www.crosscultured.com), where I have the legal citations for you.

So what do we have to do? Let me back up to the slide illustrating the components of a tiered instructional service model using RTI for ELL/LEP students. (Refer to page 18.) This slide isn't the way I really want it to be yet but imagine it's like the way a pyramid is built with blocks at each level and every one of those blocks is a strategy, content, information, skills, performance and all.

The blocks of the foundation would have every bit of the phonics base, the awareness base, the readiness skills, the whole foundation for learning. Then at each successive tier more building blocks of learning, more strategies of cognitive learning all the way up.

Tier one is the standard's base. These are your state, national guidelines, the general standards based curriculum. If you delivered everything at this tier perfectly, addressing all student needs and all students came ready to learn, you would take care of about 70% of the students, ideally.

But there will always be students who need further assistance, more differentiation. Tier two is where Title I, Reading Support, Math Support, ESL, and Bilingual support come in. One size, one tier doesn't fit all - you have to individualize, you have to differentiate.

But you may still have some learning and behavior issues and this takes you to tier three. This is where Response to Intervention (RTI) comes in. In my model, as you can see on the slide, this is an extension of a whole problem-solving process that is built up from the foundation. (Refer to page 18 for the slide.)

There are a wide range of these tier type models. I don't want you to think there's just one way to do this. But I'm giving you a best practice model of these programs based on research as we know it at this time.

There are now enough of these models in place in the United States so that we have a long enough time frame and enough kids that we can analyze the effectiveness of RTI in schools with large numbers of limited English proficient students. We are beginning to understand what are the best ways, what are the most effective ways of using instructional intervention with limited English proficient students.

I have been presenting an emerging model. No one has it all in place just yet. I don't want you to think that you can go here or there to see how to do this just yet — nobody has a perfect model. Everyone has pieces. We do know some things about effective integrated instructional intervention but it's still coming along.

If you go to my website, I compare a whole range of these models and talk about what the research says regarding the effectiveness of the models. (www.crosscultural.com) They're all very new so it's preliminary findings most of the time.

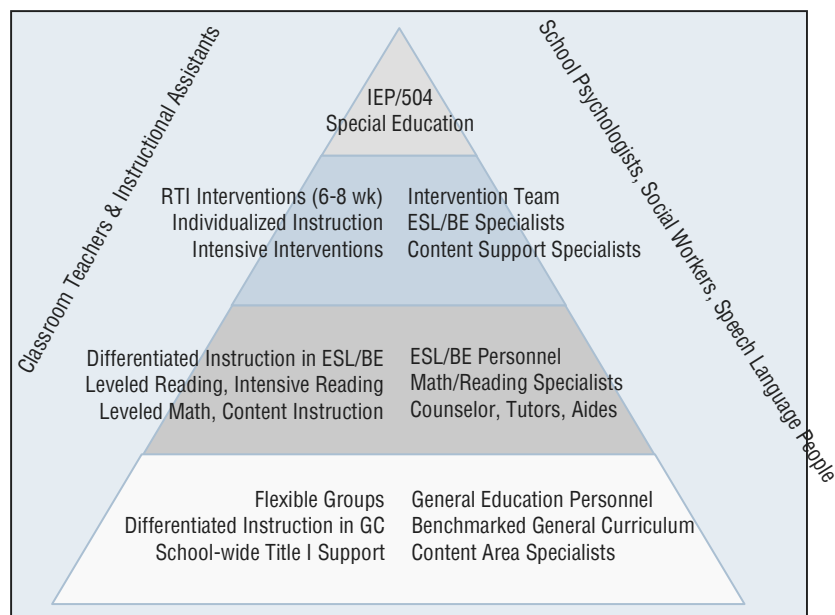
In conclusion, we recommend a tiered approach to instructional intervention. We recommend taking only six to eight weeks, no longer than 12, for the RTI

intense portion. Some of the research shows that ELL students too often get trapped in an endless sequence of interventions. You really need an ending point. So use a little sense here.

At the first tier you've got flexible grouping, differentiated instruction, and school-wide support. The personnel that do this are your ESL bilingual and content area people and your general education people.

At the second tier, you have differentiated instruction in all of those content areas, including language support, by these more specialized, certificated, highly qualified personnel. When you get to tier three (RTI) you make sure the six to eight weeks, no longer than 12, is very intensive, the interventions are targeted and you have a team.

It is extremely important that you have a team. It is not something you just hand back to your classroom personnel. It is a group of people implementing the targeted intervention or you will run afoul and you'll get a lot of resistance from teachers. Some people even think RTI stands for resistance to intervention.



Then finally, tier four is our top level application with the most intense, focused intervention, Special Education.

Behind the scenes with all of this, classroom teachers and instructional assistants are involved in every level of this problem solving model. You also have the school psychologist, the social workers, and the speech language people involved with all areas. Not in charge of it but involved as resources to help it, to facilitate that it happens. If you implement an intense instructional intervention model (takes about 4 years to work the bugs out) you should be achieving 70-80% of problem resolution at the RTI point and at the end of the six to eight weeks a team agreement that it's time to go on to a full psychometric and other evaluation for 20% or so.

And finally, below is an illustration of a framework for integrating services if and when an ELL/LEP student is found to be eligible for Special Education while still needing assistance with English acquisition. Across the top are levels of English acquisition and down the left side are degrees of special need.

So there you go. Those are some of the big issues, but we have shared our answers, we have shared our emerging research about effective models and systems.

See also an attachment by Dr. Collier: "What Every Administrator & Educator Should Know: Separating Difference from Disability"

### Integrated Services

	Pre-Production	Early Production	Speech Emergence	Intermediate Fluency	Intermediate Advanced Fluency	Advanced Fluency
Needs total assistance	Pull out for targeted assistance					
Needs a great deal of assistance						
Needs a lot of assistance	Pull out/Push in for targeted assistance					
Has moderate level of needs				↓ Student		
Has moderate but specific needs		Push in for targeted assistance				
Has specific need to be addressed					Total Inclusion	
Needs minimal assistance						

## Chapter 3: The Emperor has no Clothes: Situating Literacy for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Student Success

Socorro Herrera, Ph.D.

I think in listening to both of my colleagues, that we are all *right on track* with what it is that we're sharing. I think from looking at the handouts from the sessions you've attended, we find that we are all speaking the same language and looking for the same outcomes with students.

The title of my session is, "The Emperor Has No Clothes." Contextualizing literacy policies and practices for CLD students holds the potential to significantly enhance AYP among these students. I use the acronym CLD (*culturally and linguistically diverse*) because we don't want to just focus on those children that we can see or that we can test, that don't speak English. Because we must not forget students who are exited, who are at the BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communications Skills) level, but that really still need help [e.g., with language learning to develop CALP [Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency] skills in English (-- that is, children who come from a home where they are the sixth or the fifth or the fourth child who arrive to school speaking English because their siblings speak English but their primary care givers speak a language other than English.

When your culture is different, so to will be the language or language variation that you speak. It usually will not be aligned with the language of the school and that's why, these students are culturally and linguistically diverse. Why "The Emperor Has No Clothes?" As we work with about 800 teachers in three states every single semester at Kansas State University, most grade-level and content-area teachers, K-

16, who are preparing to work with second language learners...the questions that come up and the discoveries that teachers make are the same no matter what the state.

Once you're informed about certain things, you can actually take any program that's research-based, any strategy that's research-based and take it into aligning with what it is that we need to do for culturally and linguistically diverse students. What often happens, though, is that we have programs that are adopted, new curriculums within our schools and no one asks the question— And what about our culturally and linguistically diverse students? That's what our conversation is going to be about today.

How do we connect policy, programs, and culturally and linguistically diverse student academic achievement? Well, first we have to ask the question -- What impact has No Child Left Behind had on policy and programs? -- Because *it has had an impact*. Are decisions in policy and programs based on what we know about all students when we make those decisions? In what ways could we increase the efficacy of programs by connecting scientifically based research and what we know works with culturally and linguistically diverse students? As you listen to

my conversation, I will return to these questions and try to answer them.

First we have to remember that the intent of No Child Left Behind was not that either instruction or assessment involving drill and practice would lead to learning. So when Secretary Spellings [appointed in 2005] tells us, as the saying goes, what gets measured gets done...when we assess every student, we make every child count. We make sure every child counts. No Child Left Behind has done that for us. It's made every child count.

Now we're holding conversations about second language learners (CLD students). Yes, five years ago I used visit schools — whether it was in Nebraska, Colorado, or New Mexico -- all across the country where children were still sitting at the back of the room coloring; where children were outside in the hall with a tutor; where they weren't part of everyday (classroom) instruction.

What we do have to remember (as Albert Einstein has reminded us) is that not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts. When we get caught up in No Child Left Behind and begin to assume that just because we're drilling and testing, we're teaching and students are learning. We can get lost and in a few years we'll find ourselves out in the forest with no path out. So, remembering that reality is very important.

We can't take a *blame it on the schools*, type of approach because we have to understand poverty and the effect it has on teaching and learning. We have to understand that *there's been a lack of attention to culturally and*

*linguistically diverse populations for decades*, even though we have effectively debated this same issue for the last 150 or more years.

But these issues, in particular, have not been at the forefront of the debate and we have a shortage of genuinely *prepared* teachers — that is, teachers who understand culturally and linguistically diverse students, and what skills and tools it takes to really address changing needs so that we actually differentiate practice for these students.

What do we do differently because of No Child Left Behind? Well, we know that we use research to set policy and that's a good thing in a lot of ways. When you select programs only if they're scientifically based — there's some good things about that. Programs that are considered valuable and reliable are often selected in response to program reputation. Although there are some good things about — there are also valuable programs and policies that have been excluded.

*Assessment driven instruction*...Is that bad? Absolutely not. If we do authentic assessment and we do some testing, we know where it is that we need to go with the students that sit before us. And from one school to the next that assessment will look different. So it helps to guide us in what it is that we need to teach. However, teaching and assessing for *uniformity* — now that becomes problematic.

There are so many programs out there that we adopt because we think that they meet the needs of all learners, or we adopt them and we go about teaching, using these programs without critically evaluating their merits for *all students*.

I've only listed a few in the slide below because there are many. But these are the ones that come up over and over and over in the schools where I teach.

Are there any programs that meet the needs of ALL learners? IMPOSSIBLE!	
Reading First	Success for All
Connect Math	Trail Blazers
Literacy Work Stations	
Reading Edge	Read 180.....
When programs do not address the unique culture and language needs of CLD students... gains are limited.	

Let's remember when programs do not address the unique culture and language of the culturally and linguistically diverse students that sit before us, our gains *will be limited*. We will see gains but not the types of gains that we would see if we actually had the skills and the tools to take those programs and to adapt them -- that is, to stay with fidelity to the core, which we like to say, but at the same time meet the needs of families and students that we teach on a daily basis.

There's no equity through uniformity. Mandated instruction with materials and time available—it doesn't work. You're all different in here; you're going to take what we said today, and you're going to process it differently.

Scripting, pacing, and monitoring, yes, brand new teachers might need that. But it takes away from good teachers the authority, the prerogative, to really adapt instruction and assessment for the differences in our populations that is, to do *what's best for the population that we serve*. Equity is achieved when

we understand the unique needs of all students, every child that sits before us. *What is best for the group may not be best for every individual within that group*. We have to remember that those of us who are educators will continue to work with populations that are very diverse. Yes, it's scientifically based, but what do we have to ask ourselves? *Is it valid for the target population?*

I work in schools that often have a population of students that is 60 or more percent composed of CLD students and then 40% of that population is second language learners. They are spending thousands of dollars on a program and having all types of in-services, and I'll say to the superintendent or the assistant superintendent for instruction, "Did you ask how this has been validated or what schools they can direct me to where they have a similarly diverse classroom population?" "Where has this program worked, and in what ways has it been, or *not* been, adapted (e.g., for second language learners)?" They will often reply -- "Well, no, we're going to look at that after we begin implementing it." Well that doesn't make sense. Over half of your population doesn't fit this particular program.

Shouldn't we start with our actual school population? I would argue that even if you have one student that cannot benefit from the program – then that remains a question that you need to ask – that's the best possible interpretation of the phrase – *no child left behind!* So what should we ask? What is our population and how is the program that we are considering going to impact the students of that population? *Does the program fit our population?*

What questions should be asked about programs under consideration for adoption beyond the question of a diverse population? What professional development will be necessary for practitioners to understand the school and classroom adaptations that will be necessary to ensure maximum benefit from the program? I think before you start implementing, for example, *Reading First*, or *Success for All*, or *Connect Math*, or *Trailblazers*, you have to ask these sorts of critical questions.

We have to provide our teachers with the appropriate tools that they will need to deliver the adopted program for *our population*. Then, and only then, may all the scientifically based research and programming gain the opportunity to reach fruition, in our school system

We, as educators, and the schools that we work in must understand the biography of the population and bend and shape the adopted curriculum. For those of you that were in the session earlier and have not explored Collier's work on the prism model – it is critical that we begin to understand the sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive dimensions of background and experience that our CLD students bring to the learning community. We're going to talk about those here in a few minutes.

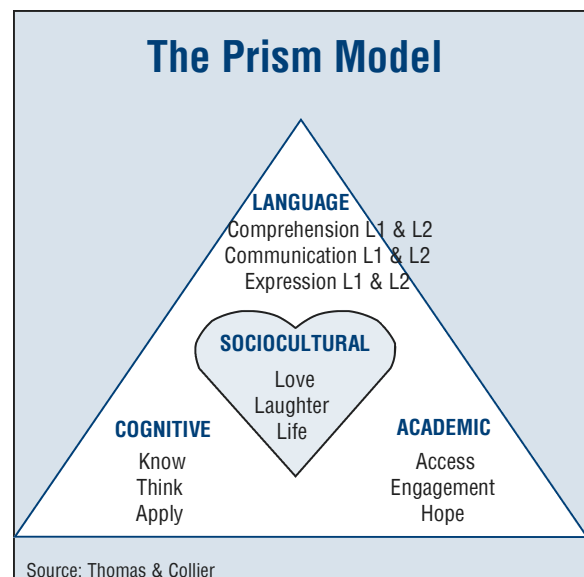
Professional development for staff for appropriate accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse students—so what does the prism model tell us? Here it is, and it just mirrors what my colleagues have shared with you. We have to understand first and foremost at the very heart of who it is that we are, in being human—the life, the laughter, and the love that is within us, and

how it is that we can engage students by connecting to that.

We don't understand language just from the formal dimension, but rather from the different dialects, as Dr. Collier just shared; how it connects cognitively; how it goes back socioculturally. We get all sorts of in-service about questioning - how to pose and how to get responses from students. How students question and respond to questions is very connected to their cultural socialization and that will differ from student to student.

I can't tell you how a Guatemalan child is socialized versus a Mexican versus a Puerto Rican – teachers must discover that from their classroom experiences. Policy makers have to listen to those teachers who have adapted to those experiences. Beyond these dynamics are, of course, so many within-group differences.

So that's why one-size-fits-all, even as far as teacher development, is not what is needed. Academically, the type of programming the student has had prior to being exited has



incredible implications for the engagement and hope that the student has in the grade-level classroom. The type of preparation the teachers have had when those students have exited...I call them the receiving teachers. We're hoping that the receiving teachers' arms are open wide and they understand how language fits into learning and how it is that they may differentiate their practices for culture and for language differences.

On each occasion where we experience a significant change in our student population, we need to *check our habits of mind and instruction* -- "What tweaking do I need to do?" Then remember that we each think, know, and apply things differently. All of these come from the actual work that we've been doing in schools for the last decade. I think it's not anything new. If we look at our own learning patterns as human beings we know that all of these things come to bear in the way that students engage and learn in any classroom.

We have an ethical responsibility to make decisions on programs that are scientifically based—I'm not disregarding that. But as educators, we also have the responsibility to learn about the population that we serve in order to provide equitable education for all students. As soon as we possess contextual information about a particular individual or group in our classes, we are ethically obligated to use it to moderate instructional decisions.

*Research and development for professional educators should promote teacher knowledge about the biographies of students.* What are the tools and the skills that I need? Bear in mind that what you will need as a teacher is

not a piece of paper with standardized assessment results. Teachers need the *full range of assessment results, including biographical information of the students served. That sort of information is best gained – first hand.* We should have knowledge of the student's culture and language in order to identify special characteristics that will drive and shape instruction.

We must be prepared to have inquiry skills. Such skills inform us about what questions to ask, such skills encourage informed adaptations, rather than ineffective trial and error in the classroom. Such skills form the basis for the teacher's capacity to meet the child at his or her level of language, socialization, academic experiences – and more.

Classroom teachers need the prerogative to make the decisions that lead to documentable academic success for their populations. Some teachers will say -- "Oh, but I can't change, I have to stay with fidelity to the core." And I say, "If you can prove by documenting in writing or by end of chapter tests that this child is growing, no one is going to dispute the accommodations that you have made. It's when the child is not progressing academically or in oral language development that people are going to ask the questions." But definitely, as a professional you have the right to make those accommodations that are appropriate, once you understand the needs of the child.

It's our obligation; finally, to use the best evidence we can for making policy and program decisions of consequence to culturally and linguistically diverse students. We must move forward as ethical educators and continue to build the

knowledge base, and ask our administrators and our professional developers what it is that we need to know to be *inquiry based* in our practice. Then you know what? You can go buy a \$50 strategies book and you can take any strategy and run it through its cycle of questions and make the adaptations; because even strategies intended for all students can work *when you consider the stages of second language acquisition and the countries of origin of your students and multiple other aspects of their biographies.*

I can go through a whole list of wonderful, wonderful tools out there, but those tools will not work and the programs will not succeed, unless you understand how it is to accommodate, to truly accommodate, for the sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive aspects of your students' biographies.

Now, I'm going to leave you with a three and a half minute clip of student voices. We have a group of CLD students at Kansas State University that we are preparing for careers in Teaching. To date, we have already prepared 92 of these students who now practice in school districts across Kansas. We went into high schools and asked high school principals and counselors to give us the kids who had not taken the SAT or ACT; who had not made over a 2.5 GPA; who were recent immigrants to the U.S. or had arrived in the U.S. during their elementary school years. These kids have the passion it takes to become truly effective teachers of CLD and other students.

The first time that we recruited in school districts, we were immediately directed to the kids who were already college-bound, who had taken the SAT or ACT, or were about to. We

said no -- we want kids who want to go to college who haven't been talked to, who are not typically considered college material, who have not necessarily taken the ACT or the SAT. Well these young people from under-represented groups were not only successfully recruited to K-State; they were graduated at a level of 90%.

One of the young people that you see on the video had a 9 ACT and a 1.7 GPA, and came to the U.S. as a sophomore in high school. He skipped a semester and he went back as a junior. He is now in a school district as a fabulous ESL and Spanish teacher, doing a tremendous job — community involvement, bringing kids to K-State to become involved.

When these students began our program at the university, we asked them to write identity papers— identity papers from their soul and also from their background and academic experiences as immigrant youth. We wanted them to share with us what it is that they would want to tell teachers who were resistant to teaching them, resistant to accepting them.

Virtually every one of these students attributed his or her success to a teacher that the individual had in middle school, high school, or elementary school. As a matter of fact, when we conducted their graduation celebration and we asked them to bring someone with them that really made a difference educationally, many brought a former teacher -- although mother often ran a close second.

So, as you listen to their voices, listen for their drive. Some say they hear anger. It's really a passion; it's

really a message – “*listen to me.*” Let me describe my experiences as an *invisible student*. So listen to these voices, and as a closure to this session, search for the messages that these students are trying so hard to convey. Their messages arise from the heart, but are grounded in the prism of their biographies!

## Chapter 4: The State of Pennsylvania – Implications for State Policy, Programs and Practice

### Margaret Chin, A School View

Well, we had some really good sharing with our presenters early on in the afternoon. What I intend to do for the next few minutes is bring you back to reality. What does it look like in a school, what does it look like in a large urban school district. I'm going to share with you the Philadelphia landscape.

The School District of Philadelphia is the eighth largest district in the nation, and is among the most socio-economically, financially and academically troubled. Over 70% of our students are qualified for free and reduced lunches. Students come largely from historically under-served racial and ethnic minorities: 64.4% are African-American, 15.8% are Latinos, 13.3% are Caucasian, 5.6% are Asian, 0.2% Native American; and 0.7% are of other heritages.

Of the approximately 170,000 students in our district, 14,000 are designated as English language learners (ELLs). The large population of ELLs enrolled in School District of Philadelphia schools come from Cambodia, Vietnam, China, India, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexico, African countries (South Africa, Eritrea and Liberia) and Eastern European countries.

Five-thousand of our students are immigrant students. Over 75 different primary languages and dialects are spoken in the homes of the students. Key School District documents sent to parents and families are translated into the ten most prevalent languages of the non-English speaking populations:

Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Khmer, Lao, Korean, Malayalam, Arabic, and Albanian. The largest groups with the most students are Spanish, Chinese and Khmer, respectively.

These students are dispersed across all grade levels, K-12 and attend 145 schools. While all 145 schools have a program of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), schools also implement instructional models tailored to site-specific needs, resources and population. For example, twenty-eight schools offer Dual Language instruction - Two-Way Immersion, Transitional Bilingual Programs and Heritage Language Programs. Twelve Transitional Bilingual Programs feature Spanish (10) or Chinese (2). Fifteen schools offer Heritage Language Programs featuring Chinese (5) Russian (4) Khmer (2) Vietnamese (1) and Spanish (3). One school offers a Two-Way Immersion Program (Spanish – English). Currently we have over 300 teachers in the ESOL and Bilingual Programs.

Today I would like to share with you what we mean by systemic approach to reform and what kind of alignment we've done in our District for the last four years.

#### Systemic Approach to Reform

##### Alignment

Over the past four years, the District is undergoing systemic reform. Now we have a standardized ESOL Core Curriculum Pre-K to 12 that is aligned to State standards as well as to the Core Curriculum in our District.

Does that mean every teacher has to teach according to the Planning and Scheduling Timeline? The answer is yes; but there is

still room for teacher creativity in delivering instruction. As part of the reform initiatives, we standardized textbooks for schools. Our office had invested over \$2.5 million dollars in new books for ESOL/Bilingual programs in the District, so that when students move from school to school, there is consistency with the same books, the same curriculum, and the same Planning and Scheduling Timeline even though the delivery of instruction could be a little different from classroom to classroom. On top of that, we also have a standardized assessment for initial placement of ELLs, level-to-level progress and as part of the exit criteria.

Teacher training is key and a must. ESOL teachers receive ongoing training on how to improve instruction as related to the ESOL Core Curriculum, new books and materials and how to administer the new assessment. We understand the importance of teaching ALL teachers to work with ELLs. MCC series - *Making Content Comprehensible for ELLs, Strategies That Work* is a four-part series we offered from region to region, school to school, to all classroom teachers and content area teachers. The goal is to ensure all teachers and administrators understand the learning process of ELLs, and have the tools to provide quality instruction for ELLs. We strategically focused trainings on District mandatory Professional Development days to make sure we have a captive audience. This August, we are providing training for all principals in addressing the needs of English Language Learners.

Collaboration with Central and Regional Offices: It is important that open dialogue and collaboration is in place for these initiatives to happen. Working together helps to streamline initiatives as well as smooth implementation and buy-in.

#### **Data**

Our District has a system in place due to the great emphasis on decision making

based on data. All schools, teachers and administrators have easy access to data to help them track student progress. SchoolNet is used District-wide. SchoolNet is our display system, and every teacher in our schools has access to SchoolNet. Teachers can find out when the student started ESOL; how many years he/she had been in the ESOL program; what are the standardized test scores; what are the benchmark scores and report card grades. These data are available to everybody, even to parents. FamilyNet is where parents have access to their children's school information and data.

Regional Superintendents and their principals have monthly SchoolStat meetings to review school data. Our CAO, Chief Academic Officer and team conduct Quantitative Quarterly Visits with the Regional Superintendents to review data on attendance, suspension, benchmark testing results and report card grades to improve instruction.

#### **Monitoring**

School level - There is a standardized Walkthrough Protocol used. Principals and Assistant Principals do informal and formal observation to provide effective feedback to teachers to change instructional practices. Schools have a data wall to display data for staff and parents. Schools that are in corrective action have a SAT (School Assistance Team) in the school to provide ongoing support. Most important, the principal's role is the instructional leader of the school and the focus is on instruction.

Regional level – Regional Superintendents and the Directors of Instruction are instructional leaders, they do daily classroom/school visits. They are accountable for student achievement and progress.

Central Office level - Quantitative Quarterly Visits to the regions involve central office staff to discuss progress

based on data and provide any focused additional support needed, e.g. Professional Development. The Chief Academic Officer also conducts Principal and Teacher Advisory Committees to involve them in instructional decision making and implementation.

#### **ACCESS/WIDA**

This year with the new State ACCESS assessment and the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Proficiency Standards, it was not an easy implementation in a district as large as Philadelphia with 14,000 ELLs. We learned and we turned it around to provide intensive training for our teachers. We were fortunate in inviting Margo Gotlieb, the guru of WIDA Standards, to meet with our teachers, to actually have a dialogue and answer some of their questions about the implementation of ACCESS and the WIDA Standards. We will continue to focus our professional development this summer and next year on teaching academic language.

#### **Language Policy**

We understand in order to make sure the above mentioned initiatives are in place, we need to revise the existing Language Policy to provide some “teeth”. The handout is the revised Language Policy which will drive the reform.

Highlights of this Language Policy speaks to a five year limit in the ESOL program. Data has shown a large number of ELLs are in the program over five years and are not progressing. This policy holds all parties involved accountable to the progress of ELLs. As our world is getting small, we have to prepare our students to compete in the global arena. This policy speaks to the need of students learning a world language other than English. There is a strong parental involvement component also, the establishment of

school-based Bilingual Parent Advisory Groups to keep parents informed of their children’s progress, and get parents involved in their children’s education.

This is how the School District of Philadelphia addresses the needs of ELLs.

There is more work to be done, but I think we are on the right track!

With that said, I just want to close with a couple of lines from Dr. Collier’s presentation. Teachers need to be engaging and then our students need to be engaged.

Thank you and I’ll be around to answer some questions.

See also Margaret Chin’s attachment: The School District of Philadelphia Language Policy - “A Pathway to Academic Proficiency”

## Chapter 4: The State of Pennsylvania – Implications for State Policy, Programs and Practice

### Karl Girton, A Policy Maker's View

I am here this afternoon because it is important for Pennsylvania educators to understand that the State Board of Education is truly invested in our ELL students. I'm personally very pleased to see this issue surface as part of the National Reform Agenda, because as Dr. Herrera suggested, this challenge has been with us for literally decades.

I understand that this is a very complex problem for a variety of reasons. Unfortunately, it does not appear to have a substantial enough number of well placed, vocal champions. Therefore, the time has come for all of us who profess to speak on behalf of these students to elevate the visibility of the problem and focus our energy on solving their educational challenges.

At the same time this symposium is working to strengthen the education of English language and bilingual learners, there is also an effort to do so by the National Association of State Boards of Education. Each year NASBE forms study groups to look at what they consider to be critical national issues. This year one of those topics is defining state priorities in policy recommendations for State Boards of Education relating to English language learners. That study group completed its work two weeks ago and they are in the process of drafting their report. This report will be presented to the National Association meetings this October in Philadelphia. These study groups have historically done comprehensive, enlightening analyses of complex issues, and for that reason, I am looking forward to seeing the report. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of that report is welcome to contact the Board office after the first of November when copies should be available for distribution.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education has a relatively broad grant of authority from the General Assembly. Among its many duties are the development and promulgation of Regulations dealing with an array of issues including curriculum, teacher certification, school construction, special and gifted education, to mention only a few. Among those that most practitioners are familiar with are the Chapter 4 Regulations, which contain the Academic Standards, and define and require the statewide system of assessment which currently centers on the PSSA. Most certified teachers are familiar with the Boards Chapter 49 Regulations, which set forth the requirements for teacher preparing institutions and provide the framework for the many different certifications granted in the Commonwealth.

Historically, English language learners have been included with African-American students, low income students, special education students and other sub groups under the larger "diverse learner's" umbrella. There is now compelling evidence that this cohort of students requires more explicit, targeted interventions and a number of initiatives have been, or are currently being undertaken. Specifically, in March of '05, the State Board of Education adopted and published "Proficiency Standards for

English Language Learners.” This set of Standards establishes a uniform set of defined expectations for ELL students.

The Chapter 49 Regulations (teacher preparation certification) have recently been revised. The new language will require all newly certified teachers, regardless of discipline, to have three credits of instruction in teaching English Language Learners. We believe this will make Pennsylvania one of the first states to have such a requirement. There is companion language in Chapter 49 requiring that all newly certified teachers, regardless of discipline, have nine credits of instruction relating to teaching Special Education students. One of the things that has troubled the State Board for a very long time is that a lot of newly minted, really excited, highly capable young teachers are thrust into classrooms where they have sizable numbers of students that they are not properly trained to teach. These new certification requirements will serve these learners and their teachers in the Commonwealth well in the future.

We are also currently revising our Special Education Regulations. Of particular interest to this group is the section of these Regulations dealing with Screening. Earlier this afternoon, Dr. Collier spoke about the problem of disproportionate identification of ELL students as learning disabled. Our hope is that this new language will help to resolve that problem. The draft language, which is currently undergoing regulatory review, talks about early intervention as a part of the screening process. It explicitly requires that schools determine that an exceptionality that's being demonstrated is not a language based problem. If this revised document ultimately succeeds, which we have every reason to believe it will, schools would be required to acknowledge that the perceived learning disability is not the manifestation of a

language skills problem before Special Education screening could take place.

During her presentation, Dr. Cole made reference to a widely accepted belief that there is a direct relationship between real estate values and perceived public school quality as defined by assessment results. This is a very real problem about which our Board has a high level of sensitivity. When the Board set out the design parameters for the current PSSA in the mid '90s, we were aware that we were setting forth a statewide assessment system that had the potential to exacerbate this unintended and undesirable consequence. The compelling need to have a uniform set of defined expectations of what students must know and be able to do (Academic Standards), coupled to a valid statewide assessment system (PSSA), outweighs any problems associated with the marginal impact on real estate values.

We continue to strive to bring balance and sanity to our statewide assessment system, and to that end, we are currently exploring the development of a requirement that all students take a series of end of course type examinations in lieu of the traditional locally developed final exams. These examinations, as currently envisioned, would be able to be used in lieu of the PSSA to define a student's proficiency for purposes of earning a diploma. If this alternative pathway to a diploma is ultimately provided for in regulation, it will provide a second pathway for students to demonstrate proficiency and would therefore presumably be more equitable.

Before I close, I want to revisit a comment that someone made at lunch. They thought the best way to have an interesting and invigorating afternoon session was to do an open mike on what people think about No Child Left Behind. I need to state for the record that I have yet to find anyone who fundamentally

disagrees with the basic premise of this federal statute. More than five years before NCLB was adopted, the Pennsylvania State Board Education went on a two day retreat at the Milton Hershey School to talk about the need to bring a uniform definition to what precisely it is that we believe students need to know and be able to do to be awarded a high school diploma in Pennsylvania. At the same time, we explored at length what kind of yardstick or measurement system was necessary to assure students, parents, teachers and the taxpayers of the Commonwealth that we were achieving the results that we defined. When No Child Left Behind became effective in 2002, it provided a national imperative for states to continue to do the right thing.

There is no question that No Child Left Behind requires some revision. It is my opinion that it is too punitive and fails to provide states with the flexibility that is necessary to craft procedures and programs that will be most effective in bringing all students to proficiency. I have great hope that when re-authorized, we will see some sanity brought to the flawed implementation pieces and that this

federal statute will continue to serve the students of this Commonwealth and the nation in very important ways.

Lisa asked me earlier if I had heard anything this afternoon that I thought was revolutionary. I've heard some exceptionally good ideas this afternoon, but am convinced that addressing the needs of our English Language Learners students is similar in many ways to those of all of our diverse learners. Katy Haycock, of the Education Trust, is fond of saying about the needs of diverse learners, that "solving this problem is not rocket science; rather it's common sense on steroids." It occurs to me that that's what we're really talking about here.

Once again, I am pleased that this issue has finally bubbled to the surface for a group of young people who deserve the attention that they are belatedly receiving. I give you my assurance that the State Board of Education remains committed to doing the right thing for these students. To do otherwise is politically unacceptable, it's economically unsustainable, but more importantly it's immoral.

Thank you very much.

## Chapter 4: The State of Pennsylvania – Implications for State Policy, Programs and Practice

Martha Strickland, Ed.D., A Researcher's View

### Educating Teachers for Diverse Populations: Considering Context and Consciousness

I assure you I have traveled all over the world and it is always interesting on how you were introduced. Many times they would say, "Oh, she's from Chicago." Even if they didn't understand English, they knew Chicago, and they'd say, "Ooh, Chicago., Bang-bang." [Laughter] All of us have interpretations of where we come from and that's what I want to talk about today. In light of the comments we heard earlier from the three national panelists, I will be looking at strengthening the Education of English Language Learners from a teacher education/higher education point of view.

I want to start by saying okay, we can look at the numbers when we consider challenges with ELL populations. I had many colleagues in Chicago that said, "You're going to central Pennsylvania? (My research focus is immigrants in the classroom.) Are there immigrants in central Pennsylvania?" When you look at the numbers, most of my colleagues in Chicago would shake their head and say, "No, not really." But when you look at the increase in the immigrant population in the state of Pennsylvania one can say, "You are on the precipice; you are on that halo dive. Do you know what the halo dive is? It is when you skydive and you don't put the parachute up until you are right before the ground." Well, as I see it in Pennsylvania we are in the halo dive.

I think Dr. Collier had a different way of expressing the context. She just kept saying or named it chaos. She did a lot of sound effects to express the context. We also had Dr. Cole who told us that context is about communication and talking—

and we're doing enough of that today—to help us understand context.

When we look at it, we see that there is an increasing immigrant population and there's no doubt about it; it will continue to increase. These are not migrants, right, that are going to go away. They're here. They're here.

To situate the rest of my comments—how many of you are ESL teachers? How many of you are coordinators, administrators, from that kind of group or from a College or university? Okay, we have a good number of all of these.

I began my career in the mainstream classroom and my passion is still there. For all of you ESL teachers, this is how I thought of it. I started in Miami where the Haitians were coming in. I was coached and trained in a very Caucasian school where I was told that ESL teachers fix everything. I learned that you just send them to the ESL teachers, right? That's where I'm coming from.

What I do is conduct my research on the mainstream classroom – trying to determine what's going on, what are classroom educators really thinking and how do we bridge that? All of you who are specialists who are working with the mainstream teachers, may know someone who keeps saying, why aren't you fixing this? That's how I see the context.

It's interesting that ETS (Educational Testing Service) in their recent report described the context as “The Perfect Storm.” That's kind of interesting, right? They said there is a colliding of forces; the demographic shifts all over the nation, the divergent skill distribution noting that number and literacy skills are not there with youth and adults, and the changing economy. You now need to have a higher level education to get the job that once took a lower educational level earlier on in life.

They went on to say in this report, “Okay, all of these three are colliding. We're going to call it, “The Perfect Storm.” Well, we also have, in this same context, a teacher quality mandate, right? Because ultimately we may not just blame the ESL teachers, let's just throw the challenges in school today on all the teachers. You see, the bottom line is, if it's a storm, come on teachers, do something about it. If it's really a storm, come on those of you who train teachers, get these teachers to get it right in our classroom. Why are you sending us teachers that aren't prepared? That's the message we in higher education are hearing.” They need to be more prepared so get it right.”

So the mandate's there. The Governor told us in higher education to get our teachers prepared to teach all students. We're to make sure we

have all students succeed in the high levels of technology, diverse global society; ACCTE echoed this mandate, AERA has their TOME which lays out all that's studied and still needed in teacher education. The 900 pages look at studying teacher education — great late night reading on what we're not doing and what we probably should do. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), in their research work about preparing teachers for the changing century, talks about what we're supposed to do.

Okay, so we already have the information. We have all these books and we'll just read it and we'll just do it. But you all know that reading it and doing it is a very complex process. For example, you heard from Margaret and as you listened many of you may have said to yourself, “Well that's not my situation. Well, if I had the funding. Well, if I had those students. You have a context—oh, I see some smiles. But you have these contexts in your head and you say “that doesn't fit, this fits. Okay, well I can dismiss that, that's not my context.”

So here's my questions for all of us teacher educators, what does it really mean for us to prepare teachers for this ever increasing diversity to population? What does it really mean to resource teachers who are also experiencing this increased student diversity in their classrooms? What does that really mean? What does that really look like? In the next few moments, all I'm going to do is take these three experts and I will summarize the answer in two words. They both start with C - Context and Consciousness.

What does it really mean to be prepared and to be equipped, to prepare our teachers and to equip them to address diversity in the classroom? It comes down to some real basics. We can have a lot of strategies. We can buy into a lot of initiatives. Like Dr. Herrera said, "They're wonderful, but bottom line, it's the deliverer, right." It's the person that interacts with those students, the person that's interacting with those teachers that is successful.

All of you are shaking your head, of course, right? It is context and consciousness and it's socio-cultural, which I'm so glad the three of you were here today. Because it includes the whole being, right? It includes your past. For example, some of you walked in saying, "I know what this is going to be like because I've done this before. I'll get more coffee, I'll get out my letter writing, or you fill in the blank. You have past experiences you bring it to the context. Every one of your students brings their past experiences to the context.

But you know what? Every teacher also brings their past experiences to the context. Every educator brings their background to the context. So you sat down, you knew what you wanted to do because you've experienced this type of meeting before. You had your formal schooling experience, your formal conference experience. We have students that come in and we all know what to do. For example you sat there. Why did you sit there? Why didn't you sit up here? What's the matter with that?

Right away, you say, "Well, that's not my place." Well who told you? I have students that I taught in Ivory

Coast who would say, those are more comfortable chairs so I'm sitting up there. Or, I just want to sit down here on the floor. Who told them to do that? We bring our cultural social context into everything that we do. Vygotsky's Social Cultural Theory talks about that. The bottom line is about learning. It's not what we do, it's the learning and how learning takes place with interactive talk. It takes place as we interact with each other and we have to pay attention to it.

I am getting more and more involved in the Cultural, Historical Activity Theory, which has as one of its key tenets that in interaction sometimes you're the subject and sometimes you're the object of that interaction. We are always constructing meaning together. So sometimes you actually are the learner with those learners. Well we don't really like that because see, we do discussions like this you begin with a question and then you look around and you see some hands raised. So you call on them and you hope they have "the answer" you have in your head, right? Because ultimately, in your mind learning is, if you got it the way I have it, then we have inter-subjectivity. That's an interesting word, because we define it sometimes as if it's this one same little piece that we all have to have. And if we're all on the same page, then we got it, right? See, right now I'm looking around the room going, "Oh good, some people are smiling. That means they have it." Really?

I did research on newly arrived immigrant students in the classroom in the Chicago area. What I did was videotape their classrooms and listen to them talk about what they saw. Then I listened to the teachers talk about what they saw. I juxtaposed

those two narratives, interesting stuff.

Here's one immigrant student: a newcomer, just arrived in the country five months ago. He's in the back of the classroom all the time. yelling "Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh" with his hand up. Now what do you say right away? What does the teacher say when she watches that video? She says, "There he is again. He is always seeking attention. I call on him and he never knows the answer. He just wants attention. He always wants attention."

All right now, what is your guess of what the student said when he sat down and told me what was going on in that video? I asked him, "What's going on here?" And he said, "Don't you know?" And I said, "No, come on tell me." And he said, "Did you see the rules in the front of the room? The Rule No. 1 says raise your hand. I am following the rule." [Laughter]. And I said, "Well that's interesting. How do you know this is okay with the teacher?" (The teacher is getting pretty frustrated with this action because he never had the answer.) [Laughter]. So the student said to me, "She smiles and looks at me, therefore, this is exactly what I need to do, see, she likes it," two different interpretations for the same action.

So what are we looking at? We're looking at socio-cultural context is coming from outside, moving into our classroom, interacting and moving outside. I would expand what you all were saying by noting that there's this basic fluidity of myth, actually. We're constantly changing what we believe is going on inside the classroom, as we interact right? When we're looking at the students we have to ask ourselves what is the

school, community, and home environment of these children. We have to find that out.

Complementary learning is becoming a major focus in the Harvard Graduate School of Education's recent research. Interesting work on how is learning happening and how is it increasing outside the classroom. This is for all you people that like scores. Increasing scores in the classroom achievement must include a look at the learning going on outside the classroom. Well then here we go—are we preparing our teachers to invest in this learning? Are we spending all of our time—I talk to myself too—are we spending all of our time teaching methodology and teaching strategies? Or are we helping them understand how to take into account the complementary learning pursuits of the students?

The second key word when looking at preparing teachers is "Consciousness." Sometimes we focus so much on the ELL kids and on the teacher that we forget that we ourselves, are bringing a cultural social experience into the classroom and this is not just teachers that are doing that. This is the teacher educator that's doing that. So you can ask, "Well why aren't these teachers being prepared?" My question is, "Why aren't the professors being prepared?" Do we have the social cultural consciousness that we need to prepare our teachers to walk into that classroom and ask the right questions of their students and of themselves? And those questions really are, as a cultural organizer, as a cultural mediator, I have to begin to ask what did I just do that may be culturally bound where my students don't get it?

Quick illustration: A teacher in the classroom needs to teach vocabulary. The vocabulary word is “fumble.” So guess where she goes? Football, yes. Now she had an interesting class, 32 kids, only a small number of these were born and raised in the United States, the majority were from other countries. She says to them, “Okay, how many of you have seen football, or know football? Everybody raises their hand. Everybody in the class raises their hand. And then she said, “Okay, so you all know, you know, when they drop the ball.”— The students all look at her. She continues, “You know when you drop the ball. You know how you're in football and you drop the ball...” [Laughter].

Two of the Caucasian boys in the back raise their hand and say, “Oh yeah, we know. And they gave their story of watching a fumble in football. The teacher responded, “Good, now did you all get it?” Everybody in the class shook their head, “yes” and they went on. I asked several immigrant student later about this, and guess what they said. Yes, one said, “Well it was just soccer, I don't know what she was talking about—It was the same word but different meaning. Thank you.

So we bring our own cultural bias into the classroom. The teacher here thought that that was the right way to teach this word and that's what they needed to understand. If they got that, then they'd get the item on — in Illinois it was the ISAT (Illinois Standardized Achievement Test). Do we understand what we are bringing into the classroom as educators and as school board members?

My next question is, “Do you ask your professional development people what they're bringing when they

come and work with your teachers? What's their cultural background? What's their cultural consciousness? What are their biases? How did they develop their curriculum? Why are they doing what they're doing? How does it address diversity? Are we asking those questions?

Bottom line is, are we infusing our whole understanding of the whole context in everything that we do? It takes awareness from the top, from the Department of Education, from the federal government all the way down. So you say, “Well that seems overwhelming.” Yes, but you know what? We can look at this “perfect storm” and we can say two things. We can say, “I'm going to hunker down, I'm going to close the windows, and I'm going to brace myself, close the door, have my kingdom and survive. And the storm will be over, “Right?” Some of you say “Yes what are we going to do?” I suggest another option. Here's our chance to look at this storm as something destructive, to be avoided or we can look at this storm as something energetic, that has energy. We can say, “You know what, all of these forces can be harnessed, and as we harness that storm we can actually get something accomplished.” So all I am saying is, let's harness the energy that the research is showing us. We can do it.

We need to start with asking ourselves as we prepare teachers and work with them in the classroom, “What's our context, what's our consciousness? What are we bringing to the table?” Don't let a professional development person, trainer, come into your midst, don't let somebody give you an item of responsibility without finding out where is that coming from and why is

that defined, and how is that defined? Then we can get somewhere.

So I want you to take a minute and I want you to think, what is your social cultural context and what is your consciousness? How aware are you of the cultural social background that you bring into your work with teachers? What you're doing includes not only the strategies you're choosing but what you expect of other teachers and your principal? So are we taking that time to ask that question? Reflect on that and embrace the energy of this “perfect storm.”

Strickland Attachment:  
*Educating Teachers for Diverse Populations:  
Considering Context and Consciousness*

## Chapter 4: The State of Pennsylvania – Implications for State Policy, Programs and Practice

Marian Walters, Ph.D., A Higher Education View

### Alternate External Funding Sources for ESL/ELL Programs

My goal today is to expand the funding sources and approaches you consider in seeking funding for ESL/ELL programs. The first thing I will do is bring some “coals to Newcastle” by showing you part of how I contextualize ESL/ELL issues. Then I can show you some ideas about funding sources, because the small role that I play with ESL and ELL, in my relatively new position at Penn State Harrisburg, is to try to coach those with ESL/ELL interests toward funding avenues. Fortunately, our ESL/ELL faculty are excited about the possibility of finding funding for their projects, which really helps since grant writing takes a good deal of effort. Not everybody is that excited about this process, or rather the possibility of funding success, but that is what I hope to provide for you.

#### Not Just One Mold

Concepts of how immigrants fit into our Society are changing. When I was young, the U.S. was considered a “melting pot”: people came here from all over the world, where they were assimilated and their cultural differences were expected to be lost (ignored, altered) as they were incorporated into their new homeland.

Today, I prefer to think of our society as a “smorgasbord”: a place where having a broad range of different flavors and textures is a positive part of the experience and the differences add to the rich heritage. This concept encourages people to appreciate the differences among different individuals and cultures and to celebrate them. Of course, this necessitates that educators learn about these cultural differences and how to educate people from these differing backgrounds, while encouraging an appreciation of the differences and the richness that they bring into our institutions and our society.

#### Expanding Face of ESL/ELL issues: Growing Immigrant Populations

The need for ESL/ELL is certainly expanding in Pennsylvania. In the Capital

area-Lancaster school districts, there are a growing number of ELL students. Spanish is the predominant language in this growing immigrant population, with more modest representation of at least ten other languages. In the Capital-area Head Start Programs, immigrant children speak more than 10-12 dominant non-English languages, including several European languages, Russian, and Asian languages (M. Strickland, personal communication). A report on the School District of Philadelphia website indicates that students come from households speaking more than 75 different languages/dialects (<http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/res-eval/rrc-invpriority.htm>).

Thus, regardless of whether you look at the age demographics (more languages represented in younger children in Head Start in Central PA) or geography (substantially increased number of languages/dialects in Philadelphia), the issue is coming to/expanding in Central PA. As a consequence, we need to be talking about how to fit the expanding immigrant population into our society and educational systems.

### Expanding Face of ESL/ELL Issues: Not Just About Children

Penn State Harrisburg (PSH) is very near this conference site, right across from the Harrisburg Airport. In Fall 2006, PSH registered 3,750 students, of which nearly 40% are graduate students. The minority student population was 8% African-American, 4% Hispanic, 7% Asian-American, and 2% International. While the 2% International is not remarkable for many colleges/universities, it is certainly notable for a college (PSH) that has traditionally targeted a local/regional audience. This expanding International student group points out that the ESL/ELL issue is also growing in higher education, and not only in Pennsylvania. And, while these International students have been admitted based on test scores that assess the ability to function in an English language arena, their cultural and linguistic differences will impact their education just as it does for the children of immigrant families.

Thus, the families and parents of the younger ESL students are struggling too, which underscores the need to understand the cultural context for learning for immigrant children and the importance, as pointed out in other talks, of involving the parents in some of the educational aspects. This connection then leads to the expanded concept of also working with programs for the families and the parents—an area that may lead to additional funding avenues.

#### Case Studies of Adult Students

Three years ago I came to PSH from a long career as a research scientist at a medical school, where I ran a departmental graduate program that recruited students far and wide. Two case studies from those days will bring the point to life that ESL/ELL issues are not just about children.

Case 1: One graduate student came from a foreign country, spoke halting English and implied that he understood spoken

English. He really struggled academically. More than a year later I realized that this student's English language skills were very weak, and I eventually talked him into going into an intensive English language training course. Subsequently, his academic performance improved. So, first point, difficult as it is to convince many of these students to do such an intensive training, it can really pay off for them.

Second point: In reality, this student had other problems in addition to English language problems that were impacting his academic achievement. However, until his language skills and course performance improved, we could not dissociate English language problems, academic difficulties, and other issues—I think, a parallel to learning disabilities also discussed in other talks. If we had gotten this student into intensive English language training earlier, he would not have struggled nearly as hard and as long, alone, as he did.

Case 2: A research postdoctoral fellow came to my laboratory from a foreign country. He was a very gifted scientist. He had earned a Ph.D. from a U.S. institution, so his spoken English language was pretty good and his understanding was good. Nevertheless, he was limited somewhat by his English language capabilities. What I came to see was that he was more limited by his cultural understanding. In the sciences, a postdoctoral fellow/trainee is the beginning of a career path, but he did not understand that aspect at all.

A year before the project funding ended, he told me he was leaving for another postdoctoral position in a research area completely unrelated to his scientific background. The rationale was that he could learn a new technical skill that he thought would help him later on. And then I realized a key point: his whole goal in coming to my lab, or leaving my lab for

another position, was to make a living and feed his family. I had a tremendous respect for this student and his scientific ability, so we had a series of long talks (rather quickly since he planned to leave very soon), where I explained to him about career building in the U.S. Ultimately, I talked him into not taking a job in a content area completely unrelated to his scientific background, but rather to find a position that would teach him the technical skill he wanted in the context of that scientific background. Stated differently, I taught him to build a professional career path. He has now been very successful in the more appropriate position he then found, where he learned the new molecular techniques he sought, but applied them to a research problem which built on his prior training. Here again, for this adult immigrant, language and cultural differences could have severely limited his ability to move forward career-wise in the new country where he wanted to build his life.

Finally, one additional lesson here is that as you seek funding for ESL/ELL programs for immigrant children, you may be able to find funding sources in areas outside of childhood education, or outside of just the educational arena, that will also support some of the programs you seek to establish.

#### Funding Opportunities Abound

Despite the expanding interest in and necessity for ESL and ELL programs, finding funding can be challenging. For educators, traditional funding sources include avenues that focus on implementation of ESL/ELL programs, perhaps including expansion to a broader geography or provision to new groups. Unfortunately, in these areas funding can be limited and competition is particularly tight. But, with a little persistence, there are many possible funding sources for those who “think outside the box”.

Alternative opportunities to acquire funding to implement educational programs can be developed when ESL/ELL programs are wrapped into a package of interest to the funding agency. While this approach may require a shift in how one thinks about the work, it does not have to alter the endpoint. For example, it is nearly impossible to do research on ESL/ELL approaches without having ESL/ELL programs to test. Thus, one approach to acquiring funding for ESL/ELL programs is to develop a research program, for example comparing two teaching approaches, or testing whether different groups (such as those that vary by ethnicity or age or time in the U.S., etc) respond differently to different teaching/learning methods. In some cases, adding the research component might require finding a research-experienced collaborator, but the funding agency should pay their costs. Other ideas include looking outside strictly educational sources of funding, or focusing on ESL/ELL delivery within specific educational disciplines, for example science and math education.

Below are a few examples of expanded funding options that might fit the needs of some ESL/ELL educators. All are taken from a synopsis of funding programs in 2006/07, but many programs repeat in periodic cycles (often annually, but sometimes more frequently). Importantly, this list does not include all the possible sources I found in a rather cursory search!

#### Funding Opportunities Abound: Fitting ESL/ELL Projects to Agency Interests

Sociological Initiatives Foundation funds research and social-action projects with a focus on understanding and finding solutions to a broad array of social problems. Among the areas of interest they list: second language learning and use, and literacy topics related to language in its social contexts. Discussion: Here is a social science initiative interested in ESL/ELL. <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/sif/index.php>

**American Honda Foundation** supports projects that meet the needs of youth, especially minority students. Prior projects have included math, science, technology, and environmental education improvement. They emphasize broad, innovative, and forward-thinking projects with national scope. Discussion: ESL/ELL approaches to teaching math and science could certainly be a “forward thinking project with national scope”, though one would need to emphasize some method for extending the project nationally or delivering the information to a national audience.

<http://corporate.honda.com/america/philanthropy.aspx?id=ahf>

**U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools: Mentoring Programs** funds projects that address the academic and social needs of children with the greatest mentoring need, including school-based mentoring programs and activities. Projects must serve children in one or more grades 4 through 8 living in rural areas or high-crime areas. Discussion: more than likely many students in need of ESL/ELL programs live in rural or high crime areas.

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/dvpm/mentoring/index.html>

**U.S. Department of Education: Improving Literacy through School Libraries** programs help local educational agencies improve reading achievement by providing students with access to up-to-date school library materials, well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media centers, and professionally certified school library media specialists. Discussion: pairing with the Library to provide relevant library facilities and media may be one avenue to enhance ESL/ELL programming.

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/index.html>

**Foundation for Financial Literacy: Financial Literacy Education** supports financial literacy education throughout the world through activities including financial education in schools and grassroots and home programs. Priority is to address underserved children through mentoring and underserved women's groups. Discussion: a possible avenue to provide financial education through or within ESL/ELL programs.

<http://www.ffliteracy.org>

**U.S. Department of Education: Education, Policy, Finance and Systems** supports research to improve student learning and achievement. Interested in projects that identify changes in the ways in which schools and districts are organized, managed, and operated that may be directly or indirectly linked to student outcomes. Discussion: perhaps in some schools where ESL/ELL students are a high proportion of the student body, some reorganization around ESL/ELL programs could be beneficial.

<http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>

The list above is by no means an exhaustive list of ideas for possible funding sources. What is important is investigating a broader range of funding agencies, coupled with the approach of turning the project around to fit your needs into the interests of the funding agency.

#### **Funding Opportunities Abound: Focused Disciplines or Expanding Target Populations**

The possible funding options can be expanded even further, for example by focusing on specific educational disciplines instead of just broad educational opportunities for students. Or, extend beyond early education students, or incorporate programs to improve teacher training.

**Institute of Education Sciences** supports education and special education research and research training on topics such as math and science education and instructional technology. Discussion: here is an opportunity to seek funding to teach math and science in an ESL/ELL context by either improving communication for/ with ESL/ELL students, or by improving the math/science models to fit the immigrant students' culture, for example where U.S. football examples make no sense to students for whom "football" means soccer.

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2007-2/040607c.html>

**Department of Education: Postsecondary Education Comprehensive Program** supports reforms, innovations and significant improvements in post-secondary education. Encourages projects that improve mathematics and science proficiency of postsecondary students, including pre-service math and science teachers. Discussion: Another funding agency that focuses in a specific disciplinary area, perhaps also going beyond the young student age group. While the target group may not be immigrant children, perhaps there is an opportunity to train the parents and help them train the students who are in the earlier educational levels.

<http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=13906>

**U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality: Reading and Writing Research** seeks projects to identify effective strategies for improving the performance of teachers with the ultimate goal of leading to improvements in students' reading and writing skills. Discussion: What if you targeted ESL teachers? Perhaps there are numerous possible projects based on different languages and cultural paths, etc.

<http://ies.ed.gov/funding>

**U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality: Math and Science Research** supports projects that identify effective strategies for improving the performance of classroom teachers to increase student learning and school achievement. Another goal is to support research on key issues of teacher quality that are likely to lead to substantial gains in student academic achievement. The agency is focused particularly on minority and economically disadvantaged students. Discussion: tailor-made for ESL/ELL programs.

<http://ies.ed.gov/funding>

In summary, the key point to all these suggestions is to seek funding opportunities outside education agencies and agencies that specifically list ESL/ELL as areas of focus, and think broadly about how ESL/ELL projects can fit into the agency's educational objectives. Good luck!

## Chapter 5: Summing Up: Symposium Synthesis and Points of Consensus

### Lisa Buenaventura, Ed.D.

Our distinguished panel of national researchers and Pennsylvania educators and policymakers identified key research findings, classroom and district practices, and policy issues we face in relation to English language and bilingual learners within the Commonwealth and the nation. This research symposium highlighted these areas at both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. It provided a kaleidoscope of perspectives to consider as we help second language learners retain their culturally and linguistically diverse identities while they acquire basic content knowledge, English proficiency, and essential workplace skills to become productive citizens. Our panelists viewed the way current research theories, educational practices, and national and state policies currently influence and impact one another through different lenses.

In reacting to the following guiding questions, every panelist chose to respond from his or her primary role as a researcher, practitioner, administrator, or policymaker:

*What guidance can be provided to schools and community service providers in drawing from the research literature on best practices and research-based service principles? How might this knowledge base be used to produce reforms within educational systems that incorporate these practices? How can the effectiveness of such programs and services best be measured?*

*What gaps currently exist in the research-based program field (for specific populations or specific types of approaches or for specific outcomes) for which there are not yet research-based models that have shown success and for which new models need to be developed?*

*What guidance can be provided to schools and community service providers in replicating proven, “evidence-based” educational programs/ instructional models for English language and bilingual learners when guidance can be given to assure on-going model fidelity and successful results?*

#### National Researchers and Scholars

Our three national researchers—**Dr. KimMarie Cole, Dr. Catherine Collier, and Dr. Socorro Herrera**—are all well-known

scholars in the field. Their individual presentations built upon and complemented one another, as they each addressed the myriad of issues and challenges facing second-language learners and educational practitioners. Each emphasized the critical importance of acknowledging, addressing, and integrating the cultural and linguistic diversity of second language learners across curriculum and instruction, educational programming, assessment, and policy.

First, **Dr. KimMarie Cole** asked us to consider the classroom itself, and identified several factors that impact or influence the learning environment. National policies regarding immigration and high-stakes testing were given as examples of external forces that critically impact teaching and learning for ESL and bilingual learners, or what she termed as *permeability*. Citing the work of Leo van Lier (1996), she discussed the significance of factors and activities beyond the classroom and their potential for meaningful learning within the classroom. Her second concept, *intersubjectivity*, related to the importance of the socio-cultural context in which communication and learning take place. Using a socio-cultural model of learning, Dr. Cole emphasized

the need to value the identities of learners and to empower them as active partners within the educational process. She stressed the significance of providing dynamic and flexible learning experiences which were authentic, creative, community-based, and personal for second language learners. Finally, she called upon educators to seriously reconsider many of their traditions: to view assessment as informing practice, to engage in alternative approaches to instructional delivery and professional development, and to seek novel projects and new partnerships with open minds and doors.

Our next speaker, **Dr. Catherine Collier**, continued the discussion by focusing upon the effects of disengagement and disproportionality within educational environments, as evidenced by the percentages of P-12 learners from low socio-economic status, diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, and different ability groups. She emphasized the importance of asking productive questions about learners to gather information needed in order to determine how learning issues might be resolved. In critically addressing the issues of difference due to socio-cultural or linguistic factors and exceptionalities, Dr. Collier identified several key areas to consider: education, home language, language proficiency, English proficiency, achievement, behavior, and adaptation. In exploring these areas, she suggested that the information gathered could be used to shape educational service delivery. She recommended the incorporation of an integrated instructional service model with a continuum of service delivery options based upon the specific needs of each learner—a *tiered approach to instructional intervention*. She compared and contrasted three current models: the Traditional Referral Model, the Instructional Intervention Model, and the Response to Intervention (RTI) Cascade Model. Dr.

Collier emphasized the importance of using authentic assessment to measure learner progress, identifying reasonable and achievable benchmarks for a diverse group of learners, and building a team of interventionists working together on implementation.

**Dr. Socorro Herrera**, our final national presenter, noted how the perspectives of her research colleagues complemented her own. Her presentation focused upon the contextualization of literacy policies related to culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners and their academic achievement. She reminded the audience about the underlying *intent* of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which was and is *to make sure that every child counts*. Dr. Herrera re-emphasized the importance of *assessment-driven instruction*, but not necessarily uniformity in instructional and assessment practices. She reiterated the fact that curricular, instructional, evaluative, and/or programming decisions needed to be made based upon “*their merits for all children*.” She encouraged the audience to engage in critical questioning about these areas—the specific needs of a target population (i.e., CLD learners), the validity and reliability of these practices and assessments, the appropriateness of the tools and training provided to educators, the effectiveness of these various elements in meeting the needs of a specific target population. As she emphasized, “*Then, and only then, may all the scientifically-based research and programming gain the opportunity to reach fruition in our school system*.” Dr. Herrera then asked the audience to “*check our habits of mind and instruction*” in thinking about what learners’ behaviors and academic performance tell us. She reminded us to be *reflective practitioners*, to carefully consider our own practices in order to improve what we do with learners in the classroom. Finally, Dr. Herrera encouraged research and professional development that promoted the integration of student biographies in

the assessment process—the understanding of a learner’s *“culture and language in order to identify special characteristics that will drive and shape instruction.”* In other words, within an American educational system, educational tools and programs will succeed only when a clear understanding about the relationship between second language acquisition, academic achievement, and a learner’s cognitive, academic, linguistic, and socio-cultural background exists. Dr. Herrera’s final thoughts concerned the critical significance of *listening* to culturally and linguistically diverse learners so that they would no longer feel invisible.

#### Pennsylvania Educational Responders

During the second half of the research symposium, representatives from the educational community across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provided their perspectives about second language learners. **Margaret Chin**, Program Officer for the Office of Language, Culture, and the Arts, for the School District of Philadelphia, highlighted the achievements and challenges of serving over 14,000 culturally and linguistically diverse learners within the eighth largest urban school district in the nation. **Dr. Martha Strickland**, Assistant Professor of Education, representing Penn State Harrisburg’s Teacher Education Unit, broached the issues related to preparing teachers to work with diverse populations, specifically second language learners. Following her, **Dr. Marian Walters**, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, discussed the relevance and importance of funded research to inform and improve practice and programming for culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and offered suggestions regarding research funding opportunities. Finally, **Karl Girton**, Chair of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, offered his perspectives about recently-instituted policies and discussions at the state level regarding many of the issues presented at the

symposium related to teacher certification, assessment, accountability, Special Education, and English-As-A-Second Language (ESL). All of these presentations provided opportunities for other panelists and members of the audience to gain knowledge and insights about the diverse and dynamic ways in which different entities with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania view and approach the various issues and challenges related to second language learners in this state.

Our first Pennsylvania responder, **Margaret Chin**, described the challenges of addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in a large and diverse urban school district. She noted that there were approximately 14,000 students designated as ELLs or English Language Learners, of whom 5,000 were immigrant students. These students represented over 75 primary languages and dialects in the home. Her point in providing these demographics was to demonstrate the significant need for a variety of programs in the district to meet the needs of second language learners, as the national researchers had suggested earlier. Ms. Chin then described what it meant to incorporate a systematic approach to educational reform and the importance of aligning curriculum, instruction, assessment, and programming to state and national professional standards for ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) and bilingual learners. She discussed the development of the ESOL Core Curriculum for PreK-12, which demanded consistency and accountability from teachers, yet also provided flexibility in service delivery. Ms. Chin emphasized the critical importance of dialogue and collaboration among school personnel in this systematic approach to reform. She identified several significant district-wide changes resulting from the implementation of this approach to reform: (1) how data were now used for decision-making and programming; (2)

how performance monitoring occurred at the school, regional, and central office levels to hold everyone accountable; (3) how teachers were trained to use and implement the new State ACCESS assessment and World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Proficiency Standards; and (4) how a district-wide language policy now held everyone accountable and encouraged parent and community involvement to support the progress and achievement of ELLs.

**Dr. Martha Strickland** then turned to a discussion about the implications of the changing demographics of our student population, particularly very culturally and linguistically diverse students, on teacher preparation. She cited several national surveys that indicated a significant and continuing increase in the number of immigrant families in the United States, with a 105% increase in the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) children in schools between 1990 and 2000. Dr. Strickland talked about “the perfect storm” (ETS, 2007)—the colliding forces of changing demographics, the poor literacy and numeracy skills of children and adults in this country, and the increasing demands for higher levels of education and skills for a global economy—with implications for second language learners and their academic achievement. She discussed the significance of several recent educational reports and teacher mandates, including the Pennsylvania Commission on Training American’s Teachers (2006), No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002), and initiatives from major educational organizations (AACTE, NCATE, AERA) regarding the critical nature of teacher preparation and training. Her key question to the audience was: “*What does it mean to prepare teachers for this increasing diverse population?*”

Dr. Strickland, as had the national researchers, then emphasized the importance of considering the “socio-

cultural context” of and for learning: the social, cultural, [linguistic] and historical experiences that children and adults bring to their learning experiences. For both pre-service and in-service teachers, understanding this socio-cultural context was necessary when working with second language learners. She cited the work of Vygotsky (1998), which emphasized social interaction and constructivism in making meaning and learning. As Dr. KimMarie Cole and Dr. Socorro Herrera had suggested earlier, Dr. Strickland reiterated the need to consider the “*cultural frames of reference*” embedded in a classroom setting and experience. Having knowledge and understanding about another’s worldview or experiences, and providing *permeability*, as Dr. Cole had suggested earlier, in the types of learning experiences to foster outside of the classroom to provide linkages to classroom learning, were also suggestions that Dr. Strickland made. She emphasized the importance of using cultural organizers to help mediate between home and school, as well as increasing the recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds. Finally, Dr. Strickland encouraged the use of *culturally responsive pedagogical infusion*, a gap in both current pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs, but a critical response to creating “socio-cultural consciousness.”

Our third panelist, **Dr. Marian Walters**, focused her presentation on the opportunities that research funding could provide, rather than on research, practice, or policy *per se*. She cited, as had other presenters, the significant demographic changes across the nation and within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She, too, emphasized the need to seriously consider how to best accommodate and serve the growing immigrant (and refugee) populations across the United States, within Pennsylvania, and specifically within our educational systems. While she emphasized the issues and challenges of

English-As-A-Second Language (ESL)/ English Language Learners (ELLs), she used this context of need to suggest avenues for potential funding that might serve several purposes: (1) expanding research in the field of second language learners; (2) developing and implementing programs to improve current educational practices and promote educational innovation for children, youth, and adults from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; (3) establishing programs to encourage parental involvement in education and provide family support; and (4) developing appropriate career pathways for second language learners seeking professional advancement. She urged members of the audience to “think outside of the box” when seeking external sources of funding to support their research and programmatic interests in working with second language learners.

Finally, **Karl Girton**, Chair of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, offered a brief overview of recent policy decisions made at the state level related to NCLB and professional standards, curriculum, assessment, teacher certification, Special Education, and English Language Learners (ELLs). He acknowledged that even the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) had identified the topic of defining state priorities for policy related to English Language Learners (ELLs) as a key area for discussion at its annual Fall conference. He noted that, earlier in 2005, Pennsylvania had developed the “*Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners*” to provide consistent expectations, and that recently the Chapter 49 regulations (for teacher certification) had adopted new language requiring newly certified teachers to have a specific number of credit hours of ESL and Special Education training in their preparation programs. Mr. Girton emphasized the importance of having “*a uniform set of expectations of what students should know and be able to do (Academic Standards),*

aligned with “*a valid statewide assessment system (PSSA).*” He acknowledged efforts at the state level to provide an alternative yet equitable pathway (other than the PSSA) for students, such as second language learners, to demonstrate academic proficiency. Mr. Girton, in closing, referred to NCLB, as had Dr. Socorro Herrera, acknowledging that, while it seemed too punitive and lacked flexibility, it did serve as a “*a national imperative for states to continue to do the right thing [for all students].*” In referring to the challenges for second language learners in Pennsylvania, he ended his presentation by emphasizing the commitment of the State Board “*to do the right thing for these students.*”

### Synthesis

Throughout the presentations of our panelists, several different terms were used to refer to second language learners. Dr. Socorro Herrera identified them as *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD)*, as she described the feelings of invisibility among these students and remembered her personal history. Margaret Chin described the English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), bilingual, and immigrant students within the School District of Philadelphia, which serves students speaking more than 75 languages and dialects. Other presenters chose the term *ELL (English Language Learner)* or *ESL (English as a Second Language)* as they discussed their research or practice within the classroom setting. Historically, at the federal and state levels, all of these terms have been used, as well as *LEP or Limited English Proficient*. The term or terms each symposium panelist chose to use varied depending upon his or her worldview. Socio-cultural, linguistic, historical, political, philosophical, educational, professional, and/or personal context and experience framed how each individual selected a term and definition for learners who speak or are acquiring a second or other language. Like the panelists, every educator approaches second language

learners with a particular worldview--underlying perceptions and subconscious assumptions about who they are, what they may need, and how to interact with them. However, while the labels may be confusing or may designate different things to different people, what is clear is the acknowledgement and understanding about the significant demographic population shift in the United States and its implications for the accommodation, acculturation, and integration of second language learners into American society--its educational systems, its workplaces, and its communities.

In considering the various responses of the panel to the original questions posed, several themes consistently emerged as elements of research, policy, and practice. The recurring themes and priorities for P-12 second language learners were reiterated by the panelists in different ways, yet were consistent. This seemed to reflect an underlying commitment to a common vision, mission, and goals for the education of second language learners as follows:

**A. Research suggests:**

- (1) A strong base of knowledge, understanding, and purposeful integration of socio-cultural context and cultural responsive pedagogy within and outside of the classroom setting, as well as a significant emphasis on these concepts and practices within teacher preparation programs, so that the life histories, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds of second language learners truly inform the teaching and learning process;
- (2) Inclusion of cultural mediators to provide linkages between home and school;
- (3) Increased recruitment of educators from culturally and linguistically

diverse populations that reflect the student population;

- (4) Authentic assessment practices that have been appropriately designed and implemented with data used to inform practice; and
- (5) Focused and interdisciplinary approaches to seeking funding for research related to second language learners

**B. Policy suggests:**

- (1) An increased emphasis on the development of specific state policies, priorities, and practices related to second language learners, which also reflect the requirements of federal mandates (i.e. NCLB);
- (2) A continued emphasis on consistent standards for both teacher certification and student academic achievement aligned with appropriate and authentic assessments to inform instruction and programming; and
- (3) Specific expectations and educational requirements for the preparation of teaching professionals related to working with culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

**C. Practice suggests:**

The importance of incorporating a systematic approach to (policy and) programming that impacts P-12 second language learners, whether at the state, district, or school level, that includes:

- (1) Consistent professional standards for the education profession and uniform academic standards for P-12 learners that provide appropriate measures for performance and accountability;
- (2) Focused alignment of standards with systematic approaches to monitoring of progress and to assessment that emphasize the relationship between the intent of benchmarks and testing;

- (3) Development and implementation of appropriate forms of assessment for second language learners that accurately and equitably measure their academic needs, performance, and achievement;
- (4) Data-driven decision-making and policies that inform and shape curricular and instructional programming that implements a continuum of service delivery models for P-12 second language learners; and
- (5) The purposeful inclusion of second language learners' parents and communities in shaping the educational practices and policies that affect their children.

Finally, it was apparent from listening to both the national researchers and Pennsylvania responders that, while there continue to be gaps in communication and implementation, that everyone is trying to make sense of what research suggests as effective strategies for practice as well as for policy. Some of the “translation” may have become muddled or taken literally, as evidenced by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the subsequent intense focus placed upon required state assessments in P-12 schools. As both Karl Girton and Dr. Socorro Herrera reminded the audience, the *intent* has been to ensure that the needs of *every learner* are addressed and *count*, including the historically “invisible” second language learner in the P-12 system, and that educators are held *accountable for measurable progress*.

In reviewing the presentations of our esteemed research symposium panelists, I have tried to frame their perspectives in terms of what we, within the Teacher Education Unit of the School of Behavioral Sciences and Education at Penn State Harrisburg, believe. We have committed to a conceptual framework for teacher preparation that considers four core elements: *constructivism, authenticity,*

*reflectivity, and standards-based curriculum.*

Aligning each of our core elements and the major themes proposed by the panelists has provided a way of understanding what these themes mean for educators. First, *constructivism* requires educators to provide P-12 second language learners with educational opportunities and experiences, which incorporate their own socio-cultural and linguistic histories and allow them to construct meaning by determining the relationships between their foundational knowledge with new information. Dr. Cole, Dr. Herrera, Dr. Collier, and Dr. Strickland all emphasized the importance of *life histories, socio-cultural context, and permeability* in learning experiences *within and outside* of the classroom. Second, *authenticity* as Dr. Cole described it, requires that the learning experiences provided by educators for these students be *real or authentic, community-based, creative, and personal*. Third, *reflectivity* as Dr. Herrera reminded us, encourages educators to provide opportunities for second language learners to reflect upon their learning. In addition, she asked the audience to “*check our [own] habits of mind and instruction*” and to carefully consider and refine our own practices in the classroom as we think about learner’s behaviors and academic performance. Fourth, *standards-based curriculum* is another reminder about the critical importance of understanding and incorporating national, professional, and state standards for educators and P-12 second language learners into our curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. As Ms. Chin, Mr. Girton, and Dr. Herrera emphasized, a systematic approach and alignment of policy, practice, performance standards, and authentic assessment are extremely significant if we are to appropriately educate second language learners (and their teachers) in our educational settings.

If we, as educators, are truly committed to *making the right investment and strengthening the education of English Language and Bilingual*

*learners*, the best practices suggested by research need to be consciously and consistently translated into policy and practice-within schools and school districts, within higher education classrooms, within communities and workplaces, and within the highest levels of policy-making at the state level. It is not the primary or sole responsibility of one particular entity to create and sustain the reforms necessary to ensure the academic success and achievement of second language learners, and to prepare them to become effective and productive citizens. In an era of globalization, we share that responsibility as members of the educational community. As Karl Girton concluded, “.....[because] to do otherwise is politically unacceptable, it’s economically unsustainable, but more importantly, it’s immoral.”

## About the Authors

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**Catherine Collier, Ph.D.** has over 35 years experience in cross-cultural, bilingual, and special education. She completed her Ph.D. with research into the referral of Hispanic students to special education programs. Her professional experience includes work with the BUENO Center for Multicultural Education, Research, and Evaluation at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she created and directed the Bilingual Special Education curriculum/Training project (BISECT), a nationally recognized effort. Dr Collier is the author of numerous books and publications.

**Karl Girton** is the current Chairperson of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. He is a lifelong resident of Millville, a rural community in Northeastern Pennsylvania, graduating from Millville High School. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Accounting from the Citadel and a Master of Science degree from Pennsylvania State University, which selected him as an Alumni Fellow in 1992.

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**Socorro Herrera, Ph.D.** serves as a professor of Elementary Education at Kansas State University and directs the Collaborative Intercultural Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) Center at Kansas State University. Her professional career includes having teaching experience is at the elementary level (K–6), primarily as a Title I teacher and grade-level teacher. Currently she has been collaborating with educators in middle and high schools across the country. Her research focus emphasizes emergent literacy with culturally and linguistically diverse children, reading strategies, and teacher preparation for diversity in the classroom. Dr. Herrera has authored many books and publications.

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## What Every Administrator & Educator Should Know: Separating Difference from Disability

Catherine Collier, Ph.D.

### Introduction

An increasing number of education professionals and education program administrators have been asking me how to address the diverse assessment and instruction needs of bilingual students with learning and behavior problems. This situation presents even the most experienced education professional with unique challenges in identifying and addressing those needs due to difference from those due to disability. Instructional and service planning which is compliant with current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guidelines can be very challenging with the wide range of student learning and behavior issues facing today's school personnel.

### Asking the Right Questions

These issues frequently appear in school settings as questions asked by concerned school personnel: "He has been here over two years, so isn't his lack of academic achievement a sign of a possible disability?" "Is this communication problem a language difference or is it a language disability?" "She was born here, so can't we rule out culture shock and language development issues?" Although illustrative of the good intentions and heartfelt concern about these students by education professionals, it is more productive to ask what information do we need and how will we use it.

### What information do we need?

The information to be gathered answers specific questions critical to separating difference from disability (SDD) considerations:

**Education:** Has the student been in school before? Are there gaps in the student's education experiences? Sufficient intensity of instruction?

**Home language:** Are languages other than English spoken in the student's home? What languages other than English does the student speak? Is the student maintaining an ability to communicate with his/her family members?

**Language proficiency:** What is the student's language proficiency and literacy? Is the student developing the home language at a normal rate?

**English:** Does the student need assistance with learning English? Is the student acquiring English at a normal rate?

**Achievement:** What is the student's level and rate of academic achievement? Is this normal for the general student population in your district/school? Specific population of the student?

**Behavior:** Is the student's emotional stability developmentally and culturally appropriate? Are there individual or family circumstances that may explain the observed behavior?

**Adaptation:** What is the student's level of acculturation? Is the student at risk for culture shock? Is the student adapting to our school at a normal rate?

### How should we use the information?

Information about students is not valuable if it is not instructionally meaningful and does not lead to a course of action for the student's benefit.

**Education:** Prior experience in school, whether in the US or other country, facilitates transitional instructional models. Thus knowing that the student has received schooling elsewhere tells school personnel they can focus on transition from one academic language foundation to English academic language. If the student has never had a formal education experience, school personnel must start by building an understanding of school culture, rules, expectations, and basic school interaction language in the student's most proficient language before transitioning into English. SDD concern: if the student shows little progress with adapting to school expectations and continues to struggle with acquiring school interaction language in their home language, they may have an undiagnosed disability and need to be referred for a full evaluation.

**Home language:** Students, who are raised in homes where English is infrequently or only one of other languages used, come to us with unique strengths that can become the foundation of instruction. Research shows that they have cognitive and linguistic capacities that can facilitate learning. Additionally, psychological wellbeing is built upon quality family communication and interactions. SDD concern: If the student has not acquired a developmentally appropriate proficiency in a language other than English, it may be due to family circumstances (see discussion under behavior & adaptation) or the presence of an undiagnosed disability. In either case this can delay their English acquisition. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in the primary home language would show whether the student has the ability to develop language and communication. If the student's communication does not improve under intervention then a referral for a full evaluation would be warranted.

**Language proficiency:** The student's proficiency and background in a language other than English assists in deciding the most effective instructional communicative models. It is critical to assess to the extent possible the student's proficiency in their home language/communication mode. As there are not standardized tests available for every language or communication mode, alternative measures are frequently needed. These can be structured sampling and observation, interview, interactive inventories, and other analytic tools. Rubrics for interpreting these tools are available. SDD concern: a student may score low on a standardized test in their home language because they have never received instruction in the language and have only an oral proficiency. Thus low primary language and low English may look like there is some language disability. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in the primary language, including basic phonics and literacy readiness would serve two purposes, profile the student's proficiency and establish whether the low score is learning based rather than something else. If the student makes little or no progress in the RTI, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary.

**English:** The student's language proficiency in English is directly related to eligibility and entry level for English as a second language instruction. There are many tools available for determining whether a student needs assistance with learning English. For initial services in English Language Learning for limited English proficient speakers (ELL/LEP), school personnel should select instruments that are quick, non-biased, and focus on speaking and listening skills. Including literacy screening would be instructionally meaningful only for students who have received prior instruction in English. SDD concern: some students speak enough English to not qualify for ELL/LEP services but have such a limited classroom language foundation that they look like students with learning disabilities. Thus English screening for ELL/LEP services must include screening for cognitive academic language proficiency and not just social language. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in English, including basic phonics and literacy readiness would serve two purposes, profile the student's proficiency and establish whether the low score is learning based rather than something else. If the student makes little or no progress in the RTI, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary. Additionally, if the child has a disability and is receiving special education services, and is an ELL/LEP student, the IEP should list the ELL/LEP accommodations as part of related services. This could be bilingual assistance or SDAIE within the special education setting or some other appropriate monitored intervention with specific objectives related to acquiring English. In many cases, the disabling condition is such that it seriously impacts the acquisition of English and thus special education personnel and ELL/LEP personnel must work together on realistic outcomes. These modified language outcomes need to be included in the IEP.

**Achievement:** All children can learn but they learn at different rates and in different manners. All children can learn but they enter and exit at different points. A challenge of today's standards based education models is that students that do not fit the scope and sequence of a particular school system are frequently placed in alternative instructional settings that may or may not be appropriate to their needs. SDD concern: if a student is not meeting the benchmarks established by a school system even when given learning support, they may be referred to special education as having a learning disability of some sort. Sometimes special education is the only instructional alternative available in the building. It is not appropriate to place students who do not have a disability in special education even when it is the best alternative instructional setting available. We recommend restructuring all programs to include differentiated instructional environments where any student can enter a lesson at his/her entry point and learn to the maximum of his/her abilities. A structured intensive intervention (part of an RTI) in fundamental learning strategies would establish whether the low score is learning based rather than something else. If the student makes little or no progress in the RTI, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary.

**Behavior:** Family and community events can be a contributing factor and it is critical to effective instruction to explore both school and non-school environments and their relationship to the student's presenting problem.

Whether the behavior problem is due to an innate disorder, biochemical dysfunction, or a temporary response to trauma or disruption in the student's home or school environment, the student needs effective and immediate intervention and assistance. SDD concern: although the student needs assistance with managing or controlling his or her behavior, special education is not the appropriate placement if the etiology of the problem is culture shock, an event or chronic stressors in the student's home or school environment. An intensive instructional intervention (part of an RTI) which facilitates self-monitoring and control within a supportive and safe environment should be always be implemented first. If the problem does not appear to decrease in frequency or intensity, or if the student makes little or no progress, a referral for a full evaluation is necessary.

**Adaptation:** The level and rate of acculturation, and accompanying degree of culture shock, must be addressed within the instructional environment. All students must adapt to the school environment whether they speak English or not; students who come into your school from homes or communities very different from the school will experience greater degree of culture shock. SDD concern: the manifestations of culture shock look a lot like learning and behavior disabilities and unaddressed acculturation and adaptation needs can concatenate into serious learning and behavior problems later in the education experience. An intensive instructional intervention (part of an RTI) which mitigates culture shock and facilitates adaptation and language transition should be always be implemented, particularly for newcomers. Most students will respond within weeks to this intervention. This positive response does not mean that culture shock may not reappear as culture shock is cyclical and a normal part of our adaptation to anything strange to us. However, a positive response to acculturative assistance lets school personnel know that the presenting problems are due to a normal adaptive process, acculturation, which responds over time to instructional intervention. Students should have their level of acculturation measured at entry into your school system and their rate of acculturation monitored annually to assure the student is making normal progress in your school. If the student's rate of acculturation is not within normal range, it is an indication either that the program is not adequately addressing his transition needs, or that there may be an undiagnosed disability of some sort that is depressing the rate of acculturation.

#### Appropriate Actions to Take

We have come a long way towards understanding the elements that best facilitate separating difference from disability. Whether a particular learning problem is due to an undiagnosed disorder or is due to an unaddressed learning need, an appropriate assessment and instruction response is required. The elements are: comprehensive information gathering, resiliency based instruction, instructional intervention, focused referrals, comprehensive evaluation, focused staffing, integrated services, and monitoring.

### **1. Improve and expand information gathering**

- a. Expand the information gathered at enrollment.
- b. Collect information about language, acculturation, health, and prior schooling at enrollment.
- c. Establish a baseline profile of all diverse learners: language proficiency in both languages and level of acculturation at entry.
- d. Train intake personnel about how to gather information, what information to collect and how to improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

### **2. Develop resiliency based instruction**

1. Use information about strengths to develop prevention programs.
2. Train instructional personnel about how to improve their cross-cultural communication skills.
3. Support educational personnel in building and sustaining instructional programs based upon strengths and resiliencies of all students.

### **3. Implement structured and differentiated learning support**

- a. Use information about needs to develop differentiated learning support options within the general education program.
- b. Train classroom personnel about how to differentiate instruction within the general benchmarked curriculum.
- c. Support learning support and content support personnel in building and sustaining these curricular support programs based upon the needs of all students.
- d. Emphasize Strategy Fitness, i.e. selection of appropriate targeted strategies for specific issues – building upon strengths or addressing needs.

### **4. Implement & monitor instructional intervention (also called RTI)**

- a. Establish instructional intervention programs based upon classroom based data gathering and behavior monitoring. Intensive instructional intervention (6-8 weeks, no longer than 12) should be documented and monitored.
- b. Train education personnel about how to identify at-risk students early in the instructional process.
- c. Develop and maintain a flexible instructional intervention team of education professionals such as classroom teachers, bilingual/ELL/LEP personnel, staff assistants, math and language specialists, Title I personnel, and other direct instruction personnel.
- d. Emphasize Strategy Fitness during intervention, i.e. selection of appropriate tightly targeted strategies for specific identified and documented issues.
- e. Referral to special education should only occur after a pre-referral analysis of information and data gathered during enrollment and instructional intervention.

### **5. Develop a focused referral process**

- a. Develop cross-cultural referral guidelines and procedures.
- b. Referral to special education should only occur after a pre-referral analysis of information and data gathered during enrollment and instructional intervention.
- c. The Instructional Intervention team passes on their findings as a referral to the evaluation team.
- d. Train intake personnel about how to gather information, what information to collect and how to improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

### **6. Expand and adapt evaluation**

- a. Develop cross-cultural assessment & evaluation guidelines and procedures.
- b. The evaluation team is sometimes called a “child study team”. The evaluation team must include bilingual/ELL/LEP personnel as well as specialists such as the school psychologist, nurse, special educator, counselor etc.
- c. Train intake personnel about how to gather information, what information to collect and how to improve their cross-cultural communication skills.
- d. Document all adaptations and provide cross-cultural interpretations.

### **7. Improve staffing**

- a. Develop cross-cultural comprehensive IEPs including specific and appropriate English proficiency outcomes for students with disabilities.
- b. Maintain an ELL/LEP monitoring plan and schedule regular reviews of language acquisition in appropriate situations.
- c. Monitor and review achievement of non-placed diverse learners

### **8. Increase integration of all services**

- a. Use a framework for balancing ELL/LEP and special education services.
- b. Plan for language of instruction in both language acquisition and special education settings.
- c. Review exit and entry criteria and conduct self-studies of procedures

### **9. Expand monitoring**

- a. Increase monitoring of all diverse learners in and out of special education
- b. Monitor ELL/LEP students for two years after exit from ELL/LEP services.
- c. Monitor identification and placement rates

**10. Continue professional development and cross-training**

- a. Self-study worksheets that can be used to assist with this process are available at no charge from [www.crosscultured.com](http://www.crosscultured.com).
- b. Remember to focus on taking action not just building awareness

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## **The School District of Philadelphia Language Policy “A Pathway to Academic Proficiency”**

Adopted August 12, 2007

In alignment with the School Reform Commission’s Declaration of Education to provide a quality and equitable educational program for all students, the School District of Philadelphia shall implement an appropriate planned instructional program for identified students whose dominant language is not English.

The purpose of the program is to ensure that all students who are English Language Learners (ELLs), including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet. Transitional Bilingual/ESOL programs will nurture self-pride and selfidentity in each students’ linguistic and cultural heritage.

The School District of Philadelphia shall provide a program for their ELLs that will facilitate the student’s achievement of English proficiency and academic standards in alignment with the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title III. The goal of the program is to attain English language proficiency in listening speaking, reading, and writing. The program shall meet federal and state program compliance:

- Using sound research-based models
- Equitable resources and staffed by highly qualified personnel who are knowledgeable and demonstrate their capacity to differentiate instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.
- Ongoing program monitoring and compliance evaluation As part of the District’s obligation to prepare, ensure, and empower all learners to achieve their full intellectual potential to become lifelong learners, equitable access to all programs will be provided to ELLs. This includes developmentally appropriate programs whose purpose is to ensure that every child is ready to learn and succeed. When success is hindered, barriers to learning will be collaboratively identified and removed through school-based and/or community-based resources and whenever necessary, comprehensive specialized services will be provided to guarantee a path to success.

The goal is for ELLs to meet the District’s Exit Criteria as it is aligned to the Pennsylvania system of school assessment, within five years of participating in the Transitional Bilingual/ESOL program. The School Reform Commission shall include provisions for the education for English Language learners in its Strategic Plan and be reflected in each school’s School Improvement Plan. The School District of Philadelphia will continue its ongoing commitment of maintaining meaningful partnerships with parents, families, caregivers, and communities of our ELLs.

As part of this commitment, the district will inform the above stakeholders of their rights to ensure full access and equitable participation in all programs provided by the district. To facilitate full partnership, all pertinent information regarding school policies and programs will be made available in multiple languages. These strong partnerships will support successful academic and social achievement of ELLs.

To promote these strong partnerships, the formation of school-based bilingual advisory councils will be established. The councils’ guidelines will be designed and supported by OLCA. Centrally, a multi-lingual parent council will serve as the representational body of parents within a city-wide structure to communicate the needs and areas of program articulation for parents and community. These councils will help promote appreciation of diversity, cross cultural communication, and engage parents and community in meaningful participatory activities.

As the School District of Philadelphia continues its efforts in developing global citizens, the importance of cultural knowledge, understanding, and appreciation will be paramount.

The District’s curriculum is reflective of the many cultures and histories of Philadelphia’s students, families, and communities. In preparing our students to become global citizens, our goal is to provide students with opportunities to become proficient in a minimum of two world languages, one of which is English. We are also committed in strengthening the cultural awareness and competencies in all School District of Philadelphia employees, thereby promoting the appreciation of multicultural diversity in the classrooms and schools of Philadelphia.

Under the guidance of the Chief Academic Officer, all District and Regional offices shall collaborate and support the Office of Language, Culture and the Arts to fully and expeditiously implement and monitor this policy. Compliance of this policy is the responsibility of all offices, schools and employees of the School District of Philadelphia. Failure to comply with the provisions stated within this policy will result in a Corrective Action Plan which will be required to address non-compliant issues.

The Office of Language, Culture and the Arts will be required to report annually to the School Reform Commission on the implementation of this policy. The success of English Language Learners and all students on their “Pathway to Academic Proficiency” is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

## Educating Teachers for Diverse Populations: Considering Context and Consciousness

Martha Strickland , Ed.D.

In the past decade the immigrant population entering the United States has been historically remarkable. The U.S. Bureau predicts that over 50% of the U.S. population increase between 2000 and 2015 will be from international migration (Kirsch, Braun, & Yamamoto, 2007). In 2005, there were more than 10 million school-age children of immigrants (ages 5-17) in the United States; 1.3 million of whom were noted as foreign-born (Camarota, 2005). It is estimated that one out of every five children in school today are either children who have newly arrived in the U.S. (“newcomers”) or children with at least one parent who has recently immigrated (Camarota, 2005).

Likewise, the number of children in our schools who are Limited English Proficient (LEPs) is on the rise. According to the State Education Agency (SEA) Survey data, the number of LEP children in schools increased by 105% between 1990 and 2000 whereas the general school population only grew by 12% (Kindler, 2000). Of these children, it is estimated that in 2000 six out of seven enrolled in grades 1-5 lived in linguistically isolated households (Consentino de Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005).

According to a recent study by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) this shifting demographic profile is one of three forces colliding to form what is being called by some as, “the perfect storm” (Kirsch, Braun, & Yamamoto, 2007). This shifting demographic force, according to ETS, is colliding with the force of the inadequacy of literacy and numeracy skills by the youth and adults in our country, and the force of the global economic scene which is requiring higher levels of education for more and more jobs in the U.S. (Kirsch, Braun, & Yamamoto, 2007). It is important to note here that these forces have their roots in education. Therefore, as we look at education in this way, it would follow that addressing the issues related to the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs) would be of vital national interest. This significance is indeed reflected in the increased focus on closing the achievement gap and high stakes testing that leaves no child behind.

### Teacher Training Mandate

In Governor Rendell’s recent report by Pennsylvania’s *Commission on Training America’s Teachers* (2006), we see the fervor to meet the challenges set before teachers and teacher trainers by this “perfect storm.” The mission, according to the report is “to improve the education of tomorrow’s teachers so that every child in Pennsylvania will have an opportunity to succeed in the high-skill, technological, diverse, global society that our students will be called upon to lead” (Rendell, Kneidler, & Feir, p. vii). This commission further stated that one of the Commonwealth’s pressing needs was for “new teachers with skills demanded by today’s more complex and diverse classrooms that are under both federal and state accountability microscopes” (p. 33).

The National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NESEA) presently known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002), also specifically notes the pressing need for credentialed, highly qualified teachers at every academic level as the achievement gap increases. Key organizations such as the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) as well as the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the work of Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) focused on teacher preparation and professional development, devoting a significant portion of their work to issues related to the preparation and training of teachers of diverse learners.

As an education faculty member I feel the “stormy waters” lapping at my feet as I seek to be committed to preparing pre-service teachers and as I educate practicing teachers to meet the present-day challenges of this “storm.” As I step into the classroom, the question that arises is, What does it mean to prepare teachers for this increasing diverse population? Subsequently I also ask, What does it mean to resource experienced teachers, who are seeing increased ELL issues in their classroom?

Although in today’s world in which we desire a script or prescriptive model that quickly and cleanly answers our questions with a list of strategies or new methods packaged in a guarantee to give you success, I believe that the answer to these questions lies in the interplay of two key components of learning. As I look at the research I see a need to get back to focusing on learning which, though emphasized by research, appears to be at best on the sidelines in our daily practice both in the schools and in our training programs.

The first component of learning that is needed to assist us in preparing and resourcing teachers for the present stormy landscape is a renewed consideration of the “sociocultural context.” This includes the social, cultural and historical experiences each brings to a learning experience. The second is the socially, culturally and historically constructed consciousness which is noted in the literature as the “sociocultural consciousness” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gay, 2005). This is the awareness of the sociocultural backdrop and the acting within that sense of awareness. Both of these are set within a Vygotskian sociocultural framework and the more recently noticed Cultural Historical Activity Theory. These effectively frames the already existing conversation of ELL research and pose questions for those of us grappling with the implications of this research within the teacher training arena – both the pre-credential pre-service teacher development as well as the on-going in-service teacher training.

### Consider the Sociocultural Context

To begin, take a moment to consider a classroom setting. This is not any setting, nor one that is artificially created by me, but I would like you to take a moment to consider a classroom setting that would be encountered in your place of work. If you had to describe this setting to someone who was exploring ELL issues and academic achievement in the classroom but is unfamiliar with your context what would you say? What components of that setting would you choose to describe? Now, consider our professional development and teacher preparation courses? What components do you believe are important for teaching ELLs?

Researchers have noted key factors that impact the academic achievement of ELLs. They noted the importance of the language issues, both the home language as well as the academic language learning in the classroom (Cole, 2007; Herrera, 2007). Research also emphasizes other key factors that impact ELL achievement which tend to be overlooked or underrepresented in research and practice. These include such factors as the ELLs' former schooling experience, the teacher-student relationship, as well as the connections the teacher and school forge between the school and the community and the lives of ELLs outside of school (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, & LePage, et al., 2005; Genessee, Lindholm-Lear, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). In other words, facilitating ELL academic achievement in the classroom requires more than a linguistic view or a content and strategy view. It requires a sociocultural contextual view.

Sociocultural learning theorist Vygotsky (1998) determined that learning was embedded within social interaction in which knowledge and understanding were constructed by the learner. You may be familiar with the terms "scaffolding" and "zone of proximal development" which have evolved from his work. What is pertinent to our present conversation is the Vygotskian understanding of co-construction of meaning as explored by Wertsch (1985, 1991) and Rogoff (1990) and further expanded within the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT).

Learning, as seen through this Neo-Vygotskian lens, is a continual mutual process of making meaning between people. Wertsch (1985, 1991), standing on the shoulders of such sociolinguists as Russian Bakhtin, noted the importance of all voices within this process. These "voices" include not only what is verbalized by the interlocutors (in this case the teacher and the student) but also the social, historical, and cultural "voices" the each brings to the conversation. In other words, as the theoretical framework of CHAT reflects, learning is the continual interaction of the subject and object and the context.

How does this look when the teacher and the student are coming from different cultural frames of reference? As was wisely indicated by Cole (2007) in her work of conversation across differences in the classroom, when we consider the context in which there are white, female, middle-class teachers educating diverse student populations within their classrooms, it is important to note and address the cultural mismatches that will occur between teacher and student. My own research has indicated key discontinuities between teacher and immigrant student in the mainstream classroom (Strickland, 2006). For example, in a classroom of students from multiple European cultures as well as those from the United States, the teacher, when attempting to teach the vocabulary word, "fumble," asks how many have seen football. In reply all the students raise their hands. As the teacher continues describing fumble as dropping the ball, those from Europe look puzzled. Why? They were familiar with the word, "football," but their frame of reference was that of European football or what Americans call, "soccer."

In this brief anecdote, one finds an important key to facilitating ELL learning. When considering the context of effective ELL learning and teaching, the sociocultural background of the teacher and the sociocultural background of the ELL need to be considered. For those of us involved in training new or experienced teachers, this point provokes two key issues that need us to address. First, more people of color need to be recruited to join the teaching ranks. Research shows that teachers of color have a positive impact on academic achievement of diverse student populations (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Although this is not a new issue, the low number of teachers of color around the nation persists requiring continuing pursuit of funds, time and energy (AACTE, 2004). The question is how are we embracing this challenge? In higher education I suggest we cannot embrace this challenge without a renewed understanding of our sociocultural context.

Secondly, the sociocultural context needs to be an important focus in our pre-service teacher training. The AACTE report from their Wingspread Conference (2004) noted that there is “little symmetry between teachers’ cultural and linguistic experiences and those of the students they are charged to teach” which becomes an obstacle to the learning process of diverse students in the classroom (p. 12). Also, the work of González, Moll and Amanti (2005), *Funds of Knowledge*, clearly noted the importance of taking into account the total context of the ELL. This context that has a significant impact on students’ learning, according to González, Moll and Amanti (2005), includes the experiences of the families and students apart from the school context. Rothstein-Fisch et al. (2001), in their *Bridging Cultures* work, identify ways of better connecting these two worlds. They capitalize on building strong connections between the home and the school.

In addition to the context of the home, the focus of the Harvard Graduate School of Education on “complementary learning” notes the significant impact out-of-school-time learning has on student achievement (Weiss, 2006). Their work challenges the teaching community to consider the importance of the linkages between community, out-of-school-time programs, and activities with higher education, P-12 schools, as well as early childhood as they relate to higher academic and social competence.

Thus, the key question this research poses to pre-service teacher educators is: What are we doing to provide access to the ELLs’ worlds outside the classroom and how are we mentoring our pre-service and in-service teachers to explore and connect the multiple worlds that they and their students bring into the everyday learning experience in the classroom? Of course, one venue for addressing this is to provide extensive and intentional field experiences that cross boundaries of comfort and culture. Penn State’s teacher preparation is remarkable in their field exposure throughout the teacher candidate training program beginning even in the Introduction of Educational Psychology before they are inducted into the major which places the one considering teaching as a major inside local classrooms with intentional observation exercises. Also, in light of the fact that many of our students come from rural and suburban areas we move our pre-service teachers into an urban field experience during their junior year. This is a good start but more is needed.

### Sociocultural Consciousness

The second issue we, as teacher educators, need to pay attention to is a “sociocultural consciousness.” This is embedded within the sociocultural context but requires additional attention. This sociocultural consciousness, as advocated by the research, is defined as that which builds on student’s cultural strengths by noting the abilities and experiences ELLs bring to the classroom and in this process being willing to learn and question one’s own thinking (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, & LePage, et al., 2005; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The key is the reflective and critical thinking on one’s own sociocultural context that forms a sociocultural consciousness. In other words, the teacher needs to be as vigilant about being aware or conscious of her own cultural frame of reference as she is about finding out about the ELL’s sociocultural background for effective learning and assessment to take place. This involves recognizing that the worldview in which one grows up is not universal and is greatly influenced by one’s social, cultural, gender, race and ethnicity, socio-economic background and life experiences. Thus, according to Geneva Gay (2005), the teacher’s role in the diverse classroom is a cultural one. Gay (2005) suggests that the teacher in a diverse classroom is inevitably a “cultural organizer” – one who knows how culture works. She is also a “cultural mediator” – one who helps bridge and negotiates cultural and social norms and an “orchestrator of social contexts” – one who aligns the multiple cultural frames of references brought to each lesson. This culturally responsive pedagogy has been proposed to be of vital importance in preparing teachers for the increasingly diverse student population (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Therefore, according to the research, the key to successfully preparing teachers requires the development of this sociocultural consciousness. The literature suggests that the key to this sociocultural consciousness is *infusion*. In other words, this consciousness must be a part of all that occurs during both teacher candidate and in-service training. When infused within the classroom life, such as is effectively demonstrated by the Training all Teachers (TAT) project out of University of New York, teachers are better prepared to work effectively with diverse student populations (Meskill, 2005).

Looking at the pre-service teacher training and in-service professional development there appears to be a gap in our culturally responsive pedagogical infusion process in our teacher training programs. The gap lies in the lack of sociocultural consciousness training of teachers of teacher candidates and trainers of teachers. Although we as teacher educators may require reflection and provoke thoughtful discussions raising the level of sociocultural consciousness amongst our students the critical question is how many times do we, as teacher educators, question whether our discussions, lectures or assigned group activities intentionally build upon the cultural knowledge base of those in our class? Before developing and assessing assignments, do we pay attention to the sociocultural frame of reference we bring to the task and recognize how that frame of reference influences my work as a teacher? What have our professional development facilitators done to develop their sense of context and sociocultural consciousness?

### Implications

What does it mean to prepare teachers for this increasing diverse population? And what does it mean to resource experienced teachers, who are seeing increased ELL issues in their classroom? It means reframing what we mean by context and thus increasing our awareness of what is brought to each classroom lesson and interaction that either facilitates or obstructs ELLs' learning and achievement. It is ultimately about connections. We may be about connecting research to the classroom, theory to praxis, content to the real world but are we about making the necessary connections of context and consciousness during the learning process? Two implications arise from this conversation.

One, as strategies, content and scores are considered during the planning of lessons and units it is also important to consider the sociocultural context in which the learning process will occur. Note the importance of considering the social and cultural context outside the classroom that each student and each teacher brings to bear on the lessons of the day. Additionally, take a moment to recognize and celebrate knowledge construction outside of what you know that is utilized by diverse learners in the classroom.

Second, take time to ask the professional development trainers and teacher educators what they bring to the training event. In addition to focusing on their strategies and training experience, explore their understanding and awareness of the sociocultural context of your setting and their own social, cultural context they bring to the training. Challenge them to bring this type of sociocultural context and consciousness to the training time.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this portrait of our national context as a “perfect storm,” as ETS suggests, does provoke teacher educators to sit up and take notice. As we look at the present research addressing the shifting demographics within a context demanding high level skills of our youth, I suggest that the necessary action on the part of all those who are educating teacher candidates, as well as of all those who deliver in-service teacher professional development, is to infuse sociocultural context and consciousness into all that is designed and acted upon while teaching. This line of action requires that we do not respond to the present “stormy” context by battening down the hatches to ride out the storm or hope it goes away, but that we capture the energy of this storm and dive into the waves of change with all we have to continue to learn about ourselves as well as our students. As Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) recommend, we must together keep learning about learning, harnessing the strengths of all.

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