Rethinking Preschool Education through Bilingual Universal Pre-Kindergarten: Opportunities and Challenges

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Giselle was born in Havana, Cuba in 1950 and migrated with her family to the United States when she was 11 years old. She graduated from Battin High School in New Jersey. In addition she completed a Bachelor’s degree from Montclair State College and a Master’s degree from Rutgers University. She earned her Doctor of Psychology in 1981 from Yeshiva University.

She joined the Fordham University Graduate School of Education (FGSE) faculty in 1982. She served as Chair of Psychological and Educational Services, Coordinator of School Psychology Programs, and Director of Therapeutic Interventions Master’s Program, Director of the Psychology of Bilingual Student’s Master’s Program, and Director of the Bilingual School Psychology Program. After 30 year of service at FGSE she retired in 2015.

She was a prolific scholar who among many publications edited (with E. C. López and S. Nahari) the *Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (2007; Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates). In addition to her academic work, she was an active and faithful member of the Centenary United Methodist Church in Metuchen, New Jersey and also served on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

An active member and leader of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education for many decades, in 2009, Giselle joined forces with Dr. Aida Nevárez-La Torre in developing the *Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER)*. As the first Book Review Editor she shaped this section of the journal. In later years she actively served as a member of JMER's Advisory Editorial Board.

We will forever be appreciative of her scholarly work and friendship.
# Journal of Multilingual Education Research

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Editorial

Rethinking Preschool Education through Bilingual Universal Pre-Kindergarten: Opportunities and Challenges

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Mercy College

Keywords: bilingual education, preschool education, pre-kindergarten education

Historically, little was known about the services and experiences that young children have before they enter school in the United States. In fact, there was no unifying system that captures the early experiences of children across the country during the preschool years that might bridge early care programs with early education; much of what is known relates to utilization rates for federally funded programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start or state funded subsidies for childcare (Early Childhood Data Collaborative, 2011).

However, more recently, in 2011, the federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding initiative called for states to develop coordinated systems of early care and education to address and track this very issue. The goal of these funds was to improve access to quality early learning and development programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and in turn, enhance their school readiness (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Then, in his last term in office, President Barak Obama introduced the Preschool for All initiative proposing to allocate federal funds for states based on their population of low to moderate income four-year-olds. This cost-sharing proposal would incentivize states to expand enrollment in their existing preschool programs while the federal government expanded funding for Head Start and Early Head Start (U.S. Office of the Press Secretary, 2013).

It is notable that this unprecedented expansion of funding came in to being while the US child population set records of racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity (Frey, 2011). Much of this diversity is driven by the increase in Latinos who comprise the largest ethnic minority in the US, and who are overwhelmingly (72.9%) Spanish speakers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). In addition, Latinos constitute 17.6% of the
overall US population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), but in the 0-5 age group, they represent 26% of the child population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Across the country, the proportion of children identified as English learners in early care and education programs is greater than in Kindergarten (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). This suggests two important conditions relative to Pre-Kindergarten:

1. Population subgroups (racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic) do not attend early education and care programs at the same rates. Usually state-funded programs reach many low-income children and immigrant populations, often children who do not speak English or are bilingual. Consequently, these types of Pre-Kindergarten programs should incorporate cultural and linguistically relevant approaches that will meet the needs of a very diverse student population (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017).

2. There are great gains in English language development during the Pre-Kindergarten year (Tazi, 2011). It becomes important to track the number of children who are classified as English Language Learners upon Kindergarten entry to note the impact of a year in Pre-Kindergarten.

It is clear that the field needs more robust sources of information regarding young children. Accurate counts that include culture and language sub-groups, histories of children’s early care experiences, programmatic goals of local days cares and Head Starts, family values and preferences – all of these data inform the work of early childhood professionals serving linguistically diverse populations. Additionally, any discussion today about formally creating or expanding Pre-Kindergarten must account for how policymakers, communities, and educators will address the needs of a growing population of very young children who enter Pre-Kindergarten speaking little or no English.

This volume of the Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER) focuses the conversation on pressing topics in the education of young emergent bilinguals at this time of Pre-Kindergarten expansion. I begin by adopting the term emergent bilingual to refer to this population, in order to align the conversation with a strengths-based perspective emanating from proponents of bilingualism and bilingual education (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). JMER has also adopted this term. There is otherwise little consistency in the terms referring to students or children who speak languages other than English. Federal bodies use the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) while the states typically use English Language Learner (ELL). These terms emphasize the acquisition of English without acknowledging a student’s potential to become bilingual. They reflect a limited and sometimes deficit perspective of the capacities of many thousands of students and short changes a dialogue on the benefits of multilingualism (Wright, 2010).

The New York Education Department has recently adopted the term emergent multilingual learners to refer to pre-school students (New York State Board of Education. Board of Regents, 2017); this term conveys optimism and respect for children’s abilities to develop more than one language in school. The term Dual
Language Learner (DLL) emerged at the federal level to refer to children from birth to age eight who are exposed to English while still learning their home language (National Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center, 2008). While this term seems to acknowledge bilingual capacity, and tries to capture the unique nature of language learning in the preschool years, it also builds distance from the historic struggle to promote bilingualism and bilingual education in the US by defining the same population without specific reference to the word “bilingual.” By contrast, I do want to sustain the connection to that struggle as educators in this country create what is essentially a new grade level with the expansion of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK).

Foremost in the minds of the contributors to this special issue are questions regarding the instruction and programming we should offer emergent bilinguals in Pre-Kindergarten: How do we employ a child’s home language to enhance learning? What is the role of the child’s home language in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom? What dispositions or skills should the early childhood workforce develop in order to be effective? How do we engage parents and communities on behalf of emergent bilinguals? What guidance can we garner from current research? These questions and others are addressed in the volume’s articles and in the discussion that follows.

Over the past decades, key national early childhood professional groups have issued position statements regarding appropriate practice for classrooms of young emergent bilinguals. In 2003, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) advised that the curriculum used in preschools should be responsive to and support children with non-English home languages (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2003). The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children urged those who work with children to respect and support their home language (Council for Exceptional Children, 2010). Head Start recently adopted new standards where bilingualism is viewed as an asset to be sustained in early childhood programming (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). These groups advocate for integrating the home language in all activities and promote bilingualism. This volume also includes a reprint of the position statement on bilingual preschool disseminated by the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) in 2014 (New York State Association for Bilingual Education, 2014).

State affiliated Pre-Kindergarten programs have been slower to adopt a clear vision for the role of the home language. The State of Preschool 2015 Yearbook (Barnett et al., 2016) lists the following features relative to the home language for state funded Pre-Kindergarten in the fifty states and the District of Colombia (n=51):

- 19 (37%) require recruitment and enrollment materials to be available in languages other than English.
- 15 (29%) collect data on children’s home language at school entry.
- 6 (12%) require assessments be conducted in the home language.
- 10 (20%) allocate additional resources (through weighted formulas) to serve emergent bilinguals.
While bilingual instruction is permitted in 27 states (Barnett et al., 2015), to date only two states (Illinois and Texas) mandate bilingual instruction at the preschool level (Bridges & Dagys, 2012). The states may learn from Illinois’ example included in this volume (Hadi-Tabassum & Gutiérrez, 2016/2017) as it looks to make bilingual instruction widely available; disseminating information in a timely manner, and making training readily accessible will be among the first formidable challenges.

The research indicating the benefits to garner from bilingual instruction in early childhood education is compelling. Vocabulary development is particularly important at a time when oral language is a primary focus of instruction. As a result, many studies in early childhood education examine the relationship between the language of instruction, vocabulary development, and early literacy skills for emergent bilinguals. Several studies report strengthened English vocabulary resulting from instruction in the home language (Farver, Lonigan, & Eppe, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2014; Méndez, Crais, Castro, & Kainz, 2015; Roberts, 2008; Schwartz, 2014). Bialystok (2007) found that vocabulary mastery in Spanish supports reading comprehension in English. Hammer, Lawrence and Miccio (2007) found growth in Spanish oral language skills predicted English early reading skills in Kindergarten. Among Spanish-speaking preschoolers, for example, Burchinal, Field, López, Howes, & Pianta (2012) found that Spanish language instruction was associated with better reading readiness. Similarly, Tazi (2014) found that children who received bilingual instruction were nearly 4 times more likely to be rated as “Very Ready for School” in four or more domains, than emergent bilinguals who received English only instruction. For emergent bilinguals, English-only instruction typically results in a decline of home language skills and no greater gains in English (Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007). In fact, in a metanalysis of comparison studies, English-only instruction represented no advantages to language growth for young emergent bilinguals (Barnett et al., 2007; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005).

In my observations of the field, despite interest and advocacy among parents and practitioners, the growth in bilingual programs in Pre-Kindergarten is slow. Limited resources and few qualified bilingual teachers plague the preschool system as it does the upper grades (Cross, 2016); however, in early childhood, a strong home-school connection is an important resource that has significant impact on learning. Families that speak languages other than English at home can contribute to their children’s learning by fostering strong skills in the home language. Building links between home language learning and school instructional goals requires intentional planning. In this volume, Otero Bracco and Eisenberg (2016/2017) describe a model of community-based preschool programming for immigrant families that supports family members in preparing their young children for school. Home language activities, preschool classes, family support, and access to services strengthen the families’ ability to focus on developing their children’s home language skills.

Programs must develop guidelines that will inform the interactions between teachers and parents to deliver a common message about how the home language enhances learning. These guidelines must be informed by research and the consensus of experts reporting that children have the capacity to become bilingual without confusion or detriment, to learn from instruction in more than one language, and to
transfer learning from one language to the other (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). More specifically, rather than passively accept the home language as a cultural feature of the home, programs should actively encourage parents to conduct all learning activities – reading, singing, learning letters, using vocabulary – in the home language. Programs sometimes encourage speaking to children in the home language but expect “homework” or school activities to be conducted in English. Introducing more English in the home can weaken the ability to develop strong home language skills. Hammer et al. (2009), for example, found that a mother’s use of Spanish at home did not negatively affect growth in English but introducing more English in the home, slowed the growth of Spanish vocabulary without increasing English vocabulary. Meanwhile, research suggests that bilingual instruction enhances English acquisition and long-term academic achievement for emergent bilinguals from Pre-K to 3rd grade (Escobar, 2013).

Clearly, the teachers that would make these recommendations to parents would themselves have a clear, robust understanding of the cross-linguistic advantages that bilinguals exhibit. These teachers would utilize translanguaging strategies (García, 2009) where children would be free to use all their words (and languages) in school and where they saw their home language elevated and honored in the same manner as English. Included in this volume, Morales and Rumenap (2016/2017) provide examples of translanguage after a read-aloud, where we can see the children’s natural, spontaneous use of multiple languages. Yet, these examples also show the teacher’s missed opportunity of “valuing Spanish only in as much as it structurally performed the same task as English” (p. 36). Our early childhood programs need to deepen the ways in which they leverage children’s emerging bilingualism to enhance learning.

Even for those programs offering English-only instruction, professional development must promote appreciation for multilingualism grounded in sound knowledge on language acquisition in young children and the relationship between language and other domains of development such as social-emotional, physical, and cognitive. Understanding this relationship is fundamental to addressing inequities such as the disproportionate classification and suspension rates among minoritized children. Brillante and Nemeth (2016/2017) outline in this volume a tiered approach similar to Response to Intervention (RtI) that supports identifying the factors contributing to challenging behaviors prior to referral. Fortified with accurate knowledge about language development, teachers can broaden their strategies and implement more effective approaches.

In June of 2015, a group of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers came together in a roundtable event in New York to discuss planning for the many emergent bilinguals in the state’s Pre-Kindergarten. The recommendations resulting from this discussion, presented in this volume as proceedings, suggest a way forward in organizing the resources and the approaches we need to serve emergent bilinguals in state-affiliated early childhood education. Universal Pre-Kindergarten offers an invaluable opportunity to launch the educational trajectory of these children from the best possible foundation, to the extent that we can integrate their home languages in all aspects of instruction and programming. I would argue that the best foundation is laid
with bilingual education at the preschool level, yet, we are a long way from universally available bilingual education. Even so, increasing linguistic diversity signals a moral imperative for educators to grow, adapt, and reform common practices in response to the linguistic needs and strengths of emergent bilinguals. This means, as García (2011) argues, preparing for both bilingual education and bilingualism in education where all teachers, bilingual or monolingual themselves, welcome, invite, and use children’s home languages in the teaching-learning process.

References


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Position Statement on Bilingual Education in Early Childhood/Preschool Programs

The main goal of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) is to ensure equitable access to all educational opportunities for English language learners (ELLs)/bilingual students in New York State. To this end, NYSABE affirms its commitment to Bilingual Early Childhood/Preschool programs for all ELLs/bilingual learners that underscore the academic, socio-emotional, and language needs of these students by building upon the rich linguistic and cultural experiences that they bring from their homes and communities.

Rationale

A growing number of studies on instructional approaches in early childhood reveal benefits from teaching young children in their home language. Dual Language or developmental bilingual programs which utilize English and the students’ home language for instruction demonstrate significant gains for English Language Learners/emergent bilinguals (Barnett et al., 2006; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Tazi, 2011). These studies suggest that bilingual instruction in the preschool years has cumulative benefits in addressing school readiness – it combines the enrichment of early experiences with the efficacy of accessing background knowledge and existing strengths in home language development. For children who speak little or no English as they begin school, bilingual instruction activates and builds upon what they know in the home language, and continues to positively impact children’s cognitive progress as they acquire new academic skills across languages. Examples include:

- Vocabulary mastery in the home language supports reading comprehension in English (Bialystok, 2007).
- Storybook reading and storytelling in a child’s home language promotes English vocabulary acquisition (Roberts, 2008).
• Bilingually instructed children exit the “English Language Learner” category earlier than children who are only taught in English (Tazi, 2011).

• Sustained gains in concepts of print are evident when children are exposed to shared reading and writing activities in the primary language (Coppola, 2005).

• Bilingually instructed children evidence greater rates of phonemic awareness by the end of Kindergarten (Tazi, 2011).

Recommendations

NYSABE proposes the following recommendations that align current research on early childhood education and bilingual education:

• Ensure equitable access for all ELLs/bilingual learners to Universal Pre-K in schools and early care settings;

• Adopt a vision that underscores the beliefs that (1) the path towards academic achievement begins in the preschool years, and that (2) central to this vision, ELLs/bilingual learners, must be educated bilingually, through their home language and English;

• Secure adequate funding to initiate and sustain preschool bilingual programs;

• Develop high quality comprehensive bilingual preschool education programs that include research-based bilingual instruction, bilingual support services, and parent/family engagement in order to ensure academic success as well as optimum socio-emotional development;

• Ensure that bilingual preschool programs implement research-based bilingual instructional strategies that link language development to literacy and strengthen the student’s home language and English, thereby building a foundation for biliteracy;

• Attain, develop, and use age-appropriate, culturally relevant instructional materials in multiple languages;

• Attain, develop, and use age-appropriate, culturally relevant formative assessment tools in multiple languages to screen and identify the educational needs of bilingual preschool learners;

• Provide a supplement to offset the cost for preschool teachers to earn a bilingual extension;

• Ensure that teachers are bilingual and biliterate and that they have the teaching credentials and preparation that will qualify them to work with young bilingual learners;
• Implement a comprehensive, long term, research-based professional development plan for educators, administrators, families, and support personnel involved in the education of early childhood/preschool bilingual learners;

• Create an early education data collection system that provides disaggregated data on bilingual learners and the type of programming they are receiving. Use this data to build and improve the instruction and support services in bilingual early childhood/preschool programs;

• Provide disaggregated data on bilingual learners with disabilities, to ensure that their special needs are met within bilingual programs at an early age;

• Develop and maintain an effective accountability system to ensure that funds generated by preschool ELLs/bilingual learners are allocated to bilingual preschool classrooms according to specified guidelines.

On behalf of the students, families, educators, members of community-based and private entities whom NYSABE represents, we thank all individuals and organizations that will support this Position Statement and will ensure the access of all preschool ELLs/bilingual learners to bilingual Universal Pre-K programs.

References


Talking about Language in Preschool: The Use of Video-Stimulated Recall with Emergent Bilingual Children

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After first discussing the ideologies (standard and monolingual) implicit in language education in the United States, we argue for a necessary ideological shift in the way multiple languages and other forms of semiotic communication are understood, used, and supported in preschool for emergent bilinguals. We present examples from a preschool study in Illinois where emergent bilingual children in two classrooms used video-stimulated accounts to make sense of their actions. Students used multiple semiotic resources – including English, Spanish, and embodiment – to collaborate with others and represent their ideas. Our findings include evidence of language awareness and awareness of audience in choosing the language of interaction. We argue that very often, preschool teachers are not taught to support or encourage students’ use of languages other than English, even in classrooms designated as bilingual. Implications are discussed for universal preschool with growing numbers of students with multilingual abilities.

Keywords: emergent bilinguals, preschool, video-stimulated recall, language ideologies, Cultural Historical Activity Theory.

The goals of most early childhood educational institutions in the United States rationally focus on preparing students for K-12 education. However, in the urgency get students ready for kindergarten, most of these settings do not currently take advantage of the full linguistic repertoires of preschool students or the knowledge base they bring from home. The Preschool for All initiative (U.S. Office of the Press Secretary, 2013) allows us to rethink the goals and approaches to preschool education generally, and it invites us to address more intentionally the goals and approaches in bilingual preschool programs. To rethink the onset of learning through early schooling, in this article we posit our support for bilingual education, while paying particular attention to how it is enacted.

While K-12 education in the United States has been mediated by institutionalized language ideologies, both in policy and practice (Schmidt, 2000; Spolsky, 2004), we argue that the language ideologies upon which bilingual programs are built must be made explicit and challenged. In our view, despite some recent policy shifts that support bilingual education (such as the state of Illinois requiring bilingual
preschool to be made available), underlying ideologies embedded in instruction may not support multilingualism, but rather support assimilation and language loss. The preschool context is an ideal forum to explore what is possible because at this educational level, students are developing language skills, and teachers encourage language production broadly. Additionally, early childhood educators learn to use play to mediate the learning context (Berk & Winsler, 1995), and thus, provide more expansive possibilities for language use. It is in the playing with, or manipulation of, language that students grow and are socialized into language use (Ochs, 2000; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1990, 2012).

In this article, we describe a study that took place in an urban preschool located in a predominantly Latino community, in the state of Illinois. As researchers, we used an instructional strategy called stimulated accounts (e.g., Theobald, 2012) to allow preschool children to talk about their language use. After we describe the methods used in the study, examples are provided of emergent bilingual children engaged in early literacy activities. Through the discussion of findings, we call attention to the diverse ways these bilingual children use language and are aware of different ways language can be used to communicate meaning. Additionally, we examine the use of multiple resources, theorizing how we can positively utilize the tools that multilingual preschoolers already have at their disposal. These examples allowed us to see what children can and are doing with language in the preschool classroom. Often what they did far exceeded our expectations of what we thought they could do.

In the conclusions, we argue that pre-kindergarten education must be re-envisioned in ways that include expanded possibilities for linguistic and cultural diversity. Young children use language in novel and creative ways by drawing on multiple semiotic resources, such as oral language, body movement, and pointing to other signs and symbols, and they are aware of doing so. However, language ideologies found in the bilingual program observed do not necessarily allow for these possibilities to be sustained. Any discussion of current bilingual education practices and policies must analyze the language ideologies underlying policies, programs, and practice; otherwise, we continue to perpetuate standardized and monolingual language ideologies (Farr & Song, 2011).

**Literature Review**

**Language Ideologies and Language Education in the US**

Education policy in the United States has generally followed the monoglot standard (Silverstein, 1996) belief, that the nation is bound together through a standardized language policy, needed for mass communication and mass education. Language policy is comprised of both the explicit stances toward language encoded in written policy artifacts, and also in the unwritten beliefs about language held by people unofficially in a society (Spolsky, 2004). These beliefs about language have been theorized as language ideologies (Kroskry, 2000, 2010; Pennycook, 2013; Razfar & Rumenapp, 2012; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskry, 1998; Siegal, 2006; Silverstein, 1979; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994).
Education both forms and is formed by language ideologies because language is used as a medium of instruction and a target of instruction. Two language ideologies particularly relevant to education in the United States are the standard language ideology, or the assumption of and bias toward a homogenous language structure (Lippi-Green, 1997; Milroy & Milroy, 1999; Silverstein, 1996); and the monolingual language ideology, or the idea that monolingualism is the norm (Blackledge, 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998; Woolard, 1998), when in actuality, bilinguals/multilinguals represent between half to two-thirds of the world’s population (Baker, 2006). The English-only movement in the United States is one of the manifestations of these ideologies, but it can also be seen globally in the social value of “correctness” in relation to language varieties (Lippi-Green, 1997; Martínez, 2017; Siegal, 2006; Whittingham, Hoffman, & Rumenapp, 2016; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Even without English-only policies, standard language ideologies and monolingual language ideologies are fundamental to many bilingual programs in the form of parallel monolingualism (Heller, 2006). Fitts (2006), for example, examined how a fifth grade dual language program generally allotted for either Spanish or English at particular times and in particular contexts. This created spaces that were monolingual, and although there was a goal of bilingualism and biliteracy, the dominant assumption was that languages were to remain separated.

Subtractive forms of bilingual education, in which a first language is used for the sole purpose of learning English, for example, are subtle purveyors of the two language ideologies. Though some may advocate for additive forms of bilingual education in which both languages are learned and maintained, thereby possibly contesting the language ideology of monolingualism, they take up the notion of bilingualism as a plurality of singular languages. That is, the understanding that bilingual education is oriented towards the learning of two separate language codes, a standard Spanish and a standard English, for example, thereby reifying the monolingual ideal (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). This view of language is evidenced also in the idea that a bilingual person is the embodiment of two monolinguals (Grosjean, 1989; 1994).

As the field of bilingual education has moved into the 21st century, rather than talking about discrete linguistic codes, there has been a push toward the idea of languaging as a way to consider speakers’ discursive practices (García, 2009). This concept moves away from the idea of learning languages as one plus one, but rather developing language practices as part of discourse communities. Pedagogically, the way to support the development of a non-linear, dynamic bilingualism is through translanguaging, which are “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (García, 2009, p. 45). We use this concept in the context of our study because it includes language interaction taking place on different planes, including multimodalities (e.g., visuals, sound, etc.; García & Wei, 2014; Makoni & Makoni, 2010; Schreiber, 2015).

In Illinois specifically, there has been legislation since the 1970s (Illinois State Board of Education, 2011) requiring bilingual education or linguistic accommodations (such as pull-out/push-in services or sheltered English instruction) for emergent bilinguals – who are called English learners in the legislation (Badillo, 2011). However, the particular bilingual program model mandated by the state is transitional bilingual
education. Thus, even though linguistic supports must be provided, the overwhelming majority of bilingual programs in the state are subtractive in nature; native language is used predominantly as a bridge to English.

While these language ideologies prevail in the organization of bilingual education (and also in monolingual education), there is a new context emerging with the Preschool for All initiative orchestrated by the Obama administration. In fact, Illinois is the first state to mandate bilingual education to three- and four-year-olds (Illinois State Board of Education, 2014). Passed in 2010, the state’s Preschool for All program is mandated through regulations adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education (See Hadi-Tabassum & Gutiérrez in this volume.). However, a lack of resources, including qualified educators, has not allowed bilingual preschool to become a reality yet for most emergent bilinguals. Yet, we contend that is in early childhood that the metaphor of a speaker of two languages as emergent bilingual may have special application. Language socialization occurs without the presumption that the learner should yet be proficient in one or another standard language. Here we may find hope to challenge the ideologies of standardization because of the implicit assumption that in early childhood education, language learning is not focused on a standard English or Spanish or language in general, at least not yet. Rather, early childhood education focuses on the emergence of language use and language socialization.

Language as a Tool for Mediated Activity

Language learning involves much more than mastering a grammar and lexicon (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Language involves beliefs and values about language that govern its use, and, in particular, how it is learned. Language can be viewed, then, not as an abstract and autonomous structure to be learned, but rather as a tool used to mediate human activity (e.g., Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Roth & Lee, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is a perspective of human development that recognizes that learning always takes place through mediation, symbolic and material, and in activity defined by communities, rules, and divisions of labor (Engestrom, 1999). From this perspective, language is taken to be a tool, used by humans to accomplish goals, and therefore language learning requires both the learning of language and learning through language (Halliday, 1985). Razfar and Rumenapp (2011) drew on CHAT to explain how tools such as language, language ideologies, and language policies mediate classroom activities. Though each may be analyzed separately, any conceptualization of education should consider how they play a role in organizing the learning context. Duff (2007) notes the compatibilities of wider sociocultural theories of language learning and language socialization theories, in which the use of language is emphasized over the acquisition of a language structure. González (2001), Martínez and Morales (2014), and Ochs (2000), for example, note language learning is best understood not as acquisition of language structures, but rather the socialization into communicative/interactional competence. Understanding the activity of language learning is helpful in conceptualizing expansive forms of bilingual education.

The ways in which young learners can articulate their thoughts about language can be important because it is part of the language socialization process (Aukrust,
Pandey (2012, 2013) advocates that talk about language in the classroom can be useful at any age level to promote the appreciation and value of language. Research has demonstrated that young children use language differently based on the specific context, and these language choices are mediated by language ideologies (Volk & Angelova, 2007). Furthermore, talking about talk allows students to express their awareness of human interaction, demonstrating socialization as a communicative competence.

Reflection on and awareness of language has been a goal and an outcome of instruction in classrooms. Digital recording devices with playback features have been used for immediately revisiting classroom events since at least the late 1990s (Forman, 1999), allowing investigators to study student reflections. Technologies such as smartphones and tablets are more affordable and accessible and may allow for novel ways to develop and explore this awareness. For instance, the thoughtful and authentic integration of digital recording devices provides opportunities for expanding instructional approaches in the classroom (Lawless & Pelligrino, 2007; Oladunjoye, 2013). The use of video recording with immediate playback allows students and teachers to think about learning, allows time for reflection, expansion, and revision of thoughts and ideas, as well as allows for the verbalization of what is taking place (Pomerantz, 2005; Tanner & Jones, 2007). Specific to the practices of preschool read alouds, video can provide a record of how students interact and how they understand those interactions. This reflective process can give insight into why students make the decisions they do when using language, providing a deeper understanding of how emerging bilingualism can be an educational benefit.

We find this reflection about language useful, for it is in the talk about language that language is objectified and seen in its proper place as a way to do meaningful things with others. Therefore, in our view, a critical need in preschool bilingual education is not simply to learn grammatical structures and vocabulary in one language, the other, or both. Rather, the critical need is to understand how to use language and other semiotic resources that make up students’ communicative repertoires to meaningfully interact with others (Lombardi, Mende, & Salgado, 2016; Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; Rymes, 2014). If framed this way, then bilingual education would not be oriented solely toward learning two languages, but rather toward communicative competence more generally. The idea of expansive bilingual education allows us to break away from both the values of monolingual ideals and standardization, and instead promote multilingualism in preschool education through the use of authentic speech, or that speech which is used to accomplish everyday tasks.
Method

School Site and Participants

The study discussed in this article analyzed the speech of early learners in an early childhood context in which students were encouraged to talk about language. We conducted a qualitative study in an urban, Catholic preschool in Illinois during the summer of 2014. The school served about 400 students from Pre-K to 8th grade, with 98% of the student population identified as Hispanic. The school was chosen because of previous connections with the teachers through a university program and because of its stated mission to serve the community. The philosophical approach taken by the school in their mission statement sought to serve the immigrant community through building strong family and community connections. However, there is only one reference to multicultural education in its mission and philosophy statements and no references to bilingual education. The community is predominantly Spanish-speaking and nearly 80% of the community are immigrants from Mexico or children of immigrants from Mexico.

The two preschool classrooms consisted of three to five-year-old children. While nearly all of the preschool students used Spanish in the home, many of the families also spoke English in the home and around the community. Classroom A consisted of 19 students and Classroom B had 18 students. While most students participated in the research study, only eight (four from each classroom) are featured in this article. The teachers for each of the classrooms were white females, and the teacher in Classroom B was proficient in Spanish. Both teachers had backgrounds in special education and were pursuing their ESL endorsements. Both classroom teachers predominantly used English for instruction. Each classroom had one bilingual instructional aide, who played a supportive role in classroom activities but rarely led instruction. The aide in Classroom A was a certified teacher. While there was an inclusion of Spanish as a medium of instruction in the preschool, it was predominantly restricted to Thursdays, for activities such as the weekly Spanish read aloud. Thus, primary language instruction was not enacted for emergent bilinguals, which will be further considered in the discussion below.

The university Institutional Review Board approved the research and special considerations were made for young, emergent bilingual students. Parent permission forms were sent out with a recruitment letter in Spanish and English and students were given assent forms in Spanish and/or English. The assent procedures were read orally each time and students were asked throughout the activities if they wanted to continue participation. On occasion, a student indicated that he or she did not want to participate and went back to the whole class activity. In addition, the principal of the school and the teacher were informed of the precise procedures and given the opportunity to withdraw students from the research.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study incorporated the use of video-stimulated recall (e.g., Theobald, 2012) during classroom read aloud activities. Video-stimulated recall is a tool used to record participants, ask them to watch the video recording, and allow them to engage in
Forman (1999) and Hong and Broderick (2003) refer to a similar approach as *instant video revisiting*, which serves as a tool to expand the mind of students and extend the learning of three to five-year-old children, for example with reflecting on parts of a story. Students are videotaped in the events of their everyday classrooms, and after a particular event are asked to revisit the video and talk about what was happening and what they were thinking. In this way, the video with the analysis of the video are instructional tools, but also include students’ analysis of classroom events. Additionally, emphasis on creating dialogue among students has lead to the development of instructional and research methodologies like video-stimulated reflective discourse (Tanner & Jones, 2007), which emphasizes the use of these tools for instruction of children while privileging the participatory methodology of including students in the analysis of naturalistic events.

The research team consisted of two white female former early-childhood teachers who were doctoral students at a local university, a white male university instructor and postdoctoral researcher (Rumenapp), and a bilingual Latina researcher sponsoring the research (Morales). Following a series of classroom observations, the research team scheduled classroom visits twice a week during daily read aloud time for three weeks. Field notes were collected during whole-class instruction, teacher-directed read aloud and subsequent follow-up literacy activities such as ordering events, categorization activities, and other response activities. A small group of four assenting children then recreated the follow-up activity at the direction of a member of the research team, who recorded the reenactment on a tablet. The tablet recordings of follow-up activities were approximately 10 minutes in length. We collected a total of 12 tablet recordings, six from each classroom. The activities that were recorded were conducted in the style that was typical of the classroom, in which English was dominant. Students used Spanish among themselves, and the teacher and researchers also used Spanish for clarification of instructions or to summarize stories with the students.

Immediately following the video recording, students collectively viewed the tablet video of their engagement in the literacy activity. Students were prompted with questions such as “What were you thinking when you said that?” or “How did you know that?” When possible, the researchers asked them about their language choices. This process was video recorded (resulting in a *reflection video*) to document student interaction and reflections on the previously collected tablet recording. This process documented 10-40 minutes of student reflection per group session. Field notes were taken throughout. Additionally, the two main classroom teachers participated in pre-post interviews to inform our understanding of classroom contexts and teachers’ perceptions of this process. These interviews consisted of questions about general classroom setup and curriculum. Additionally, teachers were asked to reflect on students’ language usage, and specifically, on how students talked about language. In the post interview, the teachers were also asked to discuss what they observed regarding the stimulated accounts activities.

Preliminary findings from this study have been reported elsewhere (Rumenapp, Whittingham, & Hoffman, 2015) with a focus on the reading practices of students. These researchers found that students used the recordings on tablets to recall events, to expand on their thinking about the read-alouds, and to reflect on their own reading
practices. For this article, the data were analyzed by the authors with a focus on the metalinguistic awareness of the students, the bilingual practices, and application from this video-stimulated accounts activity, particularly in light of the fact that they were all able to draw from multiple languages in their linguistic repertoires. All videos were cataloged and instances in which students used Spanish were selected for further investigation to see if students’ reflection of their activities on the video included explicit reflection on their language choices. The examples were analyzed using a form of discourse analysis (Gee, 2011) that attends to the wider social and cultural implications of language in use. In the examples below, one of the members of the research team, Liz (pseudonym) facilitated these activities.

Results

We present three examples from this study of language in use to showcase how early education students use multiple languages for different purposes and are aware of doing so, as well as how they actually talk about these choices. The first example shows how language is used by students to assert their own ideas in a disagreement, with an explicit focus on how Spanish was used as an additional resource to vie for power in an English dominant group. The second example includes students reflecting on multiple languages used, as they articulate their choices of using Spanish and English with their peers. Finally, we present an example of a student who uses a variety of semiotic resources to explain events that had transpired earlier in the activity.

Examples

“No Catarina, como así”: Using language(s) to assert ideas, disagree, and collaborate. In this first example, we show how language, along with multiple modes of representation, is used in student collaboration and conflict. In the example below, four students from Classroom A are working together to put felt figures in the order in which they occurred in Eric Carle’s (1969) classic book The Very Hungry Caterpillar. This was videotaped on an iPad so that students could view it directly after the activity. Initially the researcher, Liz, asked the students to put the felt cutouts in linear order. Each student had one of the following: an egg on a leaf, a caterpillar, a cocoon, or a butterfly (Figure 1). The students include three girls: Susan, Catarina, and Flora, and one boy, Diego. Catarina primarily spoke Spanish in her classroom, although she also speaks English for academic purposes, as seen below. Diego, Susan, and Flora speak both English and Spanish in the classroom and among the group, although they spoke primarily English in whole group activities.
After reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, the four students sat on the floor with their figures. Liz gave Catarina the cocoon, and Catarina said in English, “The ladybug goes to the cocoon.” When asked to repeat what she said, Catarina replied, “The ladybug goes to the cocoon and changes to the butterfly.” We can see through this that Catarina has a working knowledge of the order of events from the story. While she referred to the figure as a “ladybug” rather than “caterpillar,” she did orally recount the order of events. The students then begin to discuss the order and place the figures. The transcripts below include several conventions that are useful in analysis to indicate pauses in speech ( . ), elongated vowels ( : ), interruptions ( /- ), self corrections ( \ ), and whispering ( °... ° ). Additionally, parentheses are used for observational comments and brackets for overlapping speech. Susan begins:

01 SU: Diego’s first and an' I'm the last one  
02 FL: That was an egg  
03 DI: And then it's for Flora  
04 FL: Ah, it’s upside down  
05 SU: Flora was in  
06 CA: you have to go in [the cocoon]  
07 DI: [That should go on the top]  
08 SU: Catarina’s turn  
09 CA: It go here the cocoon  
10 DI: They have to go at the top

At this point, we see each of the students participating verbally and in action. Flora placed the caterpillar under the egg, and Catarina put the cocoon next to the caterpillar and moved it to touch the head (Figure 1). This represents the ordering that the caterpillar moves into the cocoon. Diego reiterates twice (lines 7 and 10) that the caterpillar and cocoon should go next to the egg in linear order. This begins an initial disagreement over how to represent the order of events. Diego is following Liz’s instructions in an abstract, more school-like way of discrete events in linear order. Catarina, recognizing that the caterpillar goes into the cocoon, finds a way to represent this by placing the cocoon next to the caterpillar and moves it so that it is partially covering the caterpillar, as if the caterpillar is moving into the cocoon.
In this next section, Spanish is introduced by Diego in the interaction and used by Susan, as well:

11 FL: Yai (inaudible 3 syllables) the top
12 DI: Catarina, dos están arriba
13 FL: It's all dirty again
14 DI: No Catarina, como así
15 CA: It have to go to the cocoon it have to go to the cocoon
16 SU: Hey! (Diego put the cocoon then the caterpillar)
17 DI: Oh wait. (moving the objects around to the correct order)
18 SU: Catarina °
19 DI: And then Susan then it's you

Here we begin to see how language plays a role in collaboration and vying for whose representation is correct. First, we see Diego, once again, directing others to put the caterpillar and cocoon in line with the egg. However, there is some ambiguity with what he is saying. When Diego tells Catarina, “dos están arriba,” he could be pointing out that two go at the top, or that one is on top of the other (and that this is incorrect). The word *arriba* in Spanish can translate to “at the top” or “on top of,” as in making a pile – just as the felt cutouts were being placed on top of each other. In fact, when Flora remarks, “It’s all dirty again,” she could be referring to the messiness of the felt cutouts, as opposed to the order Diego was attempting to demonstrate.

Diego then takes control and demonstrates to Catarina what he means, showing her “como así.” He accidentally reorders the cutouts incorrectly, and in line 16, Susan jumps in to correct him as Diego recognizes his error and puts them back in order. Susan seemingly follows Diego’s lead in speaking Spanish to Catarina and whispers to her “así” twice (line 18) as she points. Up until now Catarina has spoken in English (lines 6 and 9) and has demonstrated that she understands the correct order of events (at least the ordering of the caterpillar and cocoon). This activity has shifted from a question of ordering events from the story to how to represent order, and Diego uses Spanish, in addition to English, to direct and clarify how he thinks things should be done.

In the rest of this activity, we see that the struggle over representation continues. Whereas in lines 12, 14, and 18 above, we see both Diego and Susan directing Catarina about how to put the events in order, now we see Diego and Susan disagree on representation.

20 SU: My turn.
21 CA: And then they change to butterfly
22 FL: Beautiful butterfly
23 SU: And then this comes out and then it's the butterfly
24 (Interchanges butterfly and caterpillar)
25 DI: No. The butterfly goes last.
26 FL: Oh wha/. No this is the last part see
27 FL: uhhh the way (inaudible 3 syllables) that
28 DI: First . wait . First is the egg then is the um caterpillar
29 then its the cocoon
30 SU: ooo oh so . So the caterpillar/-
31 DI: It's right there it's after the egg.
32 SU: (puts caterpillar down)
33 DI: No, it's like this.
(Interchange the cocoon and butterfly and caterpillar)

The three girls all move the butterfly to exchange the caterpillar. They also attempt to put the cocoon on top of the caterpillar and the butterfly on top of the cocoon. These are more embodied forms of representation, for, indeed, if the caterpillar did change, we should not see it represented anymore. This struggle over representation climaxes in lines 25 and 26 in which Diego says that the butterfly goes last, and Susan says, “this is the last part, see.” Here we see the conflict over representation, not over the recall of events. All agree on the order; the question is representational. Diego ultimately moves the figures into the linear order, ending with whispering his directives.

After this, Liz asked if they could tell her what happened. Diego states the order from the egg to the butterfly, “First he was an egg, and then he was a caterpillar, and then he was in his cocoon, and then he is a butterfly.” Interestingly, he personalizes the caterpillar with the pronoun “he” and also switches tenses from past to present tense. This is significant because what Diego represents linguistically is in line with what the girls were attempting to represent via the movement of the cutouts; that this single being is changing, and therefore there should not be four discrete representations next to one another, all present at once.

In this example, we see that language plays a vital role in collaboration, building understanding, and in the struggle for whose representation is correct. We see that the activity was mediated by conflicting notions of representation, but are explained through verbal language. The use of Spanish in this episode is quite significant because we see that Catarina is making sense of the activity in English, correctly ordering events, but due to the conflict in representation, Diego attempts to clarify with the use of Spanish. Susan picks up on this and follows suit. Ultimately, we see that the conflict is not in Catarina’s sense-making of the activity, but rather in two different ways to represent the order. Diego’s use of Spanish becomes one more tool to use in the struggle over meaning and in the collaboration of completing the activity.

“Dos están arriba”: Articulation of language choice based on interlocutor.

In the second example, we shift to the video response activity. Liz shows the students a video of themselves taken during the above activity. She guides their attention to the moment that Diego speaks to Catarina in Spanish (Figure 2) and asks Diego about what he said (VD refers to “Video Diego”, or the video recorded image of Diego on the tablet).
Figure 2. Liz shows students the video of them placing cutouts in linear order.

01 LI: Ok, let's keep listening. I want to see how you guys work together and what you say to each other to get this job done so well.
04 VD: Catarina. Dos están arriba
05 LI: What did you just say?
06 DI: I um. I told Catarina that, um, in the in the in the . um .
07 the caterpillar and the stuff go on top.
08 LI: Ok . and do you remember what words you used to say that?
09 DI: uh huh
10 LI: What did you say?
11 DI: Catarina. están arriba
12 LI: And what does that mean?
13 DI: Catarina, that caterpillar stuff is up, it's right there where everybody put it.

When Video Diego makes a declaration in Spanish in line 4, Liz asks Diego in the current moment about what he said. Diego responds by translating his words into English in line 7. Liz prompts him to recall his exact words in line 8. Diego responds that he does remember and reproduces his initial phrase, “están arriba.” Liz asks him what that means. Diego translates and explains the placement of the felt cutouts, referring to them as the “caterpillar stuff.” Liz then continues to prompt Diego to explain why he used Spanish words instead of English words.

15 LI: ‘There it is,’ right? So why did you use Spanish words instead of English words.
17 DI: Because she speaks in Spanish.
18 FL: And you would, and you go to Mexico
19 LI: Yeah (looking at Flora who is raising her hand) go ahead.
20 FL: (inaudible)

When Liz asked Diego to explain why he used Spanish words instead of English words, Diego tells Liz that the reason is because Catarina speaks in Spanish. This is not to say that Catarina only speaks Spanish. On the contrary, Catarina had spoken in English throughout this interaction. However, it is possible that Diego associated Catarina with the Spanish language and seems to understand that Catarina has a better understanding and command of Spanish. At this point, Flora mentions going to Mexico in line 18. It is not clear whether Flora is addressing Catarina and has knowledge of
Catarina’s travels, or if she is making a statement, associating speaking Spanish with Mexico, as one could say, ‘one goes to Mexico.’ After this, Liz asks Catarina a metacognitive question about what she was thinking when spoken to in Spanish.

21 LI: Catarina, what were you thinking about when he was talking to you in Spanish?
22 CA: I think uh (inaudible utterance)
23 LI: He said arriba
24 CA: uh huh
25 LI: And you heard him say that.
26 CA: uh huh
27 LI: What did that make you think? . . What did, what did that make you think about when he said that to you?
28 CA: He said (inaudible 2 words; gestures hand up, like indicating the top)
29 LI: That's what he was saying, right? Did you hear a difference in his words? Did you think about those are English words or those are Spanish words? . . Did you think about those words being in English or in Spanish?
30 CA: um
31 LI: Or did you not think about it?
32 CA: I think about
33 LI: You did think about it? So did you do what he was asking when he spoke to you in Spanish?
34 CA: uh huh

Liz asks different questions to Catarina, mostly asking for acknowledgment or a yes/no response. Catarina responds to most of the questioning simply with “uh huh.” However, we do see in line 30 that she responds by recounting what Diego had said with gestures. This seems to indicate that she understands Liz’s question and is answering as best she can. Catarina may understand more English than she can express.

Liz then asks Catarina if she had thought about Diego speaking to her in Spanish while speaking in English the rest of the time. Catarina responds that she did think of it, although as she is agreeing to each of the questions from Liz, it is difficult to know whether she had been thinking about Diego’s language choice or whether she had been thinking about the activity more generally. She seems to have been hesitating to form an answer in line 36, but did not have enough wait time to develop her response before Liz rearticulated the four questions in lines 32-35 into the negative form (line 37). This is something typical in young, emergent bilinguals. Their receptive capabilities of L2 develop before L2 production.

Liz started the video again and heard Video Diego saying, como así. Liz follows up to ask Diego about his language choice again.

42 LI: Como así. Who were you talking to?
43 DI: Catarina
44 LI: You were talking to Catarina. If you were saying the same thing . to Susan would you have used the same words?
45 DI: What's that
46 LI: You would have said "What's that?" if you were talking to Susan? Why is that?
47 DI: Um. I don't know what/wha you are talking about.
48 LI: You don't know what I am talking about? I'm asking you why
you would have said to Susan and why you said different words to Catarina.

DI: Because Catarina speaks in Spanish and Susan speaks in English.

LI: Oh so you kind of made a decision because of who you are talking to.

Similar to the above statement, Diego explains his use of multiple languages (line 52). As Liz asks him about why he said *como asi*, she digs deeper into whether he could imagine other contexts, and if he could articulate which language he would choose in an assumed situation. He acknowledges that he would speak in English to Susan, and he articulates why he would do so. This example demonstrates that preschool students can and do articulate their decisions about language use.

“Caterpillar walking”: Omar’s use of multiple semiotic resources. In this final example, four students from Classroom B conduct a similar sequencing activity. The students include two girls and two boys: Lucila, Karina, Jimmy, and Omar. All four students spoke primarily in English in the classroom, although as seen below, Omar used both English and Spanish to explain events from the story. Liz was facilitating the small group activity that had been determined by the teacher. The read aloud had been conducted in Spanish, as was typical for Thursday read alouds, but the teacher’s follow-up activity was primarily conducted in English, with Spanish translations for objects from the story. Like the other class, students were asked to put the following in order from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly. However, in this classroom, the visuals were accompanied by both English and Spanish words. While the book and classroom discussion had used the word *cocoon*, these figures used *chrysalis* to index the more accurate term. *Chrysalis* was not referred to during the read aloud, as the students were ordering the pictures and not the words specifically. In addition to this ordering activity, the children also had a glass jar with a live caterpillar inside. Students turned around frequently to look at it and also spent time watching and describing it. Below, Omar’s hand gestures seem to mimic the walking of this live caterpillar.

The conversation below occurred while this group was looking at themselves as recorded earlier on the iPad. Jimmy had already shared his version of the events in the video. Liz had just pointed out Karina in the video and then asked her about the actions she had taken with the egg. She next asked Karina if she had anything more to add, and while Karina did not, Omar was eager to share something. In the transcript below, words preceded by an asterisk are phonetic spellings.

```
01 LI: Do you have anything you want to tell us about that? (to Karina)
02   (Karina shakes her head no)
03 OM: Me yeah.
04 LI: Do you have something you want to say?
05 OM: (nods head)
06 LI: Ok
07 OM: um Jimmy say the caterpillar en the coocoo y en la
caterpillar (moving fists in a circle) y an da an da
08   butterfly .. (pointing to the video) y coocoo son y es
09   jumpin’ akwas y *katana en the coocoon.
11 LI: Ok, you’re using some Spanish words and some English words
```
From the outset, Omar is enthusiastic in his communication. He seems excited to share his recollection of Jimmy’s version of the events in the video. When Karina shakes her head no to signify that she does not have anything else to add, Omar jumps in with the phrase, “Me yeah.” While we can understand this phrase as an approximation of “I do” in English, it is actually closer to a word-for-word translation of the phrase, “Yo sí,” in Spanish, which also means “I do.” Not only does Omar use both Spanish and English in his recounting of what he heard Jimmy (sitting next to him) say about what is happening in the video, but Omar is also using his hands and body to retell what Jimmy just shared. Although it is difficult to understand everything Omar is saying, he is clearly using the vocabulary from the story (caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly) and signaling the movement of the caterpillar, with his fists rotating in a circular motion, towards the picture representation of the cocoon and eventually the butterfly. He is largely accurate in his representation of the order of events. Liz comments on his use of both Spanish and English words in his narrative. Next, Liz directs him to tell his narrative again but more slowly this time.

Upon Liz’s encouragement, Omar agrees to tell his version of events again, with an “ok” at the beginning of line 21. On his second retelling, Omar gets a little bit confused with the order of events, stating that the cocoon comes first. He says “no” a few times, which may be a way he is negating what he just said, or changing his mind about the order. Because after those few “no’s”, Omar begins to say butterfly, but stops midway through the word and goes back to talking about the caterpillar. He again describes the movement of the caterpillar (“walking, walking”), putting his hands together, palms touching, and swerving his connected hands back and forth, as if a long caterpillar was moving along. Omar abruptly changes his hands to making a fist with his right hand and opening his left hand, palm up, to signify a butterfly landing on a leaf.
Liz repeats what she believes Omar has just said, contrasting the moving caterpillar with the butterfly staying still. Omar emphasizes the word “moving” one more time, looking behind him at the real caterpillar in the jar to confirm that the caterpillar is indeed still moving.

**Post-Interviews Regarding Language Use in the Classroom**

Post-interviews were conducted with both teachers; they were asked to reflect on their own and their students’ language use in the classroom. Teacher A generally viewed her role as supporting what she perceived as the parents’ goals, noting that “the parents want their children to speak English; overall they want them to have a better life and to have better opportunities and better jobs than they themselves had.” Other than the teacher aide reading a Spanish book to the students once a week or translating for students, there was little use of Spanish in classroom instruction.

Both teachers expressed that there was often resistance to speaking English in the classroom at the very onset of the year, but that students soon shifted to becoming resistant to speaking Spanish at home, which has been documented in the literature elsewhere (Martínez-Roldán & Malavé, 2004). However, Teacher B noticed a slight difference in her students this year:

Um, they tend to be more English. They’re like, typically once you start learning English in the classroom, that they’ll fight it, they’ll fight using Spanish as a home language, like they’ll go home and they’ll just want to speak English all the time. Um, but I haven’t really had that this year.

In fact, instances emerged organically where students expressed an interest in bilingualism. For example, one student in Classroom A told the researchers that she wanted to learn Spanish during a reflection activity. Teacher A, in her post-interview, noted that:

[This student] is very, very eager to learn Spanish, I think because she [the teacher aide] will read the book once a week in Spanish and will sing songs or occasionally speak in Spanish, and she realizes that she doesn’t fully understand, so she is the most eager one in the class to learn Spanish.

This student’s interests in language development included Spanish, in a classroom, which exposed her to authentic language practices, such as songs and a fluent Spanish speaking adult (the classroom aide).

Teacher A also heard comments about language use from her preschool students frequently in the course of the school day. She noted that some students expressed very clear home/school delineation, such as, “when I’m here I speak English, when I’m at home I speak Spanish.” She also allowed language to be a topic of conversation in the classroom and acknowledged the concept of language varieties with students:

When I came back from London I had a bit of an accent because I had to learn phonetics and teach it. And I still do one or two times I catch it. And one of my kids she goes, "Do you celebrate St. Patrick’s day?" And she goes, "No? But I know you're Irish because you sometimes say 'scof' instead of 'scarf'."
Teacher A noted that her preschool students noticed varieties even within the English language.

The teacher in Classroom B explained that the majority of her students spoke Spanish at home, but that in the classroom they used English most of the time. In response to how she integrated Spanish into the classroom, she described an attempt to foster Spanish and English by conducting a read aloud once a week in both languages:

So we do repeated readings of the read alouds. We try to find books that are in English and in Spanish so that once a week the kids who are stronger in Spanish are exposed to the same book and can learn the vocab words that the teacher aide reads.

In this classroom, an attempt was made to include a limited selection of texts that could be found in both Spanish and English. Emphasis was placed on vocabulary development and learning from the teacher aide. The teacher continued to explain the attempts to incorporate Spanish in the classroom and make connections between the two languages:

I'm really cognizant of trying to get them to bridge between the languages. So, um, I can look it up on the computer, I can look it up in the Spanish dictionary. Turn it into English and then like yesterday like I had, after we reread the book, I said oh *chapalear* and oh! I can look it up on the computer or in the Spanish dictionary and then turn it into English, so, like they're going to *chapalear* like they're going to splash. But doing it more as like a bridge into English, like I'm going to teach a new word in Spanish.

The teacher here mentions being able to use technology to translate words, or learn new words in either language. She also seems familiar with the Spanish language, enough to know a word like “chapalear” or “to splash.” However, these examples were fairly minimal uses of Spanish, less than what is found in most bilingual classrooms, where it is typical to see primary language instruction at the early grades. It is also not taking advantage of what students know in Spanish, which we elaborate below.

**Discussion**

The study yielded a rich set of data to investigate children’s use of multiple semiotic resources, including English and Spanish, and their reflection of that use. This allowed us to demonstrate that children use language in diverse ways, although we do not always value the way they use and think about language. The children in this preschool classroom were able to recall the story the teacher read, put events in order and talk about it, and interact with each other and the researcher using various semiotic means. These emergent bilinguals engaged in translanguaging as they co-constructed meaning with each other by using both Spanish and English, embodiment, pointing at the tablet screen, and moving the felt figures. They demonstrated language awareness by giving a reason for addressing interlocutors using a particular language. As a tool, the video-stimulated recall helped make explicit the students’ ability to make sense of and articulate what they did in the immediate past. The examples of researcher and student discussions point to the full linguistic resources at these students’ disposal, as well as evidence the value students gave to their burgeoning languages, even while the
school program did not always leverage these resources, as shown by an absence of a specific policy that supports multilingualism and a lack of instructional attention given to Spanish.

**Teacher Language Ideologies in Tension with Program Goals**

Teachers in preschool classrooms navigate complex linguistic spaces. Not only is early childhood a rich and complex space for learning language, but also multiple semiotic resources are used to make meaning. The language practices of students vary from child to child, and classrooms become spaces in which different language practices (and language ideologies) collide. Preschool teachers may not always know how to support the use of these diverse linguistic resources.

For example, in the interview conducted with the bilingual classroom teacher after the conclusion of data collection in the classroom, the teacher discusses exposing children to the same books in Spanish and English about once a week. Here we see that the teacher was valuing Spanish only in as much as it structurally performed the same task as English in the classroom. That is, Spanish was only helpful so far as it reinforced vocabulary in English and stories that were already told (most likely written and created) in English. This can further be seen in her effort to bridge the two languages. Rather than incorporating more authentic literature in Spanish or use storytelling to support the development of oral language for instance, the impulse when a Spanish word is spoken is to turn it into English. This act implicitly devalues the languages students speak in the classroom other than English. She did not explicitly reflect on the space she was providing for different languages to be used in her classroom, or how she was helping to construct the linguistic space necessary for students to feel comfortable using their first languages. The teacher’s own language ideologies were affecting the way languages were being used for instructional purposes, and in this case, minimally using one of the primary languages of many of the students in the classroom.

When the student in Classroom A expressed that she desired to learn Spanish, she displayed an authentic interest in broadening her own linguistic repertoire. Thus, students are aware of bilingualism in the wider context of a classroom or community, even though they may not need to use multiple languages to complete the goals of an instructional activity. This lends credence to the notion that bilingual identities can be fostered in early childhood classrooms, an approach much different from restrictive and utilitarian notions of multilingualism.

**Pedagogical and Teacher Education Implications**

The findings discussed prompted the question of what possibilities may be fostered in early childhood classrooms when students are aware of and can articulate use of their multiple tools. We point to a need for a theoretically updated bilingual education (Nevárez-La Torre, 2013), informed by studies of the way real people speak and analysis of actual talk (Palmer & Martínez, 2013). Instruction in early childhood bilingual programs should enact not a strict separation or development of two separate codes, but the development of ideas about the tool of language itself, in all its complex, hybrid forms. One way of moving toward this ideal is incorporating more metalinguistic talk in the classroom – talking about talk, and why one language or the other is used in a particular context. As Pandey (2013) noted, talk about language, and
multiple languages, in the classroom can support appreciation for language diversity and, when home languages are valued and celebrated, students will grow. These discussions should be strategic and explicit, building student consciousness of their own practices and language forms. While the researchers were explicitly asking students questions about why they chose to use a particular language at certain moments in the recorded interactions, there were conversations that at least one of the teachers was already having with her students that could be further built upon.

In the example of the accented English when the teacher said the word scarf, the same teacher interviewed who did not integrate authentic use of the primary language into classroom instruction, was able to recognize her students' metalinguistic awareness. While the student was not able to differentiate between an English and Irish accent, this example demonstrates the level of attention paid to language differences, as well as the overlay of identity to language when the student assumes the teacher must celebrate St. Patrick's Day based on the way she speaks. As demonstrated in the study itself, students talk about language and reflect on their language choices, when these were facilitated by the researcher. These metalinguistic acts can be leveraged in the classroom to promote expanded forms of learning. By facilitating these dialogues, language is not viewed as a monolithic construct with a standardized ideal. Rather, language is a topic to discuss and a tool to use.

Some implications of this shift in the way language is understood and leveraged in the classroom include changes to teacher education that begin with having teacher candidates listen to how students actually talk, rather than promoting an ideal of language. By engaging in the process of discourse analysis in the classroom, pre-service teachers may discover the language practices of particular communities, uncovering for themselves how much language hybridity actually exists. Instruction should reflect more expansive views about language and a value for understanding languaging rather than attempting to move towards demonstrating proficiency of a code, particularly at early levels of schooling.

**Conclusion**

The potential opportunities that may open up because of Preschool for All initiative allow educational researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to reflect on what it would take to truly make preschool accessible for all students. Specifically of interest are programs such as Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) in which policies are in place to allow for expansive forms of bilingual education, but the policies must align with language ideological stances and classroom instructional practices. One way to rethink bilingual preschool education is to revisit the role language plays. The code, that is the lexicon and grammar of language, is not the primary tool used in making meaning. A wider set of semiotic resources is available for students to make meaning and communicate. Awareness of these multiple resources, and how they work to accomplish goals, is a more nuanced way to understand preschool learning activities.
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End Notes

i Students who have previously been identified as limited English proficient (LEP) or English language learners (ELLs), are more recently being described as “emergent bilinguals” (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010) in order to place emphasis on the abilities they are developing, rather than their supposed deficiencies. In early childhood, another commonly used term is “dual language learners”, especially in the state of Illinois. In this article, we use the term emergent bilinguals and note where the label “English learners” is used in legislation or other sources.

ii This example was, in part, discussed in Rumenapp, Whittingham, and Hoffman (2015). Please refer to this source for further information.
Teaching Emergent Bilingual Learners with Disabilities and Challenging Behaviors in Preschool

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Challenging behaviors in young children can result from a variety of factors that may interact to make it difficult for teachers to find effective instructional solutions. The authors of this article provide an overview of research that focuses on understanding challenging behavior in young children. It describes a research-based model, the Pyramid model, intended to support the development of social competence in young children. Classroom practice suggestions with some vignettes are provided to illustrate how teachers may implement this model with children that experience challenging behaviors and ways in which their practice could be transformed. The article concludes with recommendations for teachers on different techniques they can use as proactive supports or interventions in order to prevent challenging behaviors from reoccurring in emergent bilingual preschoolers.

Keywords: emergent bilingual learners, challenging behavior, dual language, early childhood, multilingual education.

Supporting a preschool child whose behavior disrupts the classroom is difficult for any teacher. A disability and a different language can complicate the situation with additional challenges that make cross-discipline collaboration necessary (Chen & Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2013; Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2014). It is important for teachers to understand the complex challenges they may face when working with a child that has an identified disability and who is learning English as an additional language.

As researchers and practitioners, we believe that all children come to school to learn. In our estimation, effective teachers have the knowledge, strategies, and materials needed to respond to the diverse behaviors of young children and the confidence to change their practices to respond to each child’s individual learning needs. In addition, the most effective programs focus on the whole child, rather than seeing a child as defined by one label or another (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010).

However, even in the best educational settings, challenging behavior in young children who are at risk of school failure, including young children who are emergent
bilinguals and/or children who may have learning disabilities, is a substantive concern for many teachers. The first months of preschool may be too early to accurately identify the factors that may be contributing to behaviors the teacher sees as challenging, but teaching and learning must proceed. Whether challenging behaviors arise from a disability, a language difference, or stressful experiences, or a combination, teachers need strategies they can use immediately and successfully to ensure each child’s progress.

The purpose of the article is to describe a research-based model, the Pyramid model, intended to support the development of social competence in young children and its application in classrooms with young emergent bilinguals who exhibit challenging behaviors. These types of behaviors and the role of language in behavior are explained in the initial section of the article. An explanation of the Pyramid model is followed by suggestions for classroom instruction that implement the model. Final instructional insights are provided in the conclusion to the article.

**Understanding Challenging Behaviors and the Role of Language in Behavior**

Behavior is the broad term referring to the way someone acts or reacts to different situations, people, or stimuli. When we see an ongoing pattern of a child reacting to situations, people, and stimuli in ways that cause injury to themselves and others, or damages the physical environment, or fails to comply with expected actions, we refer to this as challenging behavior. Young children can use challenging behaviors as a way to communicate with us when they do not have the words to express themselves in any other way. The challenging behavior becomes the message that their needs are not being met or that something is not right.

When children enter preschool or kindergarten, they are still in the process of developing language. Teachers that are not familiar with the stages of second language development may misinterpret a child’s behavior, attributing it to adjustment difficulties or developmental delays. Children’s common behaviors at the early stages of second language development such as refusing to speak during the school day, or wandering away from activities because they do not understand what is happening, are important and must be noted. However, while these behaviors present challenges to teachers, they may simply be the child’s reaction to being in a situation where people do not speak his language and activities are hard to understand (Brice, 2002; Tabors, 2008). To prevent confusing challenging behaviors that result from a disability from those that may be part of the normal process of language acquisition, it is important for teachers to be familiar with the stages of second language acquisition (Tabors, 2008).

- Continuing use of the home language
- Silent period (may appear like selective mutism in school or during certain parts of the day)
- Telegraphic or formulaic speech (child may say “iwantdat” to get something she needs, but may not yet be ready to say “I” and “want” and “that” as separate words)
- Informal language (full sentences in English may be produced and understood, but the child still understands and expresses some information
in the home language).
- Full academic fluency (when child is able to rely fully on the new language to learn and express learning) (Cummins, 1991; Tabors 2008)

Even as young children progress through the stages of first and second language development, the way they use their language resources in every day interactions is actually quite fluid. While children continue to develop both languages their individual experiences and abilities influence the way they use words from each language as needed to facilitate understanding and communication. This process is called “translanguaging” (García, Makar, Starcevic, & Terry, 2011) and it is observed in children across the range of disabilities and abilities. It is normal for all young emergent bilinguals to put together words from both languages to meet their communication needs, although monolingual teachers may find this a bit confusing. While the instincts of monolingual teachers, special education specialists, and therapists may be to teach one language or the other, the focus for all children in the early years needs to be on the development of overall effective communication skills and content learning in both languages.

The stress of being separated from family – possibly for the first time - in a new school with a new language may be a trigger for a child’s challenging behavior, or it may be the language difference that masks different problems such as adjustment issues or developmental delay. There are no quick fixes or easy answers that will help extinguish the challenging behaviors. Ideally, programs should not have to choose between special education supports, language supports, content learning, and behavioral supports. Just as multiple factors work together to influence the child’s behavior, multiple and coordinated supports will be needed to address that behavior. The goal must be to support the whole child rather than to break down his challenges into isolated parts. The Pyramid Model, described below, proposes to achieve a more holistic intervention for these children.

**Responding to Challenging Behaviors through the Pyramid Model**

In order to be proactive and prevent challenging behaviors in young children, classrooms and schools are implementing research-based frameworks, such as the Pyramid Model, to support the development of social competence in young children (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009). The Pyramid Model was developed with all children in mind, and the strategies are equally applicable for children who experience speech or language delays, cognitive developmental delays, physical disabilities, or children who are simply adapting to learning in a new language (Yates et al., 2008). This model was developed by researchers at two national, federally-funded research and training centers: The Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI) beginning in 2003, and conforms to a Response to Intervention tiered approach (promotion, prevention, and intervention) with emphasis on social interactions for children 2-5 years olds (Fox, Carta, Strain, Dunlap, & Hemmeter, 2009).

In the following paragraphs we identify the main components of the model and then illustrate some practices that emerge from the model. Four tiers comprise the model. The first two tiers focus on the promotion of quality, nurturing relationships
with teachers and other caregivers, and the use of high quality environments. They also highlight the developmentally appropriate practices outlined by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children’s Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education as well as National Association of the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria (Cimino, Forrest, Smith, & Stainback-Tracy, 2007; Smith, 2008).

If the relationships and environmental supports are not enough for children at risk, more targeted secondary prevention strategies to promote social development are implemented (Smith, 2008). Finally, at the top of the Pyramid Model, child specific intervention strategies can be implemented for children with persistent challenging behaviors (Fox et al., 2009; Fox & Smith, 2007; Smith 2008).

The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children identifies a framework of interventions to support the social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph & Strain, 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006). The interventions and strategies in the Pyramid Model are recommended to help teach children with disabilities the social and emotional skills needed to be effectively included in the least restrictive environment (Fox et al., 2009).

Research on the implementation of the Pyramid Model has found that using the strategies found within the bottom three tiers can help teachers adapt and modify challenging behaviors effectively in all children, even before individualized assessments and evaluations provide any additional information needed (Fox & Hemmeter, 2014; Yates et al., 2008). These strategies, identified below, can be used in early learning classrooms with young children who are both emergent bilingual learners and have identified disabilities with behaviors that prove to be challenging for teachers. The purpose in describing the strategies is to guide teachers and other professionals in understanding the complex issues of emergent bilinguals with disabilities who are exhibiting challenging behavior.

Traditional special education methods alone may not work and must be adapted to meet the unique needs of children who are also emergent bilinguals. The issues surrounding the disabling condition and the language needs must be considered together as interventions are built and implemented in collaboration with the other educators and specialists (Brillante, 2014). The Pyramid Model supports teachers by describing four tiers of evidence-based interventions they can use in diverse classrooms.

**Tier 1 and Tier 2**

The foundation of the Pyramid Model is twofold, first is the development of nurturing relationships with teachers and other caregivers, and second is the use of developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom as outlined by NAEYC’s Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Fox et al., 2009). Specifically, these are learning activities, lessons, and interactions that are appropriate to each child’s age and developmental level, that are responsive to each child’s interests, and are responsive to the child’s language and culture, within the context of any curriculum (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). We list
some of the recommended strategies for the initial two tiers below.

1. For children with disabilities, developmentally appropriate classrooms feature a clear intent on providing access, participation, and supports for young children with disabilities in their least restrictive environment (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

2. Teachers need to help preschool children develop knowledge of essential concepts in a child’s home language, which will help the child frame the new concept into the familiar language and cultural context (NAEYC, 2009). This practice of having the teachers learn essential concepts in the child’s home language is not to be disregarded just because the child has a disability (Espinosa, 2008).

3. Relationships with peers who speak other languages need to be fostered by developing common language that children can use to communicate with each other and by teaching everyone about the language and culture of the members of the class. This strategy stresses the importance of social development between children. Language barriers and developmental disabilities can impede social interactions in the classroom. Some programs use a two-way dual language immersion approach to foster bilingualism and biliteracy among all of the children in the class. Other programs emphasize learning English as the common language. Other strategies include communication supports such as American Sign Language or picture communication boards.

**Tier 3**

For children with more significant needs, the Pyramid Model suggests more targeted supports to prevent some of the challenging behavior (Fox et al., 2003; Hemmeter et al., 2006). Teachers may need additional strategies to adapt recommendations that were designed for monolingual classrooms. Whenever a solution entails explicit instruction, consideration must be given to the dilemma of teachers and children not speaking the same language. Teachers will need to be intentional about helping emergent bilinguals learn social skills – either through direct instruction, or careful modeling and Social Stories® in the home languages of the children.

1. Teachers are advised to provide direct instruction on skills such as how to initiate and maintain interactions with peers; problem solving within social situations; handling disappointment and anger; and expressing emotions and feelings in appropriate ways (Strain & Joseph, 2006). When the students do not understand the teacher’s language, this advice may be hard to follow. Teaching the targeted skills to the whole class can increase the opportunities children with language barriers and developmental delays have to model the appropriate behaviors.

2. Using Social Stories® featuring the children in the classroom can help reinforce the targeted behaviors during times when the child is not engaging in challenging behaviors.
Social Stories® were first developed in 1991 by Carol Gray to improve weak social skills typically found in people with high functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder. Gray and Attwood (2010) explain that the individualized stories highlight a challenging social situation and provide the relevant social cues for that situation. In addition, these stories highlight the perspectives of the other people in the social situation, and provide the appropriate response the reader would need in that social situation. The use of Social Stories® to teach appropriate interaction and targeted behavior for preschoolers with challenging behaviors is becoming common in preschool classrooms (Delano & Stone, 2008). The format of these individualized stories can be adapted to use with preschool students with disabilities and dual language needs. Offering Social Stories® in the home language of each child in the class can significantly enhance the teacher’s ability to reach all of the children with the skills they need to learn. When these linguistically appropriate stories are available in the classroom, visitors and volunteers who speak the home languages of the children will have a valuable resource to read and discuss with the children who are emergent bilinguals.

3. Playing cooperatively with peers is a key element of the third tier of the pyramid, however, Chang et al., (2007) found that in classrooms where half the children speak English and half speak Spanish, more behavior issues including bullying and teasing of the Spanish speakers were likely to occur when the teacher did not speak any Spanish. According to these researchers, when the teachers spoke some Spanish, even for a portion of the day, the conditions in the classrooms changed, reducing challenging behaviors from children of both languages. Furthermore, Kohnert and Derr (2012) synthesized relevant research and recommended that children with language and/or cognitive impairments will do best when they receive interventions that support both their home language and English. This recommendation is also included in the position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), 2010.

4. It is key to understand that there is no evidence that learning in two languages is detrimental for children with developmental or language delays (CEC, 2010; Hambly & Fombonne, 2012). In other words, support for a child’s home language should not be considered optional. That does not mean every teacher has to become fully fluent in all of the languages of her students. Small steps such as reading stories, learning to use a few words to meet basic needs, or singing songs in the non-English languages can help (Castro, Espinosa, & Paéz, 2011; Pandey, 2012). The goal for all early childhood educators should be to support meaningful conversations and content learning in the home languages of young children while also helping them make connections with English (U.S. Department of Health and Human services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Learning some key words that help children feel more understood and welcome to the new classroom environment is just a first step in this process.
Tier 4

For children with persistent challenging behaviors that do not respond to the interventions in Tier 1 and 2, or Tier 3, more individualized, comprehensive interventions may be required. As described by Fox and Hemmeter (2009), Tier 4 will assist teachers in developing and implementing individualized plans that intensively address challenging behaviors.

1. The individualized Tier 4 process begins with a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) designed to understand why the behavior is occurring. The FBA must begin with establishing a multidisciplinary team that can provide different perspectives about the interfering behavior. Essential members of this team include staff members that are familiar with how the disability is impacting the child’s access and participation in the curricular activities as well as the supports that are currently in place. It is also essential for the team to have someone who is familiar with both the child’s home language and the cultural expectations of the family and community. The team identifies interfering behaviors as the target for the observations and interventions. Extensive observations are completed to help understand the various factors related to ongoing challenging behaviors. Functional assessments can be complex when focusing on both the role of the disability and how that impacts behavior as well as the role of the child’s language and culture. Identifying the function of the behavior for children who have disabilities in addition to having dual language needs is a necessary step before designing interventions to replace the behavior with more appropriate behaviors that meet the same goal.

2. For preschool aged children who have disabilities and are learning in two languages, identifying the function of the challenging behavior can be difficult. Teachers will need to look at the problem from many different angles. The disability may be inhibiting developmental and social growth. The language difference may make it difficult for the child to understand the demands being placed on them. The child may only have a limited selection of words in each language they can use when interacting with peers and adults, which will limit the ability of the peers and adults to understand their communicative intent. When the child has no easy way to communicate their wants and needs, engaging in challenging behavior may be an effective alternative form of communication for them.

3. Within Tier 4, plans are designed to teach new skills that replace challenging behavior. One evidence-based practice is the use of functional communication training (FCT; Durán, Hartzheim, Lund, Simonsmeier, & Kohlmeier, 2016; Franzone, 2009). This practice will help determine what the child is trying to communicate and replace the challenging behavior with more conventional forms of communication (e.g., pointing, picture exchange, signing, and verbalizations) that are appropriate for the developmental needs as well as the language barrier (Mancil, Conroy, Nakao, & Alter, 2006; Nathan & Gorman, 2002). As with any intervention, the intervention team
must be aware of, and make adaptations for, the ethnic and cultural differences of the children and their families.

**Recommendations for Implementing Strategies**

Challenging behaviors can interfere with learning new skills and even making and keeping friends, so it is essential that teachers understand the evidenced based practices that are based in years of research they can implement in order to provide the supports children exhibiting challenging need, and proactively preventing challenging behaviors in the future.

The following recommendations for teachers are based on the research on effective instruction for young children (National Research Council, 2001), as well as effective strategies connected to the PBS model of promotion, prevention, and intervention (Dunlap, Kincaid, Horner, Knoster, & Bradshaw, 2014).

**Revising Expectations**

Tier 1 of the Pyramid Model is the first step in helping students with challenging behaviors (Fox et al., 2009). Setting a solid foundation requires the teacher to both understand and adjust classroom expectations based on the developmental level of the child and the language ability in each of his or her languages. The environment and the activities should be stimulating and supportive of the developmental levels as well as the home languages in the classroom (Nemeth, 2009). Teachers may need to revise their own expectations or develop a plan with other professionals in the school to teach specific skills. Work on skills the child needs to use in the classroom should be addressed at times when the child is not exhibiting challenging behaviors, and may need to happen when they are with different teachers or specialists. Specifically helping the child learn a variety of ways to express feelings, wants, or needs can result in giving them alternatives that reduce their use of challenging behaviors (Roben, Cole & Armstrong, 2012). The following fictional vignette describes the example of the experiences of a new teacher we will call Hamidah and how she changed her expectations of the students in her classroom.

*Hamidah was excited that she had been hired for her first job as a preschool teacher. She was comfortable in the classroom and she spoke fluent Arabic. She was sure she would be able to help the three typically developing students in the classroom who were native Arabic speakers, but some of the students in the class were native Spanish speakers, and Hamidah did not speak Spanish. The other problem was there were six students in the class that had developmental disabilities, including two of the students that only spoke Spanish and one that was a native Arabic speaker. Hamidah had some training in college about making adaptations for students with disabilities, but not for students with disabilities that did not speak English. She reviewed the student’s IEPs and planned a course of action with her supervisor. She decided to learn some key words in Spanish by practicing with several children’s bilingual storybooks that came with CDs. This gave her a starting point of words she needed to begin the year and the children loved helping her learn. Slowly but surely, she made sure that the students in her*
class who were developmentally disabled had the same preschool experiences as the rest of the children in the class.

In this example, it becomes clear that teachers could adopt effective strategies, even when they are new to the field or lack specialized preparation. Revising and changing attitudes, support from administrators, and availability of information about best practices can all contribute to successful adaptations for each individual child.

**Embedding Home Languages in Classroom Environment and Services**

Throughout their day, children have both planned and unplanned opportunities for learning (Dunst, Bruder, Trivette, Raab, & McLean, 2001). Embedding language supports for children into the routines and activities of the child’s day reinforces the idea that the more opportunities a child has to practice new skills in context; the more those new skills will be used across settings (McWilliam, 2010). Teaching these skills in the environments where they will be used is an important part of the puzzle. Buysse and Bailey (1993) reported behavioral and social benefits when supports are embedded into the classroom routines rather than provided in pull out services.

A child’s home language is a resource that can be used to help reduce challenging behaviors (Castro, Espinosa, & Paéz, 2011; Goldenberg, 2008). Rather than being viewed as a deficit, the home language should be used to increase learning and to support the child in the multilingual classroom (Cheatham, Armstrong, & Santos, 2009; García et al., 2011; Puig, 2010). Keeping Tier 1 of the Pyramid Model in mind, the use of visual and multilingual supports will help all members of the class. Adding photos to all labels can help children learn the words and connect them to the languages of their peers, which in turn strengthens the social bond between classmates (Thelan & Klifman, 2011). Pictures, standardized icons, graphics organizers, props, and video are other examples of visual supports that facilitate learning and communication in multi-ability and multilingual classrooms.

When bilingual teachers work with students that speak their languages, they can support communication and learning in both English and non-English language. This supports bilingual development of all children, including children with disabilities, whether they start with English or not. When language matches are not possible, the goal of true bilingual education with support for translanguging will not be within reach. Administrators, teachers, and special education professionals must create a language plan that guides practices to fit the individualized needs of the children with the resources available at the school. This may mean making compromises or learning new strategies to improve effectiveness of teaching young children with disabilities who are dual language learners and reducing conditions that can lead to challenging behaviors.

Monolingual teachers can use a variety of materials to help them support other languages in the classroom (Chen & Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2013). Add books in the home languages to the library and read them to the class as a way to build the teacher’s vocabulary in the languages of the students. Teachers can ask a parent to record a story to play back to the class to demonstrate that the class accepts and encourages the home language. Have the children or families teach everyone key words that are used daily (Nemeth, 2009). This makes for a much more welcoming environment. These are
beginning steps used by teachers who need to create that environment even when they do not know the languages spoken by the children. Once survival words have been used, additional language learning will help the teacher do more to connect with the students.

Similar approaches should be implemented by any of the specialists who may be involved in working with the child, including speech therapists, special education specialists, occupational therapists, and social workers. In order for these strategies to be implemented effectively they should be part of a comprehensive language plan that is supported by administrators. Factors must be taken into account such as the number of children who speak each language, the availability of teachers who speak the languages of the children, and the availability of books, learning materials, and assessments in those languages. Many teachers are overwhelmed at the prospect of having to learn new languages. Support of administrators can include additional release time, stipends for courses or language software, and opportunities for staff to support each other. Changing the environment can be that one intervention that can make a significant difference in the life of a child.

**Watching Teacher Language**

Several studies point to the advantages of providing true bilingual learning that employs the principles of translanguaging and encourages the continuing development of both of the child’s languages (Barnett et al., 2007; García et al., 2011; USHHS & USDOE, 2016). This framework depends on the availability of a balanced group of language learners with properly qualified teachers who speak each language. With the increase of the number of students with disabilities included into general education classes, and the number of home languages in many classes, this set of balanced circumstances is not commonly available. Administrators must look for the most effective way to work within the limitations of the circumstances that are present in their programs. This may mean more than two languages in a classroom, or teachers whose languages do not match the languages of their students, or monolingual teachers being assigned to multilingual classrooms, or bilingual teachers who may not be versed in special education practices.

According to NAEYC (2009), the teachers should make sure the child is learning the essential concepts in the home language. The teachers should learn key words in each child’s home language, then establish activities and routines that will give everyone opportunities to practice those words in multiple situations (Nemeth, 2009). When speaking in a non-English language, the teacher should have plenty of practice and place pronunciation reminders in convenient locations around the room (Nemeth, 2009; Tabors, 2008). Repeating key words to support understanding and use gestures, body language, and visual cues will aid communication (Tabors, 2008). In their review of research on interventions for emergent bilinguals with disabilities, Chen and Gutiérrez-Clellen (2013) found that children who received some support of their home language progressed faster in their learning of a second language than children who were taught using only the second language.

Embedding practices from Tier 2 of the Pyramid model will help the teacher design more global interventions that will support all of the students in the class. Social
Stories® can be a visual support that helps teachers to use the same key phrases in both the home language as well as English. This consistency will help students learn the replacement behaviors in both the home language and English (Kohnert & Derr, 2012). Other interventions include teachers making a clear effort to take time to stop and make eye contact with the child they are talking to so that both can pick up nonverbal cues from each other that will facilitate interactions (Brice, 2002; Tabors 2008). It is best to use informative feedback such as “I see you gave Joe one of your cookies,” rather than general praise like “good job.” It may be effective for teachers to develop a plan for which times of day, or during which activities they will use English and when they will use the home language(s). This will vary based on the students, the teacher’s own language proficiencies, the school’s instructions, and the resources available. Every teacher should watch their own language and the language used by other adults in the classroom to make sure they are providing consistency for the students in the class. Every teacher should watch their own language and the language used by other adults in the classroom to make sure they are providing consistency for the students in the class, as it was for Mrs. Clancy in the following fictional vignette.

Mrs. Clancy found herself paying attention to the language spoken by the teacher aides in the classroom. She listened intently to how they corrected classroom behaviors. They used phrases like “Stop it now,” and “play nice,” and she realized that the children did not know what those expectations entailed. She decided to do a role-playing scenario using a Social Story® first during circle time, and then in small groups. She would role-play fighting in the block area and not sharing in the art area. She would then read the Social Story® several times a week, using consistent language to demonstrate her expectations in each play center. She included her aides in the role-playing and story reading to encourage them to learn the language she wanted them to use.

In this example, the role of paraprofessionals in supporting the language, learning, and behavioral needs of individual children is highlighted. Teachers can use role play and a Social Story® to model both solutions and prevention strategies for both paraprofessionals and children in a collaborative early learning setting.

Adapting Teaching Strategies

Reducing the use of whole group meeting time in favor of small group and one on one interaction can be an effective change to reduce challenging behaviors in the classroom (LaForett, Fettig, Peisner-Feinberg, & Buysse, 2012). This individualized use of Tier 3 strategies is effective when the teacher understands the function of the behavior and is actively teaching replacement skills that meet the same function (Mancil et al., 2006). Replacement behaviors can be taught and reinforced using non-verbal cues (e.g., facial expressions, signs, gestures) that model and enrich communication. Maintaining a predictable classroom schedule and using visual supports so the child understands what is coming next will help the child to participate. Adding props, photos, and other graphic representations will help bring meaning to interactions (Nemeth, 2009). This is especially important during classroom transitions when saying a few words in English will not help a child who may have language-based disabilities and does not understand the language. Using a classroom buddy as well as
visual and auditory prompts to consistently support the child will be the most effective combination of strategies (Thelan & Klifman, 2011).

It is important to make language input easy to understand. Some authors (Tabors, 2008; Strain & Joseph, 2006) posit that teachers should help the children in the class communicate with their peers who are emergent bilinguals – teach them to speak slowly, be patient, repeat their message, and use nonverbal cues like pointing, showing, and demonstrating. These strategies are illustrated in the last fictional vignette.

Hamidah decided to add a classroom visual schedule to the room. She made the symbols for the extended times of the day larger than the symbols for the shortened time of day to help children learn that the bigger the symbol, the longer they would have for that activity. While this was a great strategy to teach all the children about the passage of time and the routine of the day, Kalila was still demonstrating challenging behavior during some of these times. Hamidah developed an individual visual schedule, using words in her home language that she and the other adults in the room could use until Kalila understood the transitions and participated with no challenging behaviors. Hamidah slowly faded this individualized supports until it was no longer needed.

This process of adding intensive supports to address a particular need, then fading them out as the child adapts to the classroom routine is an example of scaffolding that can resolve or prevent challenging behavior for a young child who is new to the program and is an emergent bilingual.

Conclusion

Children with disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviors and who come from different language backgrounds present some of the most complex issues in early childhood education. Understanding and finding the function of challenging behaviors for a preschool student with disabilities and dual language needs is difficult, but not impossible. It may not be necessary, or even possible to strictly identify which behaviors result from language differences and which result from disabilities or learning differences. Using supports and strategies based on research as well as recommendations found in the Pyramid Model can help teachers understand the function of the challenging behavior and design more effective replacement behaviors. Having all the professionals on the school team collaborate to design behavioral interventions that strengthen the home-school partnership, will ultimately increase ownership and use of those interventions (Lohrmann & Malley, 2015).

Remediating a child’s special education needs should not exclude the dual language needs. Facilitating home language development will effectively assist the child with developmental disabilities in actively participating in the routines and activities at home and in the classroom (Espinosa, 2008; USHHS & USDOE, 2016). This active participation will reduce the need for the child to use challenging behavior as a form of communication. High quality early education for all children depends on every educator’s ability to honor and respect each child’s individual personality, ability, language, and cultural background.
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Neighbors Link's *Parent-Child Together* Program:
Supporting Immigrant Parents' Integration to Promote School Readiness Among Their Emergent Bilingual Children

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The authors of this article describe Neighbors Link, a multi-service community and worker center in suburban Westchester County, NY. This organization created *Parent-Child Together* in the belief that supporting immigrant parents' integration and social inclusion, in activities that also engage long-term community residents, would improve school readiness outcomes for preschool children. A key assumption in the program design is that immigrant parents are best supported when teaching respects their home language and incorporates their home culture and customs. Among the program's positive results has been greater acceptance of the assets and strengths that immigrants bring to the community. The community, concurrently, has incorporated this perspective into programming, notably the school district's new elementary-level dual language program that supports both children of immigrants and long-term residents in becoming bilingual.

**Keywords:** bicultural, bilingual, emergent bilingual, foreign-born, immigrant, integration, language acquisition, literacy, kindergarten readiness, Neighbors Link, New American, parent, parenting preschool, school, school readiness, suburbia, toddler.

Lost amidst the increasingly loud rhetoric around who is American and who gets to live, work, and be educated in this country is this startling demographic fact: Today, nearly 25.5% of all children in the US have at least one parent who is foreign-born (Migration Policy Institute, 2014). There are now 61 million immigrants and their young children living in the US, three quarters of whom are here legally (Camarota & Zeigler, 2016). These large and fast-growing populations raise questions of whether the US has the capacity to absorb so many newcomers (Camarota & Zeigler, 2016). Whether born in this country or
born aboard, these children have the right to attend U.S. public schools - and are, in fact, attending and changing the face of public schools across the country.

The authors, in their work with immigrants in a Westchester County, NY multi-service community and worker center, have found that immigrant parents play a significant role in their children's integration into and success in school. This organization, Neighbors Link, created Parent-Child Together in the belief that supporting immigrant parents' integration and social inclusion, in activities that also engage residents of the receiving communities, would improve school readiness outcomes for their preschool children. The organization's experience to date suggests that this is the case. Additionally, as it will be described here, it appears that this approach cultivates an appreciation of immigrant culture, perspective, and language that strengthens the entire community, and holds promise for broader study and replication.

This article examines trends in immigration, the debate on assimilation versus integration of immigrants, and Neighbors Link's history in defining and fostering integration. The authors also explain the rationale for the creation of Parent-Child Together, how this developed from the Neighbors Link mission of integration and community relationships, and the influence of this program on parents, children, and the community.

The Changing Face of Education

Immigrant children and the children of immigrants have been the fastest growing segments of the under-18 population nationwide (Migration Policy Institute, 2014). By 2050, more than one-third (34%) of the nation's children will be immigrants or will have immigrant parents (Park & McHugh, 2014; Passel & Cohen, 2008). At the same time, the number of people who speak a language other than English at home has reached an all-time high at 61.8 million or 21% of the U.S. population (Camarota & Zeigler, 2014). This compelling demographic trend prompted educators to examine their teaching strategies, family engagement practices, and communication channels with an interest toward increasing bilingualism and multiculturalism in their schools. A new awareness of the limitations of monolingualism in schools was highlighted by Utah's educator Gregg Roberts, stating to a panel discussion in Boston in April 2013, "Monolingualism is the illiteracy of the 21st century!" (Roberts, 2013). More recently, the then-U.S. Secretary of Education John King said in a March 2016 speech to California educators, "What we see now is that bilingualism is a gift that we can give to our students and to our communities. And that is a powerful shift in our historical perspective on bilingualism." (King, 2016, para. 5).

In 2017, statements such as those are being challenged. While federal policy is still being formed, these trends - and ensuing debates - are increasingly playing out in suburban communities. Unlike previous waves of immigrants who settled in large urban centers, today's immigrants are moving to suburban areas (Singer, Hardwick, & Brettel, 2009; Suro, Wilson, & Singer, 2011; Wilson & Svailenka, 2014). The suburbs often lack the infrastructure that cities provide and once used to promote the integration of immigrants, such as affordable housing, public transportation, low-cost legal assistance, translation assistance, and language classes. As a result of these changes in settlement patterns, tensions between new arrivals and residents who have been living in the suburban community increasingly define the immigrant experience and serve to negatively impact
their ability to integrate into the community (Licher & Johnson, 2006; Parra & Pfeffer, 2006). In fact, the definitions of assimilation, integration, and American are still very much being debated.

**Getting from “Us” and “Them” to “We”**

These conflicts often are acted out within a narrative of "us" versus "them" and within the context of classic assimilation, which Papademetriou (2003) defined as the process by which immigrant groups come to resemble the characteristics, values, language, and customs of the receiving society. In this view, the adaptation is all one-way, with the immigrants required to adapt to the receiving culture, and not the other way around. Further, assimilation often is assessed by the receiving culture in terms of its benefits, that is, successful assimilation may be determined by how quickly new Americans learn English, but not by whether or when they earn as much money as residents of the receiving community (Bean, Brown, & Rumbaut, 2006).

In contrast, Neighbors Link promotes the vision of integration, defined as "the process through which, over time, newcomers and hosts form an integral whole" (Papademetriou, 2003, para. 12). This definition assumes a two-way process in which dynamic exchanges between immigrants and residents in the receiving culture influence and shape both of their exchanges, perceptions, and interactions in shared spaces and create a sense of "we." This perspective allows for social inclusion, in which all individuals are free to participate in a community's civic, social, economic, and cultural life. While this perspective has support in research, it is far from dominant in the fields of sociology or education (Papademetriou, 2003) or for that matter, life. Yet, this mission has informed all of Neighbors Link's activities.

**Neighbors Link’s Mission and History of Integration**

Neighbors Link’s mission is to strengthen the whole community through the healthy integration of immigrants. The center began its work in the village/town of Mount Kisco. Mount Kisco’s approximately 11,000 residents are predominately white (69.5% or 7,661) and affluent (median income of $71,727 vs. $58,687 statewide). A quaint, leafy suburban locale, Mount Kisco also offers a modern and vibrant mix of restaurants, shops, entertainment, and offices around a commuter train station hub. As such, Mount Kisco serves as a nexus for business, social networking, and entertainment in northern Westchester County.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Mount Kisco began to attract increasing numbers of Guatemalan immigrants. More than 3,000 miles away, Guatemala was emerging from more than three decades of brutal, bloody civil war. Estimates are that during this time, one million Guatemalans were displaced or disappeared, and another million sought refuge in the US and in nearby countries (Green, 2009). During that decade, Guatemalan immigration spiked 643% (Menjivar, 2006). Suzanne Jonas (2013) wrote that approximately 1% (9,700) of the 902,293 Guatemalan immigrants who settled in the US found their way to Westchester County. Many followed family and friends to Mount Kisco. In the decade between 1980 and 1990, Mount Kisco’s Latino population nearly tripled, from 4.97% (401) of the town’s total population to 12.15% (1,180). As these immigrants moved into housing that quickly grew overcrowded, and clustered in the streets around the
train station to seek day labor in ever-larger numbers, longer-term residents grew uneasy, and then fearful.

By the mid-1990s, longer-term residents and Latino immigrants were on a collision course. Mount Kisco’s mayor formed the Community Relations Committee charged with improving relations between the two groups. Committee members used this forum to press for the 1995 passage of Local Law 6, which banned individuals from congregating on streets and at the train station seeking day labor. Later in that same year, the committee pressed for, and the local police responded with, a series of housing raids. Most were conducted in the middle of the night, and all focused on the homes of Latino immigrants. In the largest of these housing raids, 52 Latino men were arrested (Walton, 2002). The raids drew the notice of civil rights advocates who filed a series of lawsuits alleging that Mount Kisco engaged in selective enforcement of local laws to drive out Hispanic immigrants. Public records indicate that most of these cases were settled by Consent Decree, with no admission of wrongdoing. Nonetheless, the village/town agreed to stop enforcing Local Law 6, and the community fell into an uneasy truce.

Founded in 1999 to integrate these two communities, Neighbors Link helps to empower immigrants through employment, education, and supportive services (see Table 1). Programs also feature meaningful roles for longer-term residents. This is a term Neighbors Link created to highlight its work with residents who are born in this country or who are from a prior wave of immigrants and typically are US citizens. For example, high school students who are studying the Spanish language provide supplemental conversational practice with adult learners enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. In addition to practice in the use of both languages, students and adults have the opportunity to discuss their cultures, home life, and families and begin to see how, as residents of the same community, their lives appear to be much different and yet much the same. Similarly, Neighbors Link has facilitated on-going conversations between New Americans and local police. Originally intended to improve understanding of each other’s perspectives, this relationship has led to fewer violations issued to New Americans for “disturbing the peace,” and an increase in immigrant victims and witness cooperating with law enforcement. Even as Mount Kisco’s immigrant population continues to increase - and today, 38.3 percent of residents are foreign-born (U.S. Census, 2015) - Neighbors Link builds bridges and fosters relationships among immigrants, longer-term residents, and local institutions that serve to strengthen the whole community.

Increasingly, Neighbors Link is expanding to help other communities across Westchester County, which has much at stake in integrating its immigrant population. The Migration Policy Institute (2016) reports that nearly 6% of all the immigrants in New York

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State live in Westchester County. Per the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2010-2015), Westchester County ranks 5th in diversity among the state’s 50 most populous counties, with 25.3% of Westchester’s 967,315 residents identifying as foreign-born. Overwhelmingly, Westchester County’s immigrants are Hispanic or Latino: According to Census data, 69.4% of all Westchester County immigrants are from (in descending order) Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Columbia, or Peru. Language skills are a barrier to integration for many immigrants. More than three-quarters (76.3%) of Westchester’s foreign-born residents report speaking a language other than English at home, and 40.4% report that they speak English "less than very well."

Across all of its programs, Neighbors Link serves more than 3,400 individuals, nearly all of whom live in poverty, as determined through staff interviews at intake using federal income guidelines for free and reduced price lunch (Federal Register, 2015). Most of those served are from Guatemala but increasingly participants hail from Honduras, Ecuador, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. Neighbors Link’s staff and Board of Directors are reflective of the ethnicity of the population served: 58% of staff and 20% of its board members are Hispanic or Latino. Nearly all of Neighbors Link’s 17 full-time staff and 20 part-time staff are bilingual in English and Spanish, as are 40% of its board members. Additionally, every year, more than 400 longer-term community residents volunteer their time in Neighbors Link programs. While volunteers’ ethnicity is not currently tracked, their gender and age group are; they are 60% female and evenly divided between those aged 18 and younger, and those over 18.

The Role of Immigrant Parents in Preparing Children for School

Within the context of increasing immigration in suburban communities such as Westchester County, little attention has been paid to those who are the first teachers of immigrant children and the children of immigrants, their parents. In their work at Neighbors Link, the authors have observed that immigrant parents are key to their children’s integration, starting at a very young age. Supporting immigrant parents in their integration helps to prepare their emergent bilingual children for school success. Smith and Kumi-Yeboah (2015) define emergent bilinguals as students whose linguistic repertoire taps into their native language and the (second) language of the receiving culture in varying, developing stages on their way to achieving balanced bilingualism, and is used in contrast with Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Language Learner (ELL) or other deficit-oriented terms.

As mentioned earlier in the article, the Parent-Child Together is a program that focuses on immigrant parents’ integration and social inclusion. Neighbors Link created Parent-Child Together in the belief that supporting immigrant parents’ integration and social inclusion, in activities that also engage long-term community residents, would improve school readiness outcomes for preschool children. A key assumption in the program design is that immigrant parents are best supported when teaching respects their home language, and incorporates their home culture and customs.

Locally, members of the community school district shared with Neighbors Link that immigrant children and children of immigrants were entering kindergarten without the basic content, language, and literacy skills, and social and emotional skill levels of their peers. These differences meant that immigrant children and children of immigrants started
peers. These differences meant that immigrant children and children of immigrants started school with a skills gap that set them apart from their better-prepared peers, thus reinforcing barriers to educational and social integration. It should be noted that the infants and toddlers served by Parent-Child Together are not likely to receive a preschool education; the community school district does not have the resources to provide a traditional preschool program in the elementary school and families cannot pay the tuition for a private preschool. While some subsidized preschool programs do exist, the demand far outweighs the classroom space. As such, kindergarten is often the first school experience for the infants and toddlers in the Neighbors Link program. Local schools work with kindergarteners at their level of academic and social emotional competence, but entering school with skills, support, and resources can better prepare these children to succeed.

Clearly, there was a need in Mount Kisco for a program that helped immigrant parents to prepare their children for school. The question was, how to proceed? Neighbors Link was founded to work holistically with immigrant families. The organization offers programs for the whole family including after school tutoring and Friday night social events, among other programs. In 2011, Neighbors Link made a decision to integrate this programming and serve families in a more strategic way. It introduced the Family Center to provide structure and staff focused on (a) parent support and education; (b) early childhood development and academic support for children; and (c) access to community resources.

To respond to the needs of immigrant parents with preschool children Neighbors Link created Parent-Child Together or, in Spanish, Adelante Juntos (Moving Forward Together). It is a key program within the Family Center that integrates all three focus-areas of the organization. It provides parents with education in child development and parenting skills. It instructs parents and children in skills needed for school readiness, and the staff offers access to resources both within the group of participating families, i.e. community building, and in the greater community.

The Parent-Child Together program serves preschool age children and follows a curriculum and lesson plans that Neighbors Link staff developed in-house based on staff experience working with immigrant families. In designing the program, Neighbors Link drew from its mission of integration with longstanding partners that included local schools, libraries, police departments, employers, and health care providers and from its focus on adult education. From there, it built on its core beliefs: (a) parents are a child’s first and most important teachers; (b) immigrant parents are best supported when teaching respects their home language and incorporates their home culture, and (c) adults learn best when they can draw upon their life experiences on the basis of their learning. From this perspective, we saw that parents had a unique contribution to make in preparing their children for school.

Allowing for Immigrant Parents’ Contributions

Just five short years ago, then-President Obama cited the energy, optimism, entrepreneurial nature, drive, and dynamism of new Americans, saying, "Immigration makes America stronger. Immigration makes us more prosperous. And immigration positions America to lead in the 21st century" (2012, para. 15). But social and educational
to the receiving culture, and end up hurting immigrants and longer-term residents alike (García, Kliefgen, & Falchi, 2008; Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015).

As an example, the assimilation perspective requires that immigrants stop using their home language and promote their children’s use of English to foster fluency in the English Language. This perspective prevents immigrants and longer-term residents from using their bilingualism as a resource in contributing to society in areas, such as, business and education. The research on bilingualism, however, consistently finds that restricting the use of a child’s home language in school actually decreases the likelihood that a child will become proficient in the English language (Parrish et al., 2006; Uriarte et al., 2009). Conversely, dual language instruction, in which all students in a classroom are taught literacy and content in two languages, has been proven consistently to promote English language acquisition and proficiency (Tazi, 2014; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Further, several studies have linked bilingualism with cognitive benefits including increased control over attention, improved working memory, greater awareness of the structure and form of language, and better abstract and symbolic representation skills (Adescope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010; Bialystok, 2011). Benefits of bilingualism extend beyond language acquisition and have been found to have positive effects on intergroup relationships, identity, self-esteem, and the likelihood of choosing friends from a different culture (Wright & Tropp, 2005).

Similarly, seeing immigrants as "less than" or a threat to those who have been here longer limits society’s ability to benefit from the knowledge, experience, and determination that immigrant populations have long brought to this county. On the contrary, immigrant parents have much to contribute to the host society and their children's education. For example, many immigrants have rich, compelling stories about their migration to this country that have the potential to teach life skills of grit, endurance, humor, vision, and optimism, while sharing lessons about relationships, customs, travel, work, and terrain in the home country versus the new. Yet immigrants who are perceived as deficient or who come to see themselves in that way are not empowered as potential partners in their children’s academic success. Research consistently shows that children, especially those from birth to age five, experience their world through their relationships with parents and other caregivers. There is ample evidence that parenting behavior is linked to children’s well-being, cognitive and socio-emotional development, and academic success (Gelatt, Peters, Kobal, & Monson, 2015). Studies on resiliency increasingly indicate that every child who does well in life has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015). Other investigations show that parents' displays of warmth and affection, monitoring of children’s activities, and consistent but not harsh discipline, are tied to children’s improved academic performance and lessened behavioral problems (Brooks-Gunn & Markham, 2005; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002).

A further danger of assimilation lies in perceiving immigrants as somehow "less than" those who have lived here longer, and thus as having no contribution to make. But this perception belies the facts. The assimilationist perspective challenges fully integrating immigrants into social and economic spheres and it often results in lower levels of income, English proficiency, and educational attainment, and higher levels of poverty and material hardships for immigrant families (Gelatt et al., 2015). These factors are consistently linked
in educational research to lower educational attainment (Gelatt et al., 2015). However, unless these factors (i.e., income, education, English proficiency) are considered within a broader perspective of immigrants' integration into society and economy, these are more likely to be seen as failures of immigrant individuals or their culture. Research indicates that when studies control for these factors, the differences between immigrants and non-immigrants in parenting and academic achievement largely disappear (Gelatt et al., 2015). On the other hand, taking a strengths-based approach and seeing immigrants as assets, as 55% of the US population have been reported to do (Piacenza, 2015), opens the possibility for greater acceptance that immigrant parents have the same potential as their longer-term peers to prepare their children for school success.

In designing Parent-Child Together, Neighbors Link took a strengths-based approach that builds on participants' talents and resources. As an example, the Guatemalan culture has a strong tradition of using the visual arts as a means of expression. Connecting to this experience, Parent-Child Together uses Visual Thinking Strategies, a methodology developed by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine (2000), to introduce parents to the practice of using inquiry about art as an educational tool. Parents are taught to ask their children open-ended questions about what they are seeing, such as, What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? And, what more can you find? This inquiry fosters children’s critical thinking and oral language skill-building and is linked to academic growth in students with limited English language skills (Tazi, Vidal, & Stein, 2015).

A strengths-based approach assumes that those served by the program are collaborators, rather than persons to be fixed, and already have resources, agency, leadership, and other assets needed for their success (Rapp, Saleebey, & Sullivan, 2005). An advantage of this strengths-based approach for Neighbors Link is that it promotes community involvement and, eventually, ownership in whatever strategy the process produces (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2013). At the heart of this project’s design is the appreciation and use of immigrants’ home language and culture as a bridge to greater understanding and connection with longer-term residents and community institutions, including schools.

Adelante Juntos (Moving Forward Together)

Parent-Child Together is offered on a drop-in basis year-round. The term "drop-in" belies the fact that each year the program serves about 400 parents and children who stay with the program for four to five years until kindergarten. Two-hour class sessions include parent education, child education, and parent-child interaction. Class sessions are offered at various times throughout the week, and parents may attend one or more. Each session is limited to groups of 12-15 families to allow for deeper learning and more personal interactions.

The project’s activities are held at Neighbors Link’s center which has a toddler-sized classroom with low tables and chairs, an art area, reading space, manipulatives (i.e., puzzles, toys, blocks), activity bins, a lending library, and a common area. Parent-Child Together is led by a trained instructor who leads the parent training and oversees the overall program, as well as trained staff who provide instruction to the children and support the activities parents and children perform together.
To start, parents drop their children in the classroom, where staff leads the children in instructive play. Children learn colors, shapes, letters, and numbers and are encouraged to play together. This time also gives both the parents and children an opportunity to practice separating and spending time apart, an important school-readiness milestone.

Parents then go to another classroom, where the instructor leads a discussion on child development, parenting skills, and instructional strategies (e.g., reading to children, providing positive discipline, recognizing developmental milestones, building vocabulary for emergent bilingual children, etc.). A typical session is rich with activities that the parents can also perform at home.

Parents and children are reunited in the second hour when they join staff and volunteers in a series of activities, including circle time, which features reading, music, and movement that the parents perform together with their children. Parents then work with staff and volunteers to lead their children in the activities that they just learned. Instruction and activities are performed primarily in Spanish, simultaneously allowing parents to focus on the skills just learned and reinforcing acquisition in the home language that will pave the way for English language acquisition in both parents and children. Songs are taught and sung in both languages and books are read in both languages.

The Parent-Child Together community-center setting provides Neighbors Link with the visibility to recruit from families who participate in other programs and to share news about the program via word of mouth. Since its inception, the program has been nearly fully subscribed. Being in a community center also provides the flexibility to work in one classroom with parents and all of their children, including at least one child age birth to 5. Being culturally sensitive to this community includes allowing children of all ages, both because families often have no childcare available for siblings and because close-knit immigrant families prefer participating together. From a program design perspective, this setting allows the parent to share this knowledge with all their children and recreates conditions that exist in their home. The community setting also allows for the extended use of longer-term residents as program volunteers. They work alongside immigrant parents in program activities, creating a cultural exchange that fosters a mutual appreciation of varied styles of parenting and family interaction.

Further, the use of longer-term residents as volunteers in the program is critical to developing cross-cultural competency in the greater community and thus, fostering integration. Neighbors Link volunteers come from all walks of life and diverse economic backgrounds. Some are currently employed professionals while others are retired. About half are high school students. While some are bilingual, most are not. All Neighbors Link programming is structured to include volunteers in meaningful assignments, modeling the integration the organization seeks to create in the community center. In more recent years, volunteers include clients, thus providing another channel for immigrant integration. All volunteers receive an orientation and ongoing training.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) identified six dimensions of culture: power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, longer-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint. Latin American and U.S. cultures are opposed on several of these dimensions, meaning that success in one perspective is seen as a failing in the other. As an example, Neighbors Link
staff experience suggests that Latin American families tend to be collectivist; and, as such, individuals see themselves as part of a group that acts together and put the needs of this group before their own needs. Learning within these families is embedded inside a social context, and it matters very much how well the others in their group are performing. By contrast, cultural values of majority population in the US focus on individual characteristics and solo accomplishment. Individuals compete with others and act independently. In a classroom setting, students from collectivist cultures may demonstrate helpfulness and contribute to the work of another student - behavior that may be viewed as cheating in individualist perspectives. *Parent-Child Together* provides an opportunity for immigrants and longer-term residents to see how their cultural perspective influences behaviors, and how their views of appropriate behaviors depend on the context of their culture.

### Additional Supports and Access to Resources

There is a strong family feel to the program, which is led by a Parent Education Manager who knows every family by name and uses every opportunity to check regarding their well-being. While not formally case management, these conversations allow the Parent Education Manager to assess whether the family is experiencing any particular challenges that should be addressed through other Neighbors Link resources or by referral to community resources.

Neighbors Link encourages parents to draw upon their own life experiences as the basis of their learning. This approach validates parent’s existing knowledge and abilities resulting in building trust in their own expertise. This validation of their worth allows each individual to follow their own personal path. Most immigrants leave behind people, places, foods, customs, holidays, styles of clothes, and occupations that are not easily replicated, nor appreciated, in their new place. They are forced to adapt and learn new ways, often without formal training. Some immigrants experience violence, deprivation, and trauma in their journey to this country that must be processed. Neighbors Link staff listens empathetically and helps to address parents’ issues of trauma and loss. In doing so, staff uses a culturally competent approach that considers the power of participants’ home language with familiar words and expressions to help them to share powerful emotions and traumatic experiences as a step toward growth and learning.

In a 12-week intensive course called *Parenting Journeys*, parents may be invited to explore their feelings of trauma and loss and to examine how the way in which they were parented has influenced their style and expectations of parenting. This class is limited to ten sets of immigrant parents who engage in peer-to-peer sharing of stories and perspectives in a supportive environment. *Parenting Journeys* alleviates feelings of isolation and allows parents to articulate their painful stories, disrupt unconscious patterns, and learn new parenting skills that can support their children’s success in school and life.

### Contributions of Parent-Child Together

In four years of operation, Neighbors Link observed how *Parent-Child Together* has influenced children, families, and the greater community. During that time, program records show that 630 children and parents have participated in the program and, in 2016, the first group of 30 five-year-old program graduates entered kindergarten in local schools.
School district contacts report that there is evidence that program graduates are entering kindergarten with increased content, i.e., knowing their letters, numbers, colors, and shapes because their parents have taught this to them. As one parent said, "My child learned so much from this program that when she started school the teachers were impressed with how much she knew. I was able to teach her at home from coming to the groups." As indicated informally by school district personnel, they have observed an increase in language and literacy skills and social-emotional skills in this first group of graduates, as compared to their observation of earlier classes.

Working in partnership with the school district has eased the transition into kindergarten for children of immigrants, and fostered an increase in parent engagement in their child's education. In recent years the school district reports that 100% of the parents in the local elementary school - both immigrant and longer-term residents - attend parent-teacher meetings. We have observed, as well, increased parent civic engagement. Parents engaged in Family Center civic engagement and leadership training have led Parent-Child Together workshops, have spoken at school board meetings, and have advocated for immigrants at lobbying days in the state’s capital. Immigrant parents and longer-term residents also collaborated to launch a healthy eating initiative at Neighbors Link to promote the consumption of more fruits and vegetables community-wide.

Parents report that the program improved their child's skills as well as their own, reduced their feelings of isolation, and put them in a stronger position to be more engaged in community life. As one mother said, "In the groups, I have learned how to educate my child but also for me to be much more social and not so fearful" when dealing with school teachers and authorities. Another mother said, "I have learned that I am not the only one experiencing problems and difficulties because we are all living through this. I no longer feel alone with my fear of dealing with this part of my life."

An additional benefit of this project has been the longer-term residents' dawning awareness that their own characteristics, values, language, and customs are merely one way of living a life - not the way. As they gain a clearer sense of their cultural identity, they also begin to appreciate the contributions of others and expand their vision of what is possible. As one longer-term resident observed, "volunteering at Neighbors Link has helped me understand the hard work and determination it takes to migrate and that this translates into a very strong work ethic – I had no idea."

This shift in the perspective of the longer-term residents, from seeing immigrants as a problem to realizing their contributions to a community, has strengthened partnerships and allowed for mutually reinforcing messages across different spheres of community life. For example, four years ago the community school district introduced a dual-language program at the local elementary school. The children of both immigrants and longer-term residents are studying in both English and Spanish throughout the school day, a program made possible by shifting perspectives on the benefits of bilingualism. In this dual-language program, children of immigrants and of longer-term residents are both emergent bilingual and are learning together as well as from each other. Together, they are developing an expanded sense of community. As one longer-term parent said, "My child is learning to socialize with other children which he otherwise wouldn't have. Being in a
group where both Spanish and English are spoken, my son is now singing songs in Spanish. I am so happy he is learning another language."

**Discussion**

*Parent-Child Together* was built on Neighbors Link’s mission of healthy integration and its focus on adult education to support the school readiness of the emergent bilingual children of immigrant parents. This project reinforced Neighbors Link’s core belief that integration, meaning, the belief that immigrants and longer-term residents each bring benefits to the whole community, supports not only individual development but also creates a climate of acceptance for bilingual education, which further empowers immigrant parents and strengthens educational and cultural outcomes for both immigrants and longer-term residents. These outcomes include improved school readiness and literacy and numeracy skills, but also a greater acceptance of diversity and improved social behaviors. Making this a process that engages the entire community moves the conversation away from educating "those kids" to benefitting "our kids" (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). It is conceivable that children of different nationalities who learn each other’s languages in kindergarten will be friends who share the same lunch table in middle school, and thus strengthen the community and its institutions as they mature and expand their sphere of influence. Beyond being bilingual, these children have the opportunity and advantage of becoming bicultural in an increasingly globalized social, economic, and political world.

A key assumption in the *Parent-Child Together* project design is that immigrant parents are best supported when teaching respects their home language and incorporates their home culture and customs. This ameliorates cultural disorientation by keeping a connection to relevant experiences and familiar signs and symbols from which to learn a new language and new skills and, ultimately, supports language skills in both languages.

Improving parents’ social and economic integration builds their resources for supporting their children’s academic achievement by enabling them to provide books and experiences that are linked to academic success. Acceptance, or knowing that they are seen as having a contribution, makes this more likely. Conversely, social and educational policies that do not consider the contributions that immigrants bring to the receiving culture only hurt immigrants and longer-term residents alike. Where there are hostilities between the two groups, critical resources are not likely to be provided for dual language programs, parent education, or early learning programs.

Finally, among the most universally understood human experiences is that of being a parent. This understanding transcends culture, nationality, or language, and serves as a powerful, common point upon which to bring people together. Neighbors Link’s *Parent-Child Together* program is using this common experience of parenting to foster improved understanding, mutual acceptance, and greater opportunity for both immigrant and longer-term families alike.
References


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**End Note**

i Mount Kisco is a coterminous and independent village/town in Westchester County, New York.
The First of the Firsts: Leadership and Legislation for Bilingual Preschools in Illinois

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With the rising numbers of bilingual children, particularly young Latinos, in 2010 Illinois was the first state to pass legislation requiring preschool sites that serve 20 or more emergent bilinguals to offer home language instruction. The purpose of this study was to examine the responses of early childhood directors to the changes required by the 2010 policy through an online survey. The results indicate that the directors do not have a background in bilingual education and are mixed philosophically regarding the benefits of bilingualism—highlighting the silo effect between the discipline of bilingual education and early childhood education. Anxiety and frustration toward a state mandated policy initiative are also voiced, along with the offering of immediate solutions to meet the policy requirements for the original deadline in 2014.

Keywords: early bilingualism, bilingual education, language policy, language planning, benefits of bilingualism, Latinos

Bilingual preschools have been a part of the educational landscape due to two key pieces of legislation from almost fifty years ago: the Head Start preschool legislation passed under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 and the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. Bilingual preschools developed due to federal aid to high-poverty school districts in order to assist them in addressing the needs of young emergent bilinguals who were mostly recent immigrants from Latin America and Asia (Crawford, 1989, 2004). In the era of Civil Rights, language rights in American public schools resulted in bilingual education policy and legislation in which the child’s home language was used in the initial years of schooling in order to build a strong foundation in a known language and then transition to English as a second language (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000). However, Ovando (2003) explains that the anti-immigrant and anti-bilingual politics from the conservative-era 1980s and 1990s led to the dismantling of the earlier Civil Rights-era bilingual policy and programming. The passing of Proposition 227 in California and Proposition 203 in Arizona marked the pinnacle of the English-only movement, which argued for a sheltered English immersion program instead. However, not all states followed the English-only movement and therefore continued to maintain bilingual education.

Today the pendulum is swinging back with the revitalization of bilingual preschools along with a strong interest in teaching rare languages, such as Chinese, to preschool children. The state of Illinois has been a forerunner in the nation in enacting
a series of legislations to establish preschool education for all children and offer instruction in more than one language to young learners. This section details the key laws that have traced this innovating and promising path.

In 2006 and amended in 2010, the State of Illinois launched the nation’s first effort to offer publically funded full-day preschool to all low-income 3- and 4-year-olds known as Preschool for All (Public Act 096-0948, 2010). This landmark legislation allowed every community to offer high-quality preschool in a variety of settings, including public and private schools, childcare centers, and licensed family childcare homes, private preschools, park districts, faith-based organizations, and other community-based agencies. Illinois became a pioneer in early childhood education by becoming the first of the firsts to offer state funded preschool.

In January 2009, under Illinois Administrative Code Title 23 Part 228 Transitional Bilingual Education, Illinois continued its pioneering work as the first state to adopt legislation for bilingual education at the preschool level, which was officially enacted into law by August 2010. Now all early childhood centers in Illinois are required to apply the same regulations for emergent bilinguals as young as 3-years old. Below we include the wording specifying this requirement:

When a preschool program of the school district has an enrollment of 20 or more students of limited English proficiency of any single language classification other than English in an attendance center or a non-school-based facility, the school district shall establish a TBE (transitional bilingual education) program for each language classification represented by the students. If the preschool program of an attendance center or non-school-based facility has 19 or fewer students of limited English proficiency of any single language classification other than English, then the school district shall meet the requirements of subsection (a)(2) of this Section when determining placement and the program to be provided. (Illinois Administrative Code, 2010, 2017, Section 228.35 c).

If there are 20 or more children in a Pre-Kindergarten program who are native speakers of the same language and who did not meet the required cut-off score on an established assessment such as the pre-IPT (IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test) or other screening procedures, the preschool or childcare center is required to offer bilingual education in the child’s home language. Here are the Illinois State Board of Education rules for the screening procedures:

- Be age and developmentally appropriate;
- Be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the children being screened;
- Include one or more observations using culturally and linguistically appropriate tools;
- Use multiple measures and methods (e.g., home language assessments; verbal and nonverbal procedures; various activities, settings, and personal interactions);
- Involve family by seeking information and insight to help guide the screening process without involving them in the formal assessment or interpretation of results; and
In addition, this same law required teachers to complete a Bilingual/ESL endorsement by July 1, 2014. Later this deadline was extended to July 1, 2016. According to the Illinois State Board of Education website, by July 2016, all certified early childhood educators who teach preschool emergent bilingual children were required to obtain a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement, which entails 18 semester credit hours of graduate coursework to attach to their initial early childhood teaching certificate. At the same time, in Illinois, schools can apply for a waiver if they feel that they cannot meet the requirements for bilingual preschools such as not being able to find qualified bilingual teachers, especially for hard-to-staff languages like Burmese and Urdu.

On August 8, 2012, the then Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed an additional law (HB3819, now Public Act 097-0915, 2012). This law strengthened the state’s already innovative early childhood bilingual education program by requiring schools to create a Bilingual Parent Advisory Council (BPAC) in order for bilingual parents to become a part of the school’s decision making base when it comes to determining changes to the school’s bilingual programs (Illinois Government News Network, 2013).

The 2012 law also required cultural competency by the teachers and administrators involved with ELs. Beginning in 2013, the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards required all college-level teaching programs for aspiring K-12 teachers to include at least two courses in ESL/Bilingual Education, similar to what is required for special education. Colleges and universities can no longer offer a series of workshops or integrate the standards for ESL/Bilingual education into other courses. Rather, teaching candidates must show college-credit coursework in their transcripts in order to be certified. The likelihood of encountering an emergent bilingual student in one’s classroom is the same as a special education child and therefore every new teacher in Illinois is taught to meet the needs of their emergent bilingual students, even if it is just two courses (one methods course and one foundation course). School administrators seeking licensure are also being asked for the first time to have two courses in relation to working with emergent bilingual students and their families—including early childhood center directors. However, the large majority of current teachers and administrators are not required to go back and acquire new coursework in ESL/Bilingual education.

This additional bill was supported by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) from the beginning and passed unanimously in both chambers. The State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia and State Senator Iris Martínez sponsored this law, whose goal was to create a more inclusive atmosphere for immigrant families in the suburbs of Chicago and encourage them to take an active role in their child’s early education.

Early on, researchers and early childhood experts agreed that Illinois made bilingual preschools a priority and demonstrated leadership in policy making since the
mandate covers 585 preschool programs run and funded by public districts, serving about 85,000 students:

‘If you start early, there’s a very good promise that you will not have achievement-gap issues later on,’ said Eugene Garcia, an education professor at Arizona State University and former chair of the National Task Force for the Early Education of Hispanics. ‘What Illinois has done is take the lead in the state policy arena.’ (Malone, 2010).

Since then, in addition to Illinois, New Jersey and Texas also adopted legislation for bilingual preschools.

However, as discussed in a New York Times article, it was found that suburban school districts in Illinois are not complying with the state requirements for bilingual education in elementary schools, let alone preschools, pointing to the disjuncture between policy and practice and resistance to state rules and regulations from suburban and rural districts:

Of the 58 suburban school districts visited by state monitors in the past three years, none met all of Illinois’s tough education requirements for students learning English, and 22 failed to provide a bilingual program for all of the students who qualified for it, according to a Catalyst Chicago analysis of Illinois State Board of Education records from fiscal year 2009 to October 2011 (Harris, 2012, September 25, p. A21).

The reaction to the 2010 early childhood legislation at the ground level has been mixed. Some school administrators argue that the bilingual preschool can provide the language-rich environment needed for the development of the child’s first language and therefore a stronger cognitive foundation for acquiring the additional language, English. Others argue that it will be challenging to find qualified early childhood educators who have successfully acquired their Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement by July 2016 (Malone, 2010). Researchers in early childhood education argue that it is still challenging to accurately measure language proficiency, whether it is the home language or the additional language, in 3-to-4 year old children using a formal test like the pre-IPT primer assessment and therefore question the validity of such normed assessments for emergent bilingual children (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Valdes & Figueroa, 1994).

The purpose of our study was to explore early childhood directors’ experiences with the 2010 Illinois initiative for bilingual preschools. By implementing an online survey and analyzing the response data from early childhood directors, we aimed to uncover some of the issues influencing the implementation of this law. In this article we report on the data and critically consider ways of enhancing the application of the 2010 early childhood bilingual initiative at the institutional and agency levels. In the article, we first review the literature on early childhood bilingual education, then describe the research methods, analyze and discuss the data, and present conclusions at the end.

**Review of Literature**

There is an extensive body of research supporting the long-term positive effects of a preschool education in general such as increased graduation rates and reduced
crime rates (Barnett, 2008). From pioneering research studies, such as the Perry Preschool and Abecedarian programs, to current research from the Foundation for Child Development, gains in language development, reading and math have been reported with about a third of a year of additional learning in large-scale, public preschools (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). The economic benefits of preschool for low-income children have also shown to increase a country's economic power by measuring its Gross Domestic Product (GDP; Dickens, Sawhill, & Tebbs, 2006).

The Heckman Equation, based on the Noble Prize winning theories of economist James Heckman, shows that early intervention programs for at-risk children can provide the social and emotional development (such as persistence, attention, and self-regulation), along with the cognitive development (such as IQ and vocabulary), needed for leverage later in life (Heckman, 2000). Therefore, there are high-benefit cost ratios and rates of return from strong public preschool programs such as federally funded Head Start as well as state funded preschools, especially for emergent bilingual students more so than even monolingual children (Gormley & Gayer, 2005). Research in other countries confirms many of the US findings regarding short- and long-term outcomes of a preschool education. In countries like New Zealand and the United Kingdom as well as Latin America quasi-experimental research studies found generalizable long-term benefits all the way into middle age in relation to decreased school failure, increased educational attainment, and positive effects on attention, class participation, and discipline (Barnett, 2008; Berlinski, Galiani, & Manacorda, 2008).

In the National Head Start Impact Study conducted in Tulsa, Oklahoma, effects for Latino students who came from homes where Spanish was the primary spoken language (emergent bilinguals) were larger than effects for Latino students who came from homes where English was the primary spoken language. In this landmark study, researchers found significantly stronger positive impacts of Head Start on language and school performance at the end of kindergarten for emergent bilingual students (Gormley, Phillips, & Gayer, 2008). Yet, there are no large-scale meta-analytic studies of bilingual education in preschool education similar to the Perry Preschool Project from the 1960s and the Abecedarian studies from the 1970s. There are meta-analyses of bilingual education at the elementary school level; however, large-scale studies examining the impact of bilingual preschools are few and far between. The majority of the comprehensive bilingual education research focuses on K-12 classrooms.

One of the first large scale studies on the effectiveness of bilingual preschools was conducted by Rodríguez, Díaz, Durán, and Espinosa (1995) who found that Latino children attending bilingual preschools showed more growth in both languages than a control group of Latino children who did not attend preschool. In a replication of the Rodríguez et al. study, Winsler, Díaz, Espinosa, and Rodríguez (1999) showed a similar positive effect of bilingual preschools in the improvement of bilingual proficiency among Latino preschool students in comparison to a control group that did not attend any preschool. A follow up study showed that the students who had attended bilingual preschool maintained their superior English language proficiency one year after the initial intervention (Winsler et al., 1999). Not many studies though have compared children who attended bilingual preschools in relation to children who attended English-only preschools.
There was one study that examined four-year-old Latino students from low-income families who were enrolled in the Even Start program, while the comparison group consisted of ethnically and linguistically diverse four-year-old preschool students also from low-income families but who were in an English-only classroom (Ryan, 2005, 2007). All of the students in the study received preschool education at the same site. The instruction in the Even Start class used a bridging approach whereby a bilingual co-teacher would integrate the use of Spanish to facilitate student understanding of the otherwise English-only instruction. As the students’ language skills improved, the use of Spanish was gradually reduced over the course of the school year. This mode of bilingual education corresponds approximately to the sheltered English immersion or early exit models of bilingual education and is not a true bilingual program (Rennie, 1993) in that it does not aim for bilingualism or biliteracy. Other differences in the intervention received by the Even Start students versus that which was received by the comparison group were that families in the Even Start program were required to receive home visits, participate in adult education, and participate in parent and child interactive literacy activities. Ryan’s (2007) analysis of two years of preschool data showed that the students who did not receive bilingual education performed worse on posttest literacy assessments but only at marginally significant levels of statistical inference. Therefore, there is a need for more studies to discern effect sizes of bilingual preschools over a longitudinal period.

Even with the research base supporting the overall benefits of a bilingual preschool education, a 2010 study published by the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Latinos states that about 35 percent of four-year-old Latino children attend some type of preschool in comparison to 66 percent of Caucasian children and 54 percent of African-American children (Fuller & Kim, 2011). In this same national study, researchers from Berkeley University tracked 380 Illinois children born in 2001 for nearly a decade, monitoring everything from the child’s social and cognitive development to how often the child read with their parents at home. As early as age two, Latino children were behind their peers in early literacy skills, such as recognizing words or turning to the cover page of a children’s book.

In the City of Chicago, more than 40% of children younger than five are Latino. In more than 30 suburbs outside of Chicago, including Carpentersville in the north and Franklin Park in the west, more than half of preschool-age children are Latino (Fuller, Kim, & Bridges, 2010). In some of the older inner-ring suburbs like Cicero and Melrose Park, more than 80% of preschoolers are Latino. Suburban school districts that have seen dramatic increases of Latino students during the last decade have sought to keep up with the population surge through dual-language programs and cultural competency workshops for teachers; but they did not focus heavily on early childhood education—creating a sharp disjuncture when Latino children transitioned from English-only preschools to bilingual kindergartens.

Furthermore, poverty has also shifted to the suburbs and now there are more low-SES preschool children in the inner-ring suburbs than the City of Chicago, where poverty levels are now declining and urban Head Start centers are shutting down due to low enrollment (Cooke & Marchant, 2006; Zielinski, 1996). Demographers monitoring the growth of the Latino population nationwide state that the community’s increasing
proportion relative to other groups is driven mostly by births, though immigration is also a factor. A decline in the White birthrate has helped accentuate the demographic shift and the number of White children is declining in 46 states, including Illinois, with the growth in Latinos helping keep the overall state population stable (Olivio, Mullen, & Bowean, 2011).

In some parts of Chicago and the surrounding suburban communities where Latino enclaves have formed, the demand for early childhood services often exceeds the capacity to supply them. Latino communities and neighborhoods have seen longer waitlists as more young Latino families try to enroll their children in preschool. Therefore, one of the reasons for low attendance among Latinos in preschool programs is a lack of programs in poor neighborhoods. The National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Latinos surveyed programs in Los Angeles and Chicago and found an overall shortage of pre-kindergarten slots in Latino neighborhoods (Sussman & Gillman, 2007). There is also a shortage of preschool programs in Chicago due to fast-paced demographic shifts where neighborhoods dominated by older Whites suddenly became populated by immigrants, in particular younger Latino families, but without the infrastructure of facilities and the capital infusion needed for building preschool facilities (Ramirez, 2009). At the El Hogar del Niño early childhood development center in Pilsen, a Latino enclave in the City of Chicago, 102 families are on a wait list (Olivio, Mullen, & Bowean, 2011).

Many feel that the preschool enrollment gap for Latino children could result in poorer school performance later in life, potentially affecting high school dropout rates, college enrollment and, eventually, the quality of the state’s workforce (García, E. E., 2002). Study after study confirms that early childhood education is essential for human capital, social capital, and economic capital (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2010). Early childhood education advocates strongly believe that a preschool program can close the academic gap at an early age for Latino children whose numbers are growing across the nation. In 2011, University of Minnesota researchers led by Arthur Reynolds released a longitudinal report that tracked 1,400 Chicago Public School students for 25 years. It found that Latino children who attended a high quality early childhood program were more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to stay out of jail, and less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol than students who did not attend such a program. In fact, Reynolds’ research team found evidence that for every $1 invested in a Chicago early childhood education program, nearly $11 is projected to return to society over the children's lifetimes—in other words an 18 percent annual return on program investment (Reynolds, 2012; Reynolds, Temple, White, Ou, & Robertson, 2011).

Currently in Illinois, another challenge is the hodgepodge of early childhood education options and the challenges with trying to centralize bilingual preschools in disparate settings such as: (a) federally funded Head Start centers located in church basements, (b) state-funded Preschool for All programs in public schools, private schools such as Montessori preschools, approved childcare centers in the homes of local matriarchs that often run all day long, and (c) center-based programs operated by powerful non-profit organizations like Educare and Metropolitan Family Services. Childcare providers who primarily serve the Latino community also state that many
families are unaware that programs exist or don’t quite understand the value of early
childhood education as of yet (Harris, 2012, February 9). Others state that enrollment
requirements often become a barrier for low-income families such as the income
verification requirement for some childcare programs, which can disqualify immigrants
who often live together in one home but do not share income (Ramirez, 2009).

Even when programs exist in impoverished neighborhoods, early childhood
experts cite other obstacles that may delay early learning for Latino children (García,
E. E., 2002). Language is perhaps the most significant issue for recent immigrants,
leading to the increased demand for bilingual preschool teachers that currently
surpasses the low supply of them in the State of Illinois. At the same time, many Latino
families prefer homecare options for child rearing as opposed to an early childhood
center due to cultural norm of parenting (Harris, 2012, February 9). Barnett’s (2008)
research, however, found that family day care homes show no effect on cognitive
development. Therefore, interaction and engagement with the local community is
critical in order to increase the enrollment of Latino children into high-quality bilingual
preschools—everything from knocking on doors on Saturday morning to leaving flyers
in the local laundromat as well as giant billboards on highways announcing a new
preschool.

Furthermore, the current research in neuroscience supports the learning of
languages at an early age before students reach puberty—a critical period for language
learning. Specifically, research shows that bilingual preschool children exhibit
increased cognitive, metacognitive, and sociolinguistic growth in comparison to their
monolingual peers (Barac & Bialystok, 2012; Wang, Kuhl, Chen, & Dong, 2009). These
cognitive advantages relate to superior metalinguistic awareness, superior
performance on concept formation tasks, and stronger analogical reasoning ability later
in life (Kuhl, 2009). A review by UNC Chapel Hill researchers confirms that children
who speak two languages make greater gains in early education programs than their
peers who speak only English (Buysse, Peisner-Feinberg, Paez, Scheffner Hammer, &
Knowles, 2014). Bilingual preschools develop a strong foundation in the child’s first
language in order to prevent language loss later and to begin balancing both languages
in parallel form at a young age (Castro, Ayan, & Kasprzak, 2011; Puig 2010).
Studies further indicate that a strong home language foundation in preschool acts as a
supporting ballast in learning a second language making English acquisition an easier
and faster process and supporting the argument that reading skills transfer quickly and
easily to a second language once children have mastered the ability to read in their first
language (Méndez, Crais, Castro, & Kainz, 2015).

An instructional approach that engages students’ use of their languages in their
learning process is based on translanguaging. This construct urges the use of a
student’s entire linguistic repertoire, as a pedagogical choice, that can dynamically
contribute to a new type of integrative education that is multilingual and multicultural
(Li, 2014). Translanguaging encourages the two languages to cross and intersect with
one another in a fluid manner, therefore, challenging the sanctioned policy of strict
separation of languages for academic instruction in dual language bilingual education
programming (Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014).
In a dual language approach, a bilingual preschool may choose to separate the languages of instruction by alternating days or times when each is the medium of instruction or by having two teachers in the classroom each dominant in one of the languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In a translanguage approach, the emergent bilingual student’s home language would be used as a scaffold to teach English and the teacher would switch to the home language in order to explain academic content and aid comprehension and vocabulary acquisition (Vaish & Subhan, 2015). Emergent bilinguals are also given the freedom to use their home language and the English language strategically by switching back and forth when and if they need to for the sake of communication (Levine, 2011).

Researchers argue that emergent bilinguals intermix different linguistic features from various languages at home and therefore they should be given the freedom to mix languages in their classrooms as well, such as listening to a story in English from the teacher but discussing it in Spanish with their peers (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Translanguaging practices are therefore in direct contrast to an English-only approach and can be seen as an additive process in which mixing languages is a tool to negotiate meaning in classroom settings (García, O., 2009). However, there is still debate in the field of bilingual education as to whether a strict language separation policy found in a dual language approach is the best method for language acquisition versus a fluid translanguaging approach in which the home language functions as a scaffold (Palmer et al., 2014).

Given the above landscape of early childhood bilingual education in Illinois, the purpose of our study was to explore the views of early childhood directors on the 2010 policy changes intended to improve the lives of young Latino children in our state through bilingual preschools. We originally designed a multi-question study to explore several issues regarding the implementation of the changes imposed by the 2010 policy. However, in this article, we only discuss the program directors’ reactions to the 2010 policy change. The exploration presented here was guided by the following research question: How are directors of early childhood centers reacting to the new state policy mandating bilingual preschools? The section below describes the methods used in the study.

**Research Methods**

Our study used an online, email-based survey methodology, which is an important mechanism for population-focused data collection as well as the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data (Mclnroy, 2016). Online survey methodologies generally permit convenient, timely, and cost-effective research (Bartell & Spyridakis, 2012). Some research has found that online surveys facilitate improved response rates, both for whole surveys and for individual items, including more detailed responses to qualitative questions (Gunter, Nicholas, Huntington, & Williams, 2002). We chose an online, email-based survey because (a) it was faster and easier to design and administer; (b) it provided numerous approaches to sampling and recruitment; (c) increased response rates over time; (d) the automatic deployment of the survey was convenient; (e) several design options were offered; and (f) there was improved survey completion and data entry. Online research allows respondents to feel increased
comfort and autonomy and decreased inhibitions to participation as a result of knowing that their contributions will remain confidential and that they have the ability to complete the survey privately (McDermott & Roen, 2012; Willis, 2011).

While some components of the larger study are ongoing, the data discussed in this article focuses specifically on how early childhood program directors have reacted thus far to the 2010 policy changes, identification of obstacles, priorities for programs, and adaptations needed. The specific and narrow survey questions posed in our study generally asked the “what” questions rather than the “why” and “how” questions. Our survey first collected specific information about the respondents then collected information about the respondents’ reactions to the 2010 bilingual policy and their subsequent behaviors, as well as their opinions of bilingual education.

Using the Illinois State Board of Education website, we emailed the 480 contact names of all early childhood program directors by county for the state’s Preschool for All centers for ages 3- to 5-year-old children from January 2013 to June 2013. The administrators and directors represent a diverse pool of early childhood centers: urban public schools with a Latino majority, suburban public schools with a growing Latino population and rural communities with a mobile Latino population, as well as the directors of federally funded Head Starts and state funded preschools. We disseminated the online survey over six months and ended with a total of 99 responses—a 21% percent response rate. The readers need to interpret findings in light of the low rate of response. Although the data might not suggest robust generalizations, it could certainly be indicative of possible trends in the reactions of administrators to the 2010 policy requirements.

Our online survey had four parts: 17 short answer questions, 6 yes or no questions, 11 Likert-scale questions and 4 multiple-choice questions. In Appendix A we include Parts I-III of the survey explored in this article. Part IV of the survey will be analyzed in a different publication.

(1) Part I included demographic information about the school site, student population, levels of poverty using the federal guidelines for free and reduced price lunch, parent education and income levels, languages present in the school, teacher qualifications, and the educational background and certifications of the director.

(2) Part II asked open-ended questions in which the respondents wrote about their beliefs and attitudes towards bilingual education.

(3) Part III of the survey included a set of Likert-scale questions on a scale of 1 to 5 in which we asked respondents to indicate to what extent they agreed with statements regarding bilingual education; bilingual resources, curricula, and assessments; the impact of bilingualism on teaching and learning; and the levels of social and cultural awareness needed in an early childhood school site.
Findings and Discussion

Demographic Information about the School Site

Table 1 below specifies that the average number of years a director worked at a site is 6.9 years, with a range from 1 year of experience to 30 years of experience in the role of the early childhood center director. The survey respondents represented seven different educational backgrounds: Elementary Education was most represented in the data (31 respondents, 31.3%) and the least represented were Bilingual/ESL education and Psychology backgrounds, each with 9 survey respondents (9.0%).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Background of Early Childhood Directors</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 75 Administrative Certificate</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree in Education</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/ESL Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that there are a greater percentage of directors with a Special Education background rather than a Bilingual/ESL background is a bit disconcerting, given the prevailing conflation of special education and bilingual education. The over-representation of poor and bilingual children in special education classrooms is still a continuing problem (Cole, 2014; Conner & Boskin, 2001), even when research strongly suggests that cognitive differences are inherently different from linguistic and cultural differences (Artiles, Harry, Reschly, & Chinn, 2010).

Furthermore, experts in the fields of special education and second-language acquisition frequently identify unfair assessment procedures for the overrepresentation data. Researchers contend that these procedures have unjust outcomes for emergent bilinguals that are directly attributable to the limited availability of tests in the students’ home languages; shortage of bilingual examiners; few university preparation courses focusing on best practices and cultural awareness; and examiners’ frequent failure to comply with federal and/or state regulations (Flanagan, Ortiz, & Alfonso, 2013).

Table 2 below summarizes data on the number of preschool programs that offer bilingual education. It illustrates that the majority of the survey respondents 61 (62%) do not offer bilingual education at their preschool sites. Also, we were surprised to find...
that of the 38 (38.3%) programs that offered bilingual education, only nine participants 9 (9.0%) serve a predominantly Latino student population. The other bilingual preschool settings serve either a predominantly African American student population or a predominantly White student population with a Latino minority.

Interestingly, a closer examination of the preschool programs not offering bilingual education revealed that there were four (6.5%) sites with at least a 50 percent Latino student population that do not yet offer a bilingual preschool classroom; one of these sites was not prepared for the original Illinois policy implementation deadline of 2014, while the others are in progress of making the necessary changes to meet the requirements. The implication is that there is still a lack of representation of Latino children in early childhood centers, even as their numbers slowly climb up, and that Latino children are integrating into either all-Black or all-White preschool settings. The question remains whether these early childhood directors’ will actively push forth an agenda to recruit more Latino children into their preschools, which requires an active engagement with their local communities.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency N=99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency N=99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

never been able to satiate the demand, especially in suburban school districts where even Spanish bilingual teachers are hard to find (Shinneman, 2013). Lastly, close to 59 (60%) of the early childhood centers surveyed serve students from low-income households.

**Views about New Policy Initiative**

The majority of survey respondents (94.92%) were aware of the upcoming change in state legislation, which suggests that top-down information was disseminated early and often enough throughout the State of Illinois by several constituents, organizations, school districts, agencies, and universities. The policy was vertically integrated across the State of Illinois. While most participants wrote that Illinois has done a good job notifying them about the legislation deadline and its requirements, at least 3% of respondents expressed feeling pressured and rushed to meet state requirements. This feeling of anxiety amongst a few is captured in one response to Item
19: How do you feel about the new policy change in early childhood education?

I understand the changes yet I feel that the full implementation of this plan has been too fast with not enough publicity. Also, this has been very hard for our teachers as this mandate was not well funded in terms of the education and endorsements our teachers needed to obtain. In fact, many of the teachers had to endure the majority of cost for this endorsement as the scholarships offered had too many restrictions regarding who would qualify for funding.

The same participant also responded to Item 23: What are questions and concerns you still have about the new state policy legislation?

At times, I feel the state is still figuring this out and can be unclear in their explanations and guidelines. I truly feel a slower, tiered approach would have been better received and have more integrity in implementation.

Yet, as shown in Table 3, even though the respondents were aware of the 2010 policy change, not all were prepared for the changes to be enacted by July 2014. Out of the 99 respondents, 12 (12.1%) stated that they would not be ready to meet the state deadline while 36 (36.4%) stated that they are making progress to meet the deadline less than a year away by July 2014, the original deadline. Due to similar concerns cited in this article, the 2014 deadline was moved forward to July 2016 by the Illinois State Board of Education after it opened up public comments on its website (Sanchez, 2014).

Although our 2013 survey did not ask for specific markers of progress, one area of preparation we investigated was the hiring of new Bilingual/ESL early childhood teachers in order to meet the needs of the state policy. Table 4 shows that 39 (39.4%) respondents are not currently undertaking this task.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have You Made Hiring Changes Based Upon the Changes in State Policy?</th>
<th>Frequency N=99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

certificate instead.

As indicated in Table 5, a smaller number, 17 (17.2%), of respondents reported reassigning teachers within their sites so that those teachers with a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement are being placed in the early childhood classrooms, even if they do not have an early childhood teaching certificate and most likely have an elementary certificate instead.
In terms of how many current early childhood teachers at the preschool sites have their Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsements, 19 (19.67%) of the respondents stated that the majority of their early childhood teachers have the required endorsements; most are currently relying on their bilingual teaching assistants to meet the state requirements. The teaching assistants, although not certified as teachers, were able to still provide language support. According to the Catalyst Chicago journal (Harris, 2010), only 1,200 teachers across the State of Illinois had a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement and an early childhood teaching certificate, since the majority of Bilingual/ESL teachers are in K-3 elementary school settings. In the year previous (2008-2009) to the publication of the Catalyst Chicago article, just 33 teachers joined the group of candidates with both a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement and an early childhood teaching certificate. This suggests that the slow-moving pipeline, indicated in the literature review section, held true in Illinois at the time when the original Bilingual Education in Preschool Centers law was enacted in 2010. Our study provided some insights as to the continuation of this pattern in early childhood centers since 2010.

Survey respondents provided a wide range of answers to the issue of having enough early childhood teachers with a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement. The answers ranged from having several certified teachers in bilingual education or in English as Second language education to having teachers in the process of acquiring such endorsements. Some respondents acknowledged using other bilingual personnel (teaching aides, social workers) to work with emergent bilingual preschoolers. See Appendix B for representative statements illustrating the range of responses.

The range of answers speaks to the lack of consistency across the sites. As suggested by an informal survey of the representative statements included in Appendix B, notable also is the greater number of teachers with an ESL endorsement (about 20) in the pool than a Bilingual endorsement (about 8). This may explain the reliance on school staff that happens to be bilingual. However, because of the 2010 policy requirements, early childhood centers can no longer rely solely on their bilingual teaching assistants and personnel for full-time language support services. It seems that some respondents did not take into account a possible increase in the number of Latino children projected at their preschool sites.

Very few teachers who at the time of data collection worked with emergent bilinguals in the State of Illinois had the adequate ESL/Bilingual coursework; out of the 2,600 certified early childhood teachers in Illinois, less than six percent had Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsements in 2012 (Harris, 2013). A 2013 report by the Council of the Great City Schools, a policy and advocacy group, found that about half of large city school districts either have a shortage of teachers for those learning English, or will

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Have You Shifted Teachers Around the School to Meet Mandate Requirements?*
have one within the next five years—requiring many school districts to hire teachers from international countries such as Spain and Puerto Rico (Camera, 2015).

Our results also suggest that there is a gap between the demands of bilingual preschools from state legislation and the directors’ own initiatives to comply. As we analyze below this gap may be due to the difficulty of implementing policy through layers of state bureaucracy as well as the required time commitment and the financial burdens.

Considering the range of responses from administrators presented above, an argument can be made that this policy change required both an individual and collective response. The intent of state policies sent down from above is that it will lead to change in how our daily educational practices are structured (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). Yet, one can sense the exasperation of some administrators as they try to respond to the policy prescriptions in a few years’ time (initially from 2010 to 2014, and later to 2016). Educational policy is often viewed as a broader response to societal changes but policy also prescribes changes that our educators are expected to implement quickly and without hesitation. Even though the 2010 legislation for bilingual preschools is a commitment to educational equity, there are nonetheless tensions with the cultural and economic imperatives of such policy changes.

One main policy concern, related to the preparation of teachers in Bilingual/ESL Education, was in relation to the financial burden to obtain a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement. Analysis of the qualitative item responses from administrators, eight (0.08%) participants expressed concern about the lack of financial help for teachers to obtain their endorsements, which can cost, on average, anywhere from $10,000 to $18,000, for the six graduate courses at local universities. Within those survey responses, the most common terms used were “not well funded,” “hard for teachers,” “unfunded mandate,” and “money issues.” Variations in responses related to the economic hardship included whether the state can provide scholarships or encourage institutions to offer financial aid to teachers who want to obtain their Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsements. Furthermore, 42 (42.4%) participants stated that they do not have the financial means for the materials and supplies needed to effectively run a bilingual preschool.

There has also been growing backlash against the costs of obtaining a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement with a 2013 amendment titled 101 ILCS 5/14C-13.5 (HB 1268) that pushed for substituting a series of teacher workshops for actual stand-alone coursework (Salinas-Duda, 2013). Voices from higher education, the Illinois Association of Multilingual Multicultural Education, and the Latino Policy Institute challenged and defeated the legislation.

Similar tensions can also be identified across the US. While most states require ESL and bilingual teachers to have a specialist certification or endorsement, a handful of states lack specialist certification requirements, which leaves local school districts to decide whether to require ESL/bilingual certification even if state policy does not. For example, due to a 2002 English-only law, Massachusetts allows general education teachers working with English learners to apply for an SEI Endorsement (Sheltered English Instruction) through multiple pathways and not just through stand-alone
coursework, such as through a state assessment and professional development hours. Currently there are no teacher preparation programs in the state aimed at preparing teachers to work in dual language programs (García & Carnock, 2016). There is also variation across the country as to what type of preparation a teacher should have in order to be able to address the needs of emergent bilingual students since the type of language program can vary from English-only instruction in mainstream classrooms to programs that balance both languages (Terrazas & Fix, 2009).

**Beliefs and Attitudes Toward Bilingual Education**

The inherent contradiction between believing in the bilingual education research agenda without espousing it in practice at the sites is defined as the “bilingual paradox” (Hornberger, 2000, p. 173). Saying “no” to bilingual education becomes a way for local schools to challenge the state policy and power, both the positive and negative aspects, as well as the absolute nature of the policy in the first place. Hornberger’s research focuses on the concept of the bilingual paradox and the “ideological tensions between assimilationist and pluralist discourses about linguistic and cultural diversity” (2000, p. 173). We know the research says that bilingual education is effective but we are failing to implement bilingual preschools because of our fears that the emergent bilinguals will fail to learn English and therefore not assimilate into mainstream society. Rather than approach early childhood education from an intercultural perspective, there is instead a bias toward an English-only curriculum and instruction framework.

The workings of this paradox are clearly visible in the responses to question #8 of the second part of the survey. The question asked if the directors believe bilingual education is effective in a preschool setting. In terms of beliefs and attitudes toward bilingual education, 93 (94%) of the survey respondents agree that there is strong research that favors bilingual education at an early age, with only four participants (0.04%) expressing uncertainty about the merits of bilingual education and commenting about the need to speak only in English when in the United States. Interestingly, these same four participants still agree that teaching children to read and write in their home language is important for language development as a whole; three out of the four (0.03%) who did not support bilingual preschools nonetheless agree that there is strong research in favor of bilingual education at a young age.

To explore more deeply the paradox issue we decided to analyze in more detail, certain Likert-Scale questions regarding the director’s beliefs and attitudes toward bilingual education presented in the survey’s section 3. The findings are shown in Table 6 below. However, not all survey respondents answered all of the Likert-scale questions, which is why the final numbers do not total 99. The analysis of the Likert-scale questions is nevertheless useful in suggesting beliefs configurations of those administrators who did answer.
The responses between the two columns favor consistently the “I Agree” category as opposed to the “I Strongly Agree” category. The oscillation between these two affirming categories leads us to believe there is still a bit of skepticism amongst the respondents in relation to wholeheartedly supporting bilingual education. The skepticism may not all be negative; rather, it shows a sense of flexibility and adaptability in thinking about bilingual education and the challenge of implementing a successful model in practice. The one exception to the results above is this survey question: “Teaching children to read and write in their native language before English helps build a strong foundation for language as a whole.” Unlike the other questions, here 32 survey respondents answered with “I Strongly Agree” with nobody answering with “I agree.” The act of teaching young children to read and write in their native language seemed a universal, essential, and natural act without contradiction and struggle for at least a third of the participants.

### Curriculum Implementation

In terms of curriculum implementation in the early childhood centers, close to 89 (90%) of the survey respondents implement The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, now also called Teaching Strategies GOLD, while a smaller percentage (less than 5%) implement the Scholastic Early Childhood Program or an inquiry/project based curriculum of their own design.¹

Our initial investigation revealed that there is a lack of emphasis on the parallel development of two languages in many early childhood curricula including the two used in the Centers surveyed in the study. The Creative Curriculum, however, did recently include objectives for Spanish language development for dual language learners, along with books in Spanish and discussion cards for lessons in Spanish. The development of biliteracy has only recently made its way into early childhood curricula,

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¹ It’s important to note the date of the study and the implementation status at the time of publication. The percentages and curricula used might have changed since then. The description should be consistent with the actual data collected during the study.
which still tend to base their foundation on theories of play and the social-emotional
development of the child. Even though there is still a greater focus on best practices for
English language acquisition, the Creative Curriculum added this statement at the end
of its website:

To support classrooms where Spanish is spoken, The Creative Curriculum for
Preschool is available in three ways: in English, in Spanish, or as a fully bilingual
curriculum. The bilingual option offers all curriculum components in both
Spanish and in English, meaning that programs can make the choice that best fits
their unique needs (Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 2017).

At the same time, there is no citation or mention of bilingual education theories and the
benefits of bilingualism on the Creative Curriculum® website.

Another question that stood out for us was whether the early childhood
directors implemented the national World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment
(WIDA) Consortium Standards for English Language Learners. The answers to this
question were divided as follows among the 99 survey respondents: 14 (14%) said “Not
at All”; 12 (12.3 %) said “Somewhat”; 31 (31.6%) said “Not Sure”; 33 (33.0%) said
“Well”; and 9 (8.8) said “Very Well.” The majority of the early childhood centers in our
sample do not implement the WIDA Standards, even though all P-12 schools serving
English Language Learners are required to implement the WIDA Standards in Illinois.
Based out of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and originating out of the No Child
Left Behind legislation, WIDA is a national leader in the development of English and
Spanish Language development standards, assessments, and professional development,
and WIDA recognizes the urgent need to provide linguistically relevant instruction and
assessment for early language learners. In 2014 WIDA released the Early-English
Language Standards (E-ELD) for the early childhood classroom; including childcare
centers, caregivers, Head Starts, and preschools. Here is what the document titled “The
WIDA Early English Language Development Standards, Ages 2.5–5.5, 2014 Edition” states
about the intent of these new standards:

The purpose of the E-ELD standards is to provide a developmentally sound
framework for supporting, instructing, and assessing dual language learners (DLLs), ages 2.5-5.5 years. Specific consideration has been given to the nature of
early language and cognitive development, family, and community-based socio-
cultural contexts for language learning, and the psycholinguistic nature of
second language acquisition in preschoolers who are still developing the
foundational structures and rules of language (WIDA, 2014, p. 3).

WIDA worked with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and the
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to develop these early childhood standards.
Furthermore, through a 2010 federal grant, WIDA and the State of Illinois already have
worked in synchronicity to develop the first-in-the-nation Spanish language standards
for the bilingual P-12 classroom known as SALSA—Spanish Academic Language
Standards and Assessments. WIDA states that the SALSA Standards can be used to
inform bilingual preschools, even though it has not officially developed Spanish
language standards as of yet for the bilingual preschool. WIDA also suggests on its
website that the SALSA Standards should be used to inform the teaching of other languages as well such as Polish and Chinese.

The lack of knowledge about the WIDA Standards from our participants suggests a “silo” effect (defined here as a stack of data in a specific discipline without cross-talk with other disciplines) in Illinois in which there is a lack of dialogue between and amongst the early childhood world and the world of bilingual and ESL education. Even at the university level, such as our own respective institutions, early childhood departments may not always get a chance to collaborate with Bilingual/ESL departments and this recent policy change is causing our two departments to sit down and cross-pollinate so early childhood teachers can get their Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsements and bilingual/ESL teachers can get their early childhood teaching certificates. This cross-pollination is bringing up questions regarding the role of play, parallel language development, and reading/writing in the birth to five-year-old setting and how to share this information rapidly with all educators across Illinois. Learning silos are seen across schools of education, but the trend is now towards curricular integration—the idea of interdisciplinary learning by combining multiple disciplines (Taylor & Taylor, 2017).

There is also a need for multiorganizational and multisector collaborations, such as between WIDA and early childhood organizations, so that we can build greater organizational capacity as well as better serve early childhood centers. By working across organizational boundaries, there is the potential to improve outcomes by leveraging resources, lowering costs and identifying solutions quickly (Bevc, Retrum, & Varda, 2015). When decisions become heavily localized, there is preference for homogeneity, tightened social networks and the status quo. In practice, early childhood organizations and bilingual education organizations must break down silos, bridge gaps and create a collective synergy that encourages multicultural and multilingual approaches.

**Conclusion**

In terms of the State of Illinois, a 2010 school year report from the Illinois State Board of Education stated that there were over 183,000 ELs in the K–12 setting, which means nearly one out of ten students in the state was an EL. According to a 2012 report by the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, one out of every seven students in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is designated as an “English Language Learner” (ELL). Thirty percent of students in the entire district have been designated as ELs at some point while enrolled in CPS. In addition, according to the Illinois State Board of Education website, in SY 2014, 726 school districts/educational entities in Illinois enrolled 207,834 EL students, an increase of about 131 students from SY 2013.

Due to these demographic changes two key laws were enacted to better serve young emergent bilingual students. The 2010 and the 2012 laws, discussed in this article, influenced changes to expand the capacity of early childhood programs to work with early learners who are ELs and to better prepare teachers and administrators working with them.

Along with the 2010 policy change for bilingual preschools, one can conclude that the State of Illinois is moving in the right direction toward creating an inclusive
education for emergent bilinguals. Illinois, along with states like Texas and New Jersey, is still a stronghold for bilingual education. Yet, from the results of our study, it is apparent that the methodology of policy implementation needs to be reexamined since it seems quixotic in its present moment. The general conclusion that can be drawn from the survey responses is that, for the most part, the early childhood directors empathize with the student population they serve but they are unsure whether they can offer bilingual education at their site to meet state requirements.

Thus, the state needs to support early childhood centers in developing a compliance strategy in order to meet the requirements of the 2010 legislation through a contingency plan. Based on our survey, there are still many remaining questions the survey respondents have about the state policy and its implementation relating to teacher certification requirements; accountability and monitoring; parent choice on the languages of instruction; deadlines for compliance. We are not sure as to how and whether the state is addressing these unanswered questions. The survey responses clearly indicated a sense of anxiety, along with resistance toward the state’s prescriptions versus a set of workable options.

Given the already lax nature of implementing ESL and Bilingual policies across school districts in Illinois, the 2010 policy makes us wonder how the state will enforce the rules for hundreds of early childhood centers (ranging from home-based caregivers to Head Starts) when so many elementary schools do not comply (Harris, September 25, 2012). What happens when the majority of centers are out of compliance? Will the state provide a remediation plan for centers out of compliance?

What often looks brilliant on paper is not always so easy to implement in practice and policy can fail if stakeholders are not engaged early on. One troubling issue about fast-moving policy is that it does not leave much room for incubation and innovation. The rules have now changed for early childhood education in Illinois but the curriculum and instruction remain the same. The state and its working group of educators and academics who advised them did a good job of selling the policy and barreling ahead with consensus building but the end result was a rigid and shortsighted framework as stated by the survey respondents in our study. At the same time, there is also some resistance on the part of the early childhood programs towards teaching from a bilingual framework, especially when they have been monolingual driven from inception.

It is often claimed that policy is driven by ideology rather than feasibility. Along with frustration toward the new policy, there was also plenty of affirmation from the survey respondents regarding the long-term effects of the policy. The short-term effects on their lives were stridently stated in the open comments section of the survey: the difficulty of hiring new bilingual teachers, allocating resources, engaging parents, etc. The long-term effects have yet to be measured, but the respondents clearly saw the need to make a strong curricular transition from bilingual preschools to bilingual kindergartens.

From their collective responses, it is clear that the early childhood directors do not want to go the way of Arizona where bilingual education options do not exist without waivers from the state. We are optimistic in Illinois; there is wide support for
bilingual education. Even opponents say they believe in the research supporting the learning of multiple languages at an early age. It is hard to imagine the disappearance of bilingual education from the landscape. Although, our research suggests more steps toward improving implementation of the 2010 policy still need to take place across the state, the opportunity to enhance preschool education for emergent bilinguals has nonetheless increased through its enactment. Perhaps introducing bilingual education at the earliest opportunity – in preschool – will reward our optimism, and being the first state to introduce policy on bilingual education at the preschool level will serve as an example that extends that optimism to the other states.

References


Barac, R., & Bialystok, E. (2012, Mar/April). Bilingual effects on cognitive and linguistic development: Role of language, cultural background, and education. Child Development, 83(2), 413-422.


Journal of Multilingual Education Research, Volume 7, 2016/2017


Appendix A: Online Survey

Part I asked the participants to complete demographic information about their school site by typing in answers to 10 questions regarding their own education background in terms of teaching degrees and certifications, type of student population served at school site, the number of students served, the type of early childhood curriculum, levels of poverty at the school, parent education and income levels, the teaching qualification of the early childhood educators in terms of their certifications and endorsements, and the languages present in the school site, etc.

Part II asked open-ended questions in which the participants answered questions regarding the new policy initiative in answer boxes:

1) Are you aware of the new state policy changes for early childhood education which require a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement for early childhood educators working with an ELL (English Language Learner) student population of 20 or more?
2) Are you prepared for the July 2014 deadline and can your site meet the state requirements?
3) Do you have enough qualified early childhood educators with either a Bilingual and/or ESL Endorsement attached to their Type 04 teaching certificate in early childhood education?
4) Are you aware of the screening process for ELL students in preschool?
5) Have you made hiring changes based upon the changes in state policy?
6) Have you shifted teachers around the school to meet the mandate requirements?
7) How do you feel about the new state policy change in early childhood programs?
8) Do you think bilingual programs are effective in an early childhood setting?
9) Should immigrant children be taught in their native language at an early age?
10) Do you have the materials and resources to implement a bilingual preschool successfully?
11) What are questions and concerns you still have about the new state policy legislation?
Part III of the survey included a set of Likert-scale questions on a scale of 1 to 5 in which we asked participants to clarify their definition of bilingual education; to choose among options for presenting bilingual education in their early childhood programs (experiences, curriculum, assessments) and to choose how language education issues affect the teaching and learning process as well as social and cultural awareness in an early childhood school site:

5=I absolutely agree  
4=I agree  
3=Not sure 
2=I agree somewhat  
1=I do not agree 

1) Bilingual education is an effective form of language education. 
2) Bilingual education should begin as early as 3-years of age. 
3) Bilingual education means that children learn in both their first native language and in English. 
4) Singing songs in the child’s first language is good enough for an early childhood center. 
5) Teaching children to read and write in their first language before English helps build a strong foundation for language as a whole. 
6) Only one language should be taught at a time and there should be no mixing of languages. 
7) Learning languages at a young age is not as important as social skills and the role of play. 
8) Young children can have many difficulties learning more than one language. 
9) The research in favor of bilingual education is strong. 
10) Children should not be allowed to speak to other in their native language in the early childhood classroom. 
11) Screening children for language needs is not necessary.
Appendix B: Illustrative Responses to the Issue of Number of Teachers with Bilingual Education Endorsement

I. Have teachers with Bilingual or ESL Endorsements or in the process of obtaining them

- We have a full time bilingual teacher.
- 1 Teacher has ESL Endorsement, 9 do not.
- 1 teacher yes, 1 teacher in the process of completing ESL Endorsement.
- 1 bilingual, 1 ESL, 4 ESL to be completed from July 2013 to June 2014.
- Yes 2 of the 4 teachers have their bilingual/ESL endorsements. Each class also has bilingual assistants.
- Yes. One teacher holds a Bilingual endorsement; 3 teachers hold an ESL endorsement and 1 teacher is currently enrolled in an ESL endorsement program.
- We have 7 teachers that have their ESL endorsements and have now hired 5 Bilingual teachers.
- All of our teachers will have their ESL endorsements by 2014. We will also be beginning a Spanish bilingual program with bilingual endorsed teacher.
- We will have 3 that will have their endorsements by June 2013. We have 1 teacher that will not have their endorsement by that date.
- One teacher, who serves the bi-lingual pre-K population is ESL endorsed.
- 1 teacher has a Bilingual/ESL endorsement, the other three are all ESL endorsed.
- We are working with two teachers to obtain the necessary certification and endorsement.
- As of now, yes. We have two as of now. We will be looking for another qualified staff member to help meet the needs of our students just in case our numbers increase.

II. Other personnel are used to work with emergent bilingual preschoolers

- No. Our ECE Social Worker is bilingual (Spanish).
- No, however, the teacher does have experience working with the Spanish population.
- We have a full time bilingual teacher on staff; the others do not possess an ESL or Bilingual Endorsement attached to their Type 04 (Early Childhood Teaching Certificate).
End Note

1 *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is a research-based, comprehensive collection of knowledge-building and daily practice resources that explains the “what,” “why,” and “how” of preschool teaching. There are 38 learning objectives addressed in the lessons, which focus on social-emotional learning, language development, physical development, cognitive development, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition. Copyright© 2016 by Teaching Strategies, LLC.

*The Scholastic Early Childhood Program* is a comprehensive, year-long curriculum that provides explicit instruction in early language, reading, and math skills. *The Scholastic Early Childhood Program* immerses children in real-world themes that begin with what is familiar to children and connects to the world around them.
Introduction to Roundtable Proceedings: Emergent Bilinguals in New York’s UPK

Zoila Morell
Mercy College

Recently New York State has seen a substantial increase in enrollment in Pre-Kindergarten programs since Governor Cuomo began allocating funds towards a total investment of $1.5 billion to make Pre-Kindergarten available statewide by 2019 (Craig & McKinley, 2014). The $377 million budget for the state's Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program served nearly 100,000 children in 2013-2014 (Barnet, et al., 2015); over half of these children were from New York City (Potter, 2015). The KIDS COUNT (www.kidscount.org) national database includes the following statistics about children living in New York:

- In 2015, New York’s preschool population (0 to 4) had only 45% of the population identifying as White while 26% were Latino, 15% Black, 8% Asian, <.5% American Indian and <.5% Pacific Islander, and 4% multiracial;
- In 2015, 23% of children ages 0 to 5 were living in poverty;
- In 2011, 21% of children of immigrants lived in homes where no one over 14 reported speaking English “very well.”

New York State’s 2013 application for the Early Learning Challenge federal grant indicated that there were more than 146,000 children ages 0 to 5 who spoke languages other than English in their homes (NYS-ELC Application, 2013). That same year, there were more than 24,000 children classified as “Limited English Proficient” in Kindergarten (NYS BEDS Enrollment) using the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). However, the NYSITELL is not valid for children before Kindergarten and, until now, the identification of emergent bilinguals in UPK has been locally determined. In the 2015-16 UPK year-end report, programs were asked two questions (Tables 1 & 2) about their procedures in identifying students and their total counts. Most (82%) of school districts had created a method to identify children (Table 1), although there are no publicly available data on what these methods included (NYSED, 2017).
Table 1
*Question on the Year-end Report for State Funded UPK Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=478</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your school district currently have a process in place for identifying Pre-K students who speak a language other than English?</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York State Education Department, 2017

Districts who did identify EBs, reported their counts (Table 2); of the total 29,802 children identified, 78% attended programs in New York City.

Table 2
*Question on the Year-end Report for State Funded UPK Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=120,000</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many students served by your state funded Prekindergarten programs are considered to speak a language other than English at home?</td>
<td>29,802</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York State Education Department, 2017

On April 3, 2017, a protocol for identifying emergent bilinguals in Pre-Kindergarten (now called “Emergent Multilingual Learners”) was presented to the New York Board of Regents (New York State Education Department, 2017). This was the culmination work of the *New York Committee of Bilingual Education in Pre-Kindergarten*, which brought together a wide coalition of service agencies, practitioners, and advocacy groups. The protocol involves a series of steps designed to serve multiple purposes:

- Identify Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) as they enter Pre-Kindergarten;
- Inform instruction and programming to implement culturally and linguistically relevant approaches;
- Gather useful data about young children to inform policy;
- Create meaningful transitions into the K-12 school system;
- Modeled on a design by Tazi-Morell and Apointe (2016), the protocol serves as guidance to programs and practitioners with the goal of creating a uniform method of identification, instructional planning, and programming.
Instruction at the Pre-Kindergarten level is organized around principles aligned with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (2011) [PKFCC]. One of the principles expressed by the PKFCC concerns the use of the home language for learning, stating that it is “essential to encourage continued first language development [emphasis mine] in our children by providing them with appropriate education settings…” (p. 6). Organizations such as the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) call for making bilingual education available at the earliest opportunity in their recent position statement included in this issue (NYSABE, 2014).

In 2015, when New York City first scaled up the number of programs to make Pre-Kindergarten truly universal, a roundtable discussion was organized under the direction of the New York State Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN) and NYSABE. To inform the reader of this seminal and influential event, the roundtable proceedings are included in this section of JMER’s Volume 7. Charged with setting the focus and direction for the field, the roundtable brought together regional experts, practitioners, policymakers, and state officials, to articulate a vision to inform the following areas:

• Instruction and programming;
• Leadership and policy;
• Community partnerships;
• Higher education and teacher preparation;
• Research.

The roundtable proceedings are included in this issue of JMER (Morell, 2016/2017).

As argued in this special volume, the interest in early childhood education to prepare children for academic achievement is gaining momentum. The expansion of Pre-Kindergarten in New York and throughout the states creates an urgency to organize approaches that will best support young emergent bilinguals. As more studies point to the efficacy of bilingual instruction for young language learners, practitioners and researchers alike need to advocate for greater access to bilingual instruction. Another key issue to support is the integration of the home language in early childhood education for instruction and programming. While the struggle to first provide early childhood education universally is only beginning, we cannot forgo the argument for the kind of experience that will best support young emergent bilinguals. Our struggle on their behalf is fueled by the promise of early childhood education and the brilliant capacities of young children.
References


New York Basic Educational Data System (BDES) enrollment


Proceedings
Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction
Roundtable Discussion June 5, 2015, Fordham University

Zoila Morell, Editor
Mercy College

Opening Comments

In June of 2015, as New York City expanded UPK to reach nearly all available four-year-olds, the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) and the NYS/NYC Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (NYS/NYC RBE-RN) of Fordham University collaborated to hold a Roundtable event bringing together educators, policymakers, researchers, and community leaders in response to two overarching questions:

1. What are the needs of young emergent bilinguals within the structure of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)?
2. What is our focus and direction in preparing to meet their needs?

Participants from a wide selection of practitioners, policymakers, and other key stakeholders from the NYC, Long Island, and Westchester County areas, were invited to take part in the Roundtable which was held on June 5, 2015 at Fordham University.

The proceedings are organized into four sections: (1) Opening Comments; (2) Roundtable Welcome and Greetings; (3) History and Collaborators; (4) Panel Presentations with Breakout Sessions summaries. Following greetings from Anita Vasquez Batisti, Director of Center of Educational Partnerships, and Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Executive Director of NYSABE, the then New York State Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages, Angélica Infante-Green (now Deputy Commissioner for Instruction), began with a “State of the Field” address on planning for young emergent bilinguals.

A panel, moderated by Dr. Luis Reyes (now Regent Reyes) and comprised of practitioners and researchers, introduced key topics (history, trends, emerging research, and new directions) in each of the five core areas of preschool education:
• Programming and instruction
• Leadership and policy
• Community partners
• Higher education and teacher preparation
• Research

The breakout sessions focused on each of the five core areas presented. Discussion within each breakout session was guided by comments and questions that emerged from the panel presentations. Also below, I include a synthesis of the consensus reached by participants of the breakout sessions. These are key recommendations the participants suggest should be considered in the field of Bilingual UPK.

The collective insights and suggested actions resulting from the roundtable can inform planning on behalf of emergent bilinguals. Together, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, can define a focus and direction that ensures meeting the needs of the growing number of emergent bilingual children in New York State.

**Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction**
**Roundtable Discussion, June 5, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizers</th>
<th>Panelists</th>
<th>Breakout Session Facilitators from NYS/NYC RBE-RN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Eva García Executive Director, NYS/NYC REBE-RN Delegate | **Moderator and History & Collaborators** Dr. Luis Reyes, Hunter College | Abby Baruch
| Dr. Zoila Morell Associate Professor Mercy College NYSABE Delegate | **Instruction and Programming** Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College | Sara Martínez
| | **Leadership & Policy** Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families | Aileen Colón
| | **Community Partners** Jorge Saenz de Viteri, Latino Coalition for Early Care and Education. | Elsie Berardinelli
| | **Higher Education and Teacher Preparation** Dr. Juan Morales, Kingsborough Community College | Dr. Roser Salavert
| | **Research** Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College | Dr. Bernice Moro
| | | Diane Howitt |
Roundtable Welcome and Greetings

Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction

Roundtable Discussion
Friday, June 5, 2015

Welcome & Greetings

• Eva García, NYC RBE-RN Executive Director

• Dr. Anita Vazquez-Batisti, Associate Dean Graduate School of Education

• Nancy Villarreal de Adler, NYSABE Executive Director

Figure 1: Roundtable Discussion Slides 1 and 2
State of the Field Address

Angélica Infante-Green,
Associate Commissioner, NYSED/OBE-WL

Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Morell
Associate Professor, Mercy College

Figure 2: Roundtable Discussion Slides 3 and 4.
Defining our Focus
Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- **Purpose:** “to help organize the efforts to provide effective instruction and programming for the growing number of multilingual children entering preschool programs at this time of rapid expansion of UPK.”
- **Process:** Convening scholars, leaders, and practitioners in a roundtable to articulate recommendations to the field.

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Defining our Focus
Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- **Terms:** There are currently many terms to define the same population – multilingual learners, emergent bilinguals, dual language learners. We find the term “English Language Learner” inadequate and so we abandon that term.
- **Starting Point:** We promote bilingual education, that’s where we begin. Conversations revolve around implementing bilingual education.
- **Recommendations and Target Action**

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Figure 3: Roundtable Discussion Slides 5 and 6
Figure 4: Roundtable Discussion Slides 7 and 8
History and Collaborators

Panel Moderator

Dr. Luis Reyes
Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College

Latino Coalition for Early Care & Education (LCECE), policy initiative of The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF) held Public Forum at Baruch College, CUNY, 2008

Key Issue Areas in Early Care & Education: language access, opportunities for professionals in the field, school readiness, family engagement, a Quality Rating & Improvement System, & community involvement & outreach.

Figure 5: Roundtable discussion slides 9 and 10.
History & Collaborators

LCECE Forum Recommendations:
• unified & more efficient data & information collection system,
• hiring & developing diverse, linguistic & culturally competent workforce,
• QRIS incorporate cultural aspects that affect learning, language acquisition, & cognitive development,
• adequate resources & funding for such programs,
• effective outreach strategies focused on Latino & multilingual-learning families, &
• better coordination among state & city agencies & school districts & between school districts, family day care providers, & child care centers.

History & Collaborators

• NYS Board of Regents (2005) ECE Policy Statement
• Pre-K Now (2006): Pre-K & Latinos (Garcia & González);
• Reyes (2007): Recommendations for Commissioner’s Pre-K Regulations (signed by leaders of 21 organizations in NY);
• Natl. Women’s Law Center (2007): Providing State Pre-K in Child Care Centers,
• National Council of La Raza (2007): Buenos Principios…;
• LCECE (2008): Building on Latino Children’s Language & Culture,
• NYS CR on Contracts for Excellence: additional state school aid model programs serving ELLs allowable, including in full-day UPK programs;

Figure 6: Roundtable discussion slides 11 and 12.
History & Collaborators

- Scholastic, Verizon & NCLR: Lee y serás/Read and You Will Be;
- Colorín Colorado (Spanish-English bilingual website created by WETA/PBS for educators and parents);
- Office of Children & Family Services/OCFS: began piloting QRIS in 2009 provides manuals, surveys and training in English & Spanish for EC programs in NYS;
- Espinoza (2008): Challenging Myths about Young ELLs (FCD);

History & Collaborators

- Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (2005): Six Research-Based Guiding Principles Serving the Needs of English Learners in Preschool “School Readiness” Programs;
- LCECE panel presentation at NYSABE 2012 Annual Conf.: Walking the Walk: Building on our Children’s Languages & Cultures;
- Maggie Severs (2012): Starting Early with English Language Learners: First Lessons from Illinois (New America Foundation);
- Zoila Morell (Oct. 2014): Board of Regents handout: Identification of ELLs in Pre-K.

Figure 7: Roundtable discussion slides 13 and 14.
Panel Presentations and Summaries

CORE AREA I

Instruction and Programming Presentation.

Panelist: Elizabeth Ijalba, PhD, Queens College Instruction and Planning

Instruction & Programming
Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

1. Alternate Interim Placement classes promote English-only language instruction and the majority culture.
2. There is a lack of parent education programs specifically targeted to immigrant families and to building parental engagement.
3. There is a general failure to consider the achievement gap for multilingual learners in UPK programs: Effective teaching should be experiential and framed within Universal Design for Teaching, Funds of Knowledge, and Translanguaging.

Alternate Interim Placement Classes
Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

• There are unclear guidelines for UPK teachers on how to work with multilingual learners.
• Responsibility for the home language is placed on teaching assistants who are only required to have a high school education.
• Limiting the presence of parents and not including families’ funds of knowledge disempower parents and foster divisions between home and school.

Figure 8: Roundtable discussion slides 15 and 16.
Lack of Parent Education Programs for Immigrant Families

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

- Parents are often ambivalent about using the home language when all therapies and instruction for their children are provided in English.
- Parents often have limited understanding of language and communication disorders and how to support their child’s development.
- Parents often have a limited understanding of their rights, their responsibilities, and U.S. institutions.

Closing the Gap: Universal Design for Learning, Funds of Knowledge, Translanguaging

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

- Instruction should include multiple ways of representation, expression, and generalization. There is current underutilization of technology and lack of guidance for teachers and parents.
- There is a need to learn about families’ funds of knowledge and how to integrate this knowledge into the classroom curriculum.
- There is a need to integrate the home language(s) as a means of communication and learning for multilingual learners.

*Figure 9: Roundtable discussion slides 17 and 18.*
CORE AREA I

Instruction and Programming Breakout Session Summary.

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitators: Abby Baruch and Aileen Colón

High priority action steps:

I. Linking parent engagement to learning

A. Outreach to parent homes to establish intimacy.

B. Build bridges to access the funds of knowledge and the parent expertise that exists.

C. Identify which parents have had a higher level of education in their country.

D. Provide incentives to parents that will get them into the school building or if they are from low literacy regions (no library in the town).

E. Provide conferences to dispel the myths and to affirm the advantages of being bilingual.

F. Establish partnerships with CBOs. For example: Literacy Inc. to create a culture of literacy.

G. Partner with CBOs. They know the parents, they do not know strategies.

H. Create materials based on their experiences in the home. For example: Cooking or Family Celebrations. You can create visuals and picture collection/integrating technology.

I. Conduct workshops on how to have conversations with “little people.” Using pictures to tell a story orally, building from their own experiences, valuing the culturally diverse backgrounds of how we do things.
II. Need for High Quality Staff.

A. Administration who is not bilingual will not know how to select high quality staff.

B. There are not enough bilingual Pre-K teachers. Many teachers in the program are monolingual. Also, not enough dually certified teachers. (ENL and Special Ed.)

C. In the suburbs, the Pre-K programs are run by non-profit organizations and the salaries for teachers are low because it is based on the funding. (Meanwhile, these programs are housed in buildings where teachers are on the NYSED pay scale. (salary dicotomy).

D. There is a concern that the role of the teacher assistant (TA) is to teach the bilingual piece.

E. Support the TA with professional development.

F. Provide incentives for TA to become early childhood teachers.

G. Needs to be another avenue to prove you have expertise in the home language.

H. Need to change: Prevailing mono-lingual philosophy.

I. Question: Are we trying to make all UPK bilingual?

III. Funding needs to be Adequate if this is a priority!

There is no uniformity in UPK programs across the State – Standards, curriculum, etc.
CORE AREA II

Leadership & Policy Panel Presentation.

Panelist: Jorge Saenz de Viteri, LCECE

Figure 10: Panel discussion slides 19 and 20.
Leadership & Policy
Jorge Saenz de Viteri, LCECE

A Systemic, Comprehensive Approach to High Quality Early Care and Education

Currently, too many governmental and regulatory entities have oversight of the various early care and education settings in NYS. Our ECE delivery system is fragmented and challenging to navigate for both parents and providers alike. Complex regulations, funding gaps, and eligibility requirements exacerbate this problem.

Ensuring High Quality Early Care and Education to Support New York’s Dual Language Learners and Their Families
Latino Coalition for Early Care and Education, CHCF, Inc.
February 2014

➢ Salary parity across New York City’s entire publicly funded early care and education system.

➢ That funding is set aside for ongoing preparation and professional development of the professional prekindergarten workforce with coursework on dual language acquisition and effective teaching practices for DLL students.

➢ That New York City promotes specific strategies that encourage parent involvement and support Latino parents in creating engaging language and literacy experiences at home to reinforce children’s learning at preschool.

➢ That the New York City Department of Education’s web-based systems expand to encompass all schools and providers who administer Universal Pre-K services and incorporate child outcomes data being collected through the various online systems that pre-kindergarten programs are currently using.

➢ That New York City ensures that the web-based information is also available in print-format in the parents’ home language.

➢ That New York City’s early education programs ensure that children have opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language, and utilize assessments in both English and the home language that help determine what the child has learned and is capable of doing as well as the child’s level of language development.

➢ That Mayor Bill de Blasio creates the Office for Early Care and Education.

Figure 11: Panel discussion slides 21 and 22.
CORE AREA II

Leadership & Policy Breakout Session Summary.

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Elsie Berardinelli

I. Participants shared their role and level of experience in Universal Pre-K. Some participants voiced concern about the challenges faced by those working in Community Based Organizations (CBOs). One of the major challenges is making funding available to run programs. Funding comes from various sources. Programs outside of city often must take bridge loans while this is not the case in city run programs. They get their funds up front. How can Contract for Excellence, 7 million dollars be used? What can be done with this pot of money? This money can be used to write proposals.

II. The availability of supports: for example, Common Core Foundation Learning Standards and the Early Childhood Guidelines etc. Question posed, “How do we make these come to life?” There is a need to have conversations with legislators, continue to push them to take the next step and come up with agreed upon principles and guidelines. It is important to approach Marco Crespo, Governor Cuomo and others, and keep the conversation going; pressing them to pay attention. They have to be pushed and the issue of poverty has to be addressed. The dialogue must be changed and the opportunity has not been there. Capitalize on the politics. Our culture does not validate bilingualism. Why are we not mandating a celebration of languages? How do we set policies?

III. Parents/families need to be provided with information about how very important it is that they use and maintain their native language. Students will make gains if parents are supported to understand that their home language is an asset. It was agreed that family engagement is absolutely necessary and that criteria needs to be developed to make clear what authentic family engagement should look like.

IV. Teacher training is important. In many instances children in Pre-K programs that are encouraged to speak their home language (asset model) are given a different message when they enter kindergarten in a public school. The message is not aligned to the current vision of bilingualism. We have to do a better job of aligning what happens after Pre-K so that bilingualism continues for students that are speaking more than one language. How are policies implemented so there is fairness (equitable, accessible)? Draw on resources in schools and take advantage of funding. Teacher preparation programs have to ensure that the agenda moves.
Going forward/Next steps:
I. What is the collective vision that we can present to legislators?
II. There is a real anti-immigrant movement. What can we do within, without the support of legislators? Leverage the power of parents; use them to advance the agenda.
III. Approach elected officials and leaders of various organizations such as ASPIRA
IV. We need to brand ourselves. What is the collective message (Pre-K to College; multilingual)?
V. Develop a vision, with clear goals, objectives, and a timeline.
VI. Invite and bring in other stakeholders from private corporations.
VII. Set criteria- What is a high quality bilingual program? What are the elements of effective bilingual program?
VIII. How do we make our message inclusive – one that values world languages as well as multilingual programs?
IX. Let’s be proactive; capitalize on the momentum, move quickly.
CORE AREA III

Community partners presentation.

Panelist: Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

Community Partners

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- CBO Partnerships in Public Schools
- NYC Early Education Centers (NYC EECs)
- Improving outcomes across settings
- Promoting bilingual education in CB settings
- Challenges to Access, Diversity, and Quality
- Partners – untapped potential

Public Schools – CBO Partnerships

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Social – emotional supports for vulnerable students and families
- Seamless integration in school governance and overall school culture to foster welcoming and inclusive school environment
- Increased student and family engagement
- Cultural and linguistic competency to reduce typical barriers to access and enrollment, and increase diversity in Pre–K classrooms

Figure 12: Panel discussion slides 23 and 24.
Community Based Pre-K (NYC EECs)
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Imbedded and integrated into communities
- Provide continuity for families receiving other services from CBO
- Prioritize admissions for currently enrolled 3-year olds, children who have siblings enrolled, or are otherwise receiving services from the CBO
- Knowledgeable of and integrated in communities, with access and ability to reach isolated, vulnerable, and diverse populations

Improving Learning Outcomes Across Settings
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Incentives for professional development to increase number of teachers certified to teach in dual language classrooms
- Promotion of ideal that the use and development of home language is an asset
- Incentives to recruit diverse workforce
- Common Core alignment
- Data collection across settings to identify language status, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Figure 13: Panel discussion slides 25 and 26.
Promoting Bilingual Education in CBO Settings
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- CBOs have added benefit of close connection with community
- Most effective CBOs are also networked with other nearby resources that can help spread the word (libraries, district offices of elected officials, CBO partners, hospitals)
- Parent education curricula that reaches parents where they are, in their own language, to empower them as advocates for their child, town halls or info events to educate parents about their rights, what they should expect from public school settings, and the elements of the common core state standards

Challenges to Access, Diversity and Quality
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Salary disparities between settings
- Elevating quality of staff in dual language programs must be done in a way that preserves the positions of existing teachers and encourages and motivates professional development and career “ladders”
- Insufficient demographic data on public schools and NYC EECs that can be used to examine diversity and access within classrooms and in various neighborhoods
- So far, only 10 “dual language Pre-K program” in Chinese or Spanish – other rapidly increasing populations must also be represented (ie Bengali). NOTE – this designation came from applying K-12 standards to the Pre-K
- DOE is unclear about the meaning of “enhanced language programs”

Figure 14: Panel Discussion slides 27 and 28.
Challenges cont’d
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Prioritization of enrollment for existing clients in NYCEECs can reduce socioeconomic diversity in these settings (both low income and higher income groups)
- NYCEECs that receive funding from ACS or HeadStart can extend hours of Pre-K through blended funding streams, also available only to income eligible families
- To maximize ability of CBOs to effectively serve school communities, common indicators must be known about the school population that can inform practice, hiring, and coordination of resources

Untapped Partners
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRRs) are experts in provision of professional development for early childhood educators, and can train Pre-K teachers in effective integration of emergent bilinguals; also directly communicate with parents to provide referrals and information and demystify the process of enrollment as well as support through:
- Health Care providers (neighborhood doctors and community based clinics can be hubs of info)
- Consulates
- Funders and Foundations to build on the momentum of interest in early education
- Grass roots organizations can recruit teachers as well as families
- Research institutions to facilitate data collection and analysis, and recommendations for policy and practice in UPK

Figure 15: Panel Discussion slides 29 and 30.
CORE AREA III

Community Partners Breakout Session Summary.

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Sara Martínez

How do we improve learning outcomes across diverse settings?
- Not taking play out of learning. Play based learning.
- Respecting the parents’ way of showing love to their children. Play resonates for parents.
- Empowering parents by re affirming giving children care, attention, and love.
- Using bilingual assessments that are culturally sensitive and respects the parents’ culture.

What is the current course of studies for cultural competency training?
- Mandating that all staff members must have cultural competency training.
- Empowering parents by making them real partners in education and not only using them for cake sales.
- Parent/Caretaker and child - Dual generation training.
- UPK mandate - Allocating sufficient funding to train staff and validate the mandates
- Creation of Excellent Dual Language UPK.
- Who are the likely partners that we have overlooked?
- Mobilize groups of foundations, the Gates, Astor, and the Ford foundations, that advocate for children, education, and teacher training.
- Federal, State, local government, and unions.

What recommendations can we make to the field with regards to community partnerships?
Investment in a standard of cultural understanding, respect, and cultural humility into all early education practices and policies including:
- Cultural competency training for educators, and all school staff from custodian to principal
- Empower parents’ role in the school community
- Use linguistically appropriate assessments and cultural competency to communicate with parents.
- Implement play based learning.
CORE AREA IV

Higher Education & Teacher Preparation Presentation

Panelist: Juan Morales Flores, Kingsborough Community College

Figure 16. Panel discussion slides 31 and 32.
Higher Education & Teacher Preparation

Dr. Juan Morales Flores, Kingsborough Community College

What can teacher preparation programs do to promote bilingual education for multilingual learners across diverse settings?

Help develop consciousness regarding the characteristics and needs of the children in the different sectors (families, neighborhoods, towns, cities) of our country.

Develop and conduct learning experiences in all subject matters in which the pre-service teachers participate in activities dealing with multiculturalism and multilingual learners.

Help them understand themselves in order to become effective educators.

Share Demographics: As an example, Census 2010 indicated Majority of children, age 5 or under, belong to a racial and/or ethnic minority group. The number of immigrants has increased, especially Hispanics.

Advocacy through campus and community events, educational, and human rights organizations.

Final Argument:

Not to foster bilingual education and to ignore multilingual learners, in my opinion, is an attack to the human rights of the children. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 30: The Right of Children of minorities/indigenous groups to learn about and practice their own culture, language, and religion. The right to practice one’s own culture, language, and religion applies to everyone, even in instances where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country.

Figure 17. Panel discussion slides 33 and 34.
CORE AREA IV

Higher Education & Teacher Preparation Breakout Session Summary

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Dr. Roser Salavert

The Institutions of Higher Education design their Teacher preparation programs based on the requirements of the state. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that these requirements respond to the expectations for high quality programs for pre-K children in a diverse and multilingual society.

By the end of the conversation, we agreed to propose action on three major fronts:

I. Ensure that the NYSED teacher certification for pre-K, bilingual and by extension all bilingual teachers, include not only methodology but,
   A. A component that prepares future teachers to work and collaborate with diverse and multilingual families and communities;
   B. the NYSED must require that any teacher candidate demonstrates proficiency in English and in the native language they plan to teach;
   C. demonstrated application of current research in classroom settings, and
   D. teachers should graduate with a vision for what students in bilingual programs will learn and an understanding of social and pedagogical goals and approaches regardless of whether students are in pre-K or high school.

II. All IHE and teachers should know about the New York State’s vision for English Language Learners and Bilingualism (i.e., opportunity for a Seal of Bi-literacy to motivate children and their families from a young age to grow bilingually). The NYSED in collaboration with IHE should develop a 5-year plan to make the vision of bilingualism a reality and thus ensuring that schools and districts not only have the necessary teachers to implement bilingual programs, but ensuring that the funding to colleges is aligned to these actions.

III. There have to be incentives to promote the acquisition of a second language among children from English speaking homes. NYSED promotes Bilingual Education Programs but they are typically available in higher incidence language i.e. Spanish, Mandarin, French. Incentives to teach a foreign language from pre-K to high school will also benefit colleges since they often find it difficult to prepare bilingual teachers in these lower incidence languages.
To help clarify:

Information about certification found via Teach Online Services
http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/login.html

- Early Childhood Education is Birth-Grade 2
- Childhood Education is Grades 1-6
- Middle Childhood Education is Grades 5-9
- Adolescent is Grades 7-12

Also found via Teach Online, for Bilingual Extension, the candidates have to take a Bilingual Education Assessment in the target language which “assesses knowledge and skills in the foundations of bilingual education, listening and reading comprehension, and written and oral expression. Offered in the target language of the certificate extension sought, it consists of multiple-choice questions, audiotaped listening and speaking components in English and the target language, and reading and writing components in the target language.”

Below is a link to the March 2015 Regents discussion item regarding additional pathways for the supplementary bilingual education extension and the ESOL supplementary certificate.

Research

Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- Settling the Bilingual/English-only question – what are the advantages?
- What does the research suggest about bilingual instruction at the Pre-K level?
- Specific areas of need for multilingual learners:
  - Incidence of poverty
  - Immigrant populations
  - Oral language development
  - First assessments
  - Inconsistent programming
  - Access to preschool

Research

Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- Specific areas of strength for multilingual learners:
  - Emergent literacy
  - Prognosis on achievement
- Understanding school readiness – the movement & the expectations
Figure 18. Panel discussion slides 35 and 36.

Figure 19. Panel discussion slide 37.

CORE AREA V

Research Breakout Session Summary

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Diane Howitt

- The importance of research as a foundational tool for good practice
- Commit resources to the promotion of understanding of research
- Create Professional Learning Communities in all schools to study research at a deep level and turnkey through the school community
- Open access to resources
  - Resources are often blocked
  - How do we open this up to the broader educational community?
  - Pathways to access
- Revamp education programs and courses at the university level to include courses
  - Multilingualism
  - Cultural and linguistic issues
  - Language learning
  - Developmental issues, etc.
• Promote deep understanding of available research with the goal of understanding threads that make up entire tapestry
• Hone in on topics for further research that will be available to all educators
  o Misidentification of students
  o Over-representation of “English Language Learners” in special education
  o Child development birth through age 5
  o Parent choice
    ▪ Bilingual versus ESL only programs
    ▪ L2 (English) over L1 (home language)
  o Stereotyping
  o Research on the home-student connection:
    ▪ Home visits
    ▪ Local school programs supporting parent-child interaction/parents as teachers
• The importance of media in the dissemination of research findings
  o Encourages parents to push for change
  o Educates policy makers on issues pertaining to multilingual learners

Conclusion & Next Steps
Eva García, NYC RBE-RN & Zoila Morell, Mercy College

• Reporting from each group
• Final Document
  – Posted on nysabc.net & NYC RBE-RN
  – Proceedings published in JMER
• Dissemination
  – Via Email to participants
  – Our networks
  – Statewide

Figure 20. Panel discussion slide 39.
Book Review Introduction

Bilingualism in Preschool

Patricia Velasco
Queens College, City University of New York

Even though bilingualism is a norm around the world, some parents, educators, and early childhood specialists may express doubts about bilingualism in young learners. These kinds of misconceptions are particularly prevalent in communities where most children grow up as monolingual speakers and, as a result, adult members of the community come to view bilingualism as ‘dangerous’ or ‘abnormal’ (García, 2009; Genessee, 1998; Genessee & Nicoladis, 2006). These myths about bilingualism stem from the belief that bilingualism will confuse children (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012).

Research has shown though, that contrary to the idea that two languages confuse people, there is evidence that well-developed bilingualism actually enhances one’s "cognitive flexibility" (Baker, 2011, p. 207) that is, bilingual people (including children) are better able to see things from two or more perspectives and to understand how other people think. Bilinguals also have better auditory discrimination. Bilinguals also mature earlier than monolinguals in terms of linguistic abstraction (i.e., ability to think and talk about language, Baker, 2011). However, bilingual development in young children can be poorly understood by many and regarded with skepticism by others.

Bilingualism in preschool is a complex process that depends on parents, grandparents, playmates, daycare workers, and early childhood teachers. The role of early childhood daycare workers and teachers cannot be underestimated. They can facilitate the development of two or more languages by having sustained, rich, and varied experiences in both languages. Teachers can also support parents in providing the confidence and reassurance they crave by assuring them that using the language they know best will pave the way to success. Language—any language—is a window to the world. It is better for parents to provide plenty of input and interaction in a language they are comfortable in than to hold back because they are not fluent or comfortable when speaking a specific language.

In this issue, Susana DeJesús reviews Karen Nemeth’s book Young Dual Language Learners (2014). This is an important contribution in light of the interest that Universal Pre-kindergarten education for all is eliciting. In her review, DeJesús stresses the practical side of the book, underlining that all children are capable of learning two languages in childhood and that knowing the language of one’s parents is an important and essential component of children’s cultural identity and sense of belonging. An important point is how the education of bilingual children can differ from that of monolingual children. DeJesús points out how bilingual children’s education requires
interactive instruction across multiple media and how children benefit from exploring the myriad linguistic, social, and cultural elements that surround them. After reading the book review I gathered how bilingual education for young children is a tool that will allow them to walk strong in this increasingly multicultural-multilingual world in which we live.

References


Book Review

Supporting the Linguistic Needs of Young Language Learners: A Guide for School Leaders

Susana C. DeJesús
New York University

Book Reviewed:

This book for school leaders is a user-friendly “how to” guide that makes an important contribution to administrators who work in schools with linguistically diverse student populations from pre-kindergarten to third grade. It is especially useful for leaders who are not familiar with the instructional strategies, educational programs, or academic requirements for early childhood or bilingual children. When effective programs need to be developed quickly, this reference book will help school leaders advance their understanding.

Many school leaders have little experience working with young, multilingual children. Federal and state departments are increasing their focus on early childhood education and school administrators may assume that working with young, multilingual children is the same as working with older multilingual students. This is not the case. With regard to the young child, there are developmental, social, emotional, and cognitive differences between very young learners and older children. This reference book provides valuable information that school leaders need to know: resources, professional organizations such as The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Head Start, educational policies, and program guidelines. It summarizes early childhood research and reviews critical concepts about the growth, progress, and development of the young child.

With regard to multilingual children, the pedagogy that succeeds with English speakers is not the same as effective strategies for young emergent bilinguals. Children from linguistically diverse families, where English is not spoken, or is not the only language spoken, are often new to schools and districts. Even seasoned administrators need information on how to work effectively with language diverse children and families. Specifically, this volume provides information needed to set up and supervise
programs, defines terminology, explains legal definitions, administrative codes, and regulations governing bilingual education. It summarizes pedagogy, describes program options, explains how to identify children who are speakers of languages other than English, how to positively interact with parents and community, and how to select and supervise appropriate staff.

The organization of the book works well by including six broad chapters, each led by two sections, one on “Key Considerations for Language Plan” and the other an “Introduction”. Each chapter contains between 9 and 16 short, one or two page articles, on subtopics, written by 45 different practitioners, including 19 articles written by the Editor, Karen Nemeth. These short articles summarize important concerns that any administrator must consider in setting up or supervising a program. Following each chapter there is a helpful section on “Resources and Questions”, which includes items for self-assessment, reflection, planning, and organizational resources. At the end of the book, there is a glossary, which defines some terms and offers a list of additional references.

The book’s organization is highly convenient. It allows administrators and staff to quickly target areas they may need information on, and it provides a quick overview of the main issues in each area. For the administrator who must quickly establish or supervise a program, this format is especially helpful, since it can provide rapid access to key concepts, responsibilities, regulations, and laws that must be addressed.

Chapter 1 is entitled Leadership and Professional Development and among its useful discussions there is Linda Espinosa’s overarching statement on how children acquire language and the research and policies that school leaders need to know (pp. 5-6). Janet González-Mena summarized developmentally appropriate practice for very young children. While short and to the point, she emphasizes the importance of play as a “vehicle for learning and development”, how a child’s experiences affect their “disposition” toward learning, the importance of positive relationships with “responsive adults”, and how to challenge children “beyond their current mastery” (p. 16). Also B. J. Frank’s brief, but extremely thorough statement on professional development, with key topics to be covered, advice on who should be involved, and the need for on-going professional development for all staff and teachers, in order to develop adults who can work effectively with young multilingual children and families (p. 20). Karen Nemeth’s explanation of how administrators can effectively supervise staff when languages do not match. This is a useful discussion since many school leaders wonder how they can supervise instruction in another language (p. 33-34).

Chapter 2 includes discussions on issues of “Identification and Planning”. Sandra Barrueco wrote a section where she caution against prematurely judging the language proficiency of very young children who are only just acquiring language, in general, and who now may be acquiring two languages or more (p. 42). In addition, in that chapter, Sonia W. Soltero discusses what administrators need to know regarding bilingual service options and expectations. She touches on the need for administrators to understand second language acquisition theory, common misconceptions, and the cognitive benefits of “learning more than one language” (pp. 43-44). Barbara Tedesco discusses the decision process for entering or exiting a program (p. 47).
Chapter 3 focuses on “How Young Children Learn in Two or More Languages”. Patton Tabor provides an overview of how young learners develop first and second language (pp. 58-60). Anita Pandey expands on these processes by describing the role of home language learning and the role of oral language in first and second language acquisition (pp. 61-69).

Chapter 4, entitled Developing Instructional Programs for Young Dual Language Learners, includes descriptions of best practices. Zoila Tazi recommends some effective instructional practices for early childhood bilingual education (pp. 84-86). Nancy Cloud’s reviews developmentally appropriate practice, focusing on vocabulary expansion (pp. 99-100).

Policies, Accountability, and Program Effectiveness is the title of Chapter 5. Kate Mahoney provides a thorough discussion of assessments and curriculum (p. 121) and content learning and core content standards for children who are not proficient in English (p. 124). In addition, Karen Nemeth specifies a list of national professional associations that can assist administrators in guiding practice and implementing preschool assessments, and measures (pp. 118-121).

Finally, Chapter 6, Working Effectively with Families, the Community, and Volunteers, explores issues of school, parental, and community engagement. Sandee-McHugh-McBride and Judie Haynes, both ESL specialists, lay out strategies for involving diverse families (pp. 135-137). Karen Nemeth offers a final summary statement on the value of growing up bilingual. She writes “the more we support the child’s ability to use information they have stored in either of their languages, the stronger foundation they have for future learning in both languages” (p. 148).

The book does not endorse one specific program option. Schools and districts are different, and student populations are never identical. Notwithstanding that caveat, as a whole, the authors of the different sections in each chapter emphasize two key points: First, very young children have specific developmental needs, and go through biological, social, and emotional stages. They are not just younger, smaller versions of older children. The pedagogy and strategies that help them flourish are not the same as the strategies used in upper grade classrooms. Second, with regard to young children from homes where diverse languages are spoken, the school must respect and value the family’s language and culture and support the child’s home language development among other instructional accommodations to enhance the child’s learning.

This reviewer, however, has some concerns regarding the impact and messaging of the book. Although the volume is informative, its succinct format does not allow for elaboration of certain concepts. Some essays are too brief to fully inform a topic, explain complex issues, or describe the nuances that a good administrator may also need to know. In some cases, some terms are not defined, and may not appear in the glossary.

The book is like a delicious smorgasbord, offering tiny morsels of information. This leads to another concern. Many school leaders, especially those who lack expertise in bilingual or early childhood education, may not go beyond these “appetizers” to develop deeper understandings. For instance, this is especially important in the process of language acquisition, given that it is complex and longitudinal. Some
administrators may use this book only as a “how-to” guide, a means of cutting to the chase, to quickly get essential facts on specific topics.

Another example of an important topic to develop more fully is Moll’s (1992) *Funds of Knowledge*, the notion that educators must recognize, value, and utilize the great reservoir of information and wisdom that resides in neighborhoods and is brought into the classroom by children and families of diverse cultures. The importance of the concept is to remind educators that while children may not speak English, they are not ignorant; they have knowledge relatable to the academic curriculum to share – knowledge about the world, their countries, their cultures, and their experiences. By utilizing the student’s home language and *Funds of Knowledge*, the teacher can integrate children new to the school or community into the instructional life of the classroom, thus helping the children feel wanted and not feel like outsiders.

Although well stated in the initial essay by Espinosa and final essay by Nemeth, the book seems to offer a highly generalized notion of support for the home language. Missing, for the most part, is a robust statement, reinforced often throughout the book, that on-going development of the home language is the ideal, as well as specifics about what that might entail. Because the book focuses on setting up programs for young multilingual learners, it might be beneficial for administrators to be frequently reminded that developing the child’s home language is the best foundation for English language and academic achievement.

Karen Nemeth, and other contributors in the book would certainly agree that support in the home language should neither be temporary, nor should it only be to help children in the initial stages of language learning. Yet, what kind of support children may need, or how long it should be maintained, is left somewhat ambiguous.

Considering that this guide may well be the only book on language acquisition that some administrators read, it could have provided a great opportunity to introduce a paradigm shift, through a clear and robust statement on what constitutes “support” for the home language, and why first language development, not just support, is needed, while English is being acquired. Many administrators can accept an undefined, general notion of support for the home language, without realizing that developing it, while the child is learning English, is the best way to develop English and high academic achievement.

Dual Language (DL) programs are ideal in that they do sustain support of the home language for several years, while English proficiency is being developed (Thomas & Collier, 2012). But there are challenges and obstacles administrators face when designing and implementing DL programs (Collier & Thomas, 2014). Therefore, it is important to describe to school leaders the overarching principles informing an ideal option – instruction in the home language, for as long as possible, while English is being learned – and ways to achieve it, even under difficult circumstances (Collier & Thomas, 2014; Hunt, 2011; Magruder, Hayslip, Espinosa, & Matera, 2013). Understanding these principles, it is also possible to design strategies for an English-only teacher to bring the child’s home language and the child’s *Funds of Knowledge* into the classroom environment. For instance, in my own professional experience, I have observed English-only teachers using the following activities to achieve this goal: reading stories
in the home language and in English, teaching songs in the home language, teaching about the history and culture of all children in the class, inviting children and families to share their customs, music, and holidays.

The book includes many important insights. For instance, Chapter 1 begins with a clear statement from Espinosa: “new scientific evidence compels us to revise our policies” (p. 6). She refers to “practices...constrained by outdated beliefs” where linguistically diverse children “need support for both assessments, and culturally sensitive engagement with families” (p. 6, her italics). Later, Nemeth concludes in Chapter 6 stating, “cognitive advantages are augmented by the social and emotional advantages of having support for the home language and the breadth of experience that comes from learning a new language” (p. 148).

These are strong, clear, and forthright statements. However, administrators who are only focused on the how-to aspect of the book may miss these insights. That said, it is still important that the book advocates for home language support, since many districts only offer ESL or English instruction. While a more vigorous position might have been very helpful, we ought to acknowledge that any support for the home language makes a contribution.

In summary, this is a helpful book, a practical guide, which provides easy access to information, an overview of critical topics, and responsibilities that school leaders need to address. As a growing number of young children who speak languages other than English enter our schools, administrators will be pressed increasingly to quickly develop effective programs. This Guide will give them the basics on what to do and how to do it.

References


Notes on Contributing Authors

**Pamela Brillante, EdD,** is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the William Paterson University of New Jersey specializing in Early Childhood Special Education. Dr. Brillante is an author of many publications including her new NAEYC book *The Essentials: Supporting Young Children with Disabilities in the Classroom,* and she continues to consult and collaborate with school districts to present about high quality inclusive early childhood practices to teachers and families.

**Susana C. De Jesús, EdD,** Scholar in Residence, NYU, researcher, writer, educator, consultant, Language Acquisition, Early Childhood, Dual Language, and Literacy. She was professor of Education at the University of Puerto Rico; Graduate Faculty and Early Childhood Bilingual Consultant at Bank Street College; Federal Monitor Head Start, Early Head Start; Peer Reviewer FIPSE at OELA. She designed and implemented $1.5 million K-4 Dual Language program, participated on NYS Committee on Bilingual Pre-K, NJ Preschool ELL Group, projects by CAL, NIH, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence, and was public school teacher NYC and PR, school/district administrator, with doctorate from Columbia University, and MA from NYU.

**Judie Eisenberg, BA,** is a proposal writer, program planner, and evaluator who helps not-for-profit and government entities to maximize their impact, sustain their organizations and position themselves to win competitive grant dollars. Her company, ProposalPro, Inc., has helped organizations to secure more than $500 million in funding over the past 22 years. A grant professional certified (GPC) by the Grant Professional Certification Institute (GPCI), she received her B.A. from the State University of New York at Albany and is pursuing a graduate degree at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY.

**Idalia Gutiérrez, MAEd,** is an adjunct faculty member at Dominican University outside of Chicago. She is currently a dual language teacher in the Highland Park-Highwood school district.

**Samina Hadi-Tabassum, PhD,** is a clinical associate professor at the Erikson Institute in Chicago. She teaches courses in bilingual/ESL education, literacy development, and linguistics. Her book titled *Language, Space and Power* (2006) won awards for its critical ethnography of a dual language classroom.

**P. Zitlali Morales, PhD,** is Associate Professor of Curriculum & Instruction in the College of Education, and affiliated faculty of the Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS) program at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Dr. Morales examines the language practices of Latino youth and linguistic interactions of students and teachers in bilingual classrooms. She works in teacher education to prepare teachers to meet their multilingual students’ needs by leveraging their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge. Dr. Morales is co-PI of a National Science Foundation funded project studying the digital literacy practices and transnational ties of immigrant youth.

**Zoila Morell, PhD,** is an Associate Professor in Educational Leadership at Mercy College. In over 25 years of experience working with children and families, she has served in an administrative capacity in a variety of programs working with young language learners and their families. She received statewide recognition for her work as a school principal where she administered programs for over 1000 children and families, mostly from immigrant homes. Dr. Morell currently serves on several advisory
boards to the New York State Education Department on the identification and instruction of young language learners in the growing PreK programs across the state. A frequent keynote speaker and presenter, she also consults with school districts on language acquisition, emergent literacy, school readiness, parental involvement, bilingual education, and early childhood programming. In addition, Dr. Morell’s research examines bilingual early childhood education, bilingualism in young children, and conditions for young Latino children in the US.

Karen Nemeth, EdM, is the Senior Training and Technical Assistance Specialist - DLL at Zero to Three. She is an author of more than ten books and many articles focusing on supporting early education for children from diverse language backgrounds. She is the editor of Young Dual Language Learners: A Guide for PreK-3 Leaders and hosts a resource website at www.languagecastle.com

Carola Otero Bracco, MBA, a first-generation US born of immigrant parents from Bolivia, is the Executive Director of Neighbors Link. She received her MBA from Duke University and worked in corporate finance before leading Neighbors Link, a community based organization with a mission to strengthen the whole community through the healthy integration of immigrants. During Carola’s tenure, Neighbors Link has become a leader in designing, implementing, and directing community-based, bilingual educational and cultural awareness training programs. In 2016 the organization was awarded the prestigious Non-Profit Management Excellence Award by the New York Community Trust.

Joseph C. Rumenapp, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at Judson University where he teaches coursework on educational linguistics, ESL and bilingual education, and research methods. Having previously worked in school and youth contexts in Chicago, his research focuses on promoting more equitable learning opportunities through understanding language ideologies in urban education and how discourse analysis can be used as a tool for teacher professional development.
Journal of Multilingual Education Research

Publication Description

The Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER) is the official journal of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education. Its distinct orientation reflects what is most important to researchers, specialists, and educators in the fields of multilingualism and multilingual education. JMER is a vehicle to respond to the changes and growth of knowledge in a variety of national language education issues that have local and regional relevance. It responds to the emerging needs and interests of teachers, administrators, teacher educators, researchers, counselors, psychologists, advocates, and community leaders whose work focuses on the successful education of multilingual students.

JMER embraces a variety of cross-disciplinary interests, both theoretical and practical, to reach a broader scholarship and readership. As such, its peer reviewed publications represent an array of themes and topics including:

- Psychology, sociology, and politics of language learning and teaching;
- Issues in research and research methodology;
- Assessment and evaluation;
- Professional preparation;
- Curriculum design and development;
- Instructional methods, practices, materials, resources, and technology and media;
- Language planning, language policy, and language learning;
- Professional standards and ethics.

JMER seeks to address the implications and applications of research in a variety of fields of knowledge, including:

- Anthropology;
- Applied linguistics;
- Multilingual/Bilingual education, including biliteracy, multiliteracy;
- Communication;
- Education;
- First and second language acquisition;
- Psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics;
- School psychology, sociology, political science.

Main Sections

1. **Focus on Research and Theory:** full-length articles of 8,500 words, excluding references, which discuss empirical research and analyze original data that the author has obtained using sound research methods, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies. Articles may also critically synthesize current knowledge in an important area of multilingual education and discuss new directions for research.

2. **Focus on Practice:** full length manuscripts of 8,500 (excluding references) that focus on best practices including innovative instructional interventions, practitioner inquiry, and collaborative projects leading to meaningful changes in educational policy and practice.

3. **Scholarly Book/Multimedia Reviews:** full-length critical reviews of professional texts and multimedia. Reviews should provide a scholarly evaluative discussion of the significance of the work in the context of current theory and practice. Reviews may either be solicited by the Reviews Editor or ideas for reviews may be submitted to the Reviews Editor for consideration. Reviews should comprise between 1,500 to 2,000 words (excluding references) for a review of a single book or multimedia.
**Special Issues**

Topics for special issues will be considered. Topics are approved by *JMER* Editors. Those wishing to suggest topics or serve as guest editors should contact the Senior Editor of *JMER*. Issues will generally contain both invited articles designed to provide state-of-the-art reviews of the literature and directions of future research and practice, as well as articles solicited through Call for Papers. On occasion, proceedings of a major impact conference or mini-symposia in the area of multilingualism will be considered.

**Guidelines for Submission**

Persons interested in publishing an article or book/multimedia review in this peer refereed journal may submit manuscripts for consideration. *JMER* prefers that all submissions be written in a style that is accessible to a broad readership, including those individuals who may not be familiar with the subject matter. The manuscript must be prepared according to the following guidelines and submitted at http://fordham.bepress.com/jmer/:

- Be no longer than 8,500 words (excluding references, notes, and tables) typed, double-spaced for manuscripts.
- If a review, should comprise between 1,500 to 2000 words (excluding references).
- Have an abstract no longer than 200 words on a separate sheet, typed/word processed, one-inch margins all around, and double-spaced.
- Have title page, without the author’s name, address, or institutional affiliation.
- Include a list of keywords.
- Include no more than two half-page size illustrations, tables or figures or one full-page size illustration, table, or figure.
- Include a complete References section following the APA 6th edition format. It is the author’s responsibility to make sure that all sources in text are credited in the References section and that all References are properly cited in the text.

A cover letter must accompany the manuscript that includes the name of author(s), a full mailing address, and e-mail address, both day and evening phone numbers, and fax number.

Include the author’s name on the cover letter only.

Papers accepted for publication will need to incorporate the reviewers’ feedback. They must be submitted and reviewed in Microsoft Word format, preferably in .docx or .doc format.

For more information contact:

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**Submission Process**

*JMER* is published once a year. **The deadline for manuscript submission is August 31.**

Submissions are done electronically at http://fordham.bepress.com/jmer During the submission process you will be asked to agree and consent to the Submission Agreement as found in the Journal "Policies" link. Authors are asked to adhere to the Submission Guidelines as stated above.

*JMER* uses a double-blind review process; therefore author(s) must exclude their names, institutions, and any clues to their identities that exist within the manuscript. The presence of such information may
compromise the blind review process. If you have self-citations please use the convention of (Author, Year) in the text and also in the references, leaving out the publication information. Do not use running-heads.

All submissions should adhere to the format and length guidelines of JMER. Please indicate the number of words at the end of the manuscript or book/multimedia review. It is understood that the manuscripts submitted to JMER have not been previously published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

**Editorial Process**

The online submission will generate an email to the author(s) with information about tracking the submission through the review and selection process. All manuscripts and book/multimedia reviews will be given careful consideration. Every effort will be made to inform the author(s) of our decision within 3 to 4 months. Types of decisions are: accept; accept with minor changes; accept with major changes; revise and resubmit; and do not accept. The editors’ decisions are final.

The editors reserve the right to make editorial changes to enhance clarity, concision, and style. The author should be consulted only if the editing has been substantial.