Common Core State Standards and English Learners: Challenges & Opportunities for Academic Success

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School of Education
“I went to a [EL] transition classroom, and now there’s a red flag next to my name. I guess now I’m an ineffective teacher? I keep getting letters from the district saying, ‘You’ve been recognized as an outstanding teacher’...But now because I teach English-language learners who ‘transition in,’ my scores drop, and I get a flag next to my name.”

“I’m scared to teach in the fourth grade. I’m scared I might lose my job if I teach an [EL] transition grade level, because I’m scared my scores are going to drop, and I’m going to get fired because there’s probably going to be no growth.”

Linda Darling-Hammond (2013) *Getting Teacher Evaluation Right*
Challenges and Opportunities

- Opportunities and challenges of federal and state policies intended to enhance teacher quality
- Opportunities and challenges of the new Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments
- What impact will such reforms have for educating today’s linguistically and culturally diverse students?
Today’s Objectives

1. Review demographic data to illustrate the rise of diversity within the Illinois student body and how it contrasts with the largely white, female, and monolingual workforce.

2. Review scholarly consensus on basic competencies for cultivating second language acquisition.

3. Discuss the implications for policy and practice.
Today’s Students

- Students from immigrant families will account for **ALL** the projected growth in the student population from 2005–2020—largely Latino and Asian
- African American and White student populations in IL have declined
- 1–of–4 children in IL have one foreign–born parent
- 88% of IL children born to immigrants are U.S. citizens

% of Illinois Students Considered Low-Income

a. 15%
b. 25%
c. 49%
e. Over 50%

*Children of foreign-born parents account for 33% of all Illinois children in low-income families

Low-income: receive public aid, live in foster care, or eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Total ELLs in Illinois (2012): 207,417

% of Illinois students who were ELL: 9.9%

% of Chicago Public School students who were or are identified as ELL: 34%*

66% of ELL students are outside of Chicago


Increase in English Learners in Illinois, 2004–2012

- Percent Change from 2004 to 2012:
  - Illinois: +24%
  - Chicago: -3%
  - Non-Chicago: +61%

Source:
English Learner Growth in Illinois

English Language Learners (ELLs) PreK-12, School Year (SY) 2005 to 2012 per County

Number of ELLs (PreK - 12) (Per County)
- 1 - 20
- 21 - 60
- 61 - 150
- Greater than 150
- No ELLs Reported
- Greater than 100% Growth from 2005-2012

62 counties experienced greater than 100% growth in ELL students from 2005 to 2012

Map Created by Carlos Lopez
February 2014
Latino Policy Forum

Counties with New Presence of English Learners from 2005 to 2012

26 Counties have a new presence of ELL students
Illinois English Learners by Grades, 2012

Analysis: Latino Policy Forum
Reasons for exit of ELL program in 2012:
64.3% exited and attained proficiency in the English language (transitioned)
35.4% exited but did not attain proficiency
- exited from program at parent request
- transferred to another district
- graduated high school
- exited for other reasons
- dropped out
Today’s Illinois Teachers

% of Illinois Teachers who are White:

a. 60%
b. 70%
c. 80%
d. 90%

Common Core, Higher Academic Expectations, and Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

- ALL teachers are language teachers

- Little mention of English Learners and second language acquisition

- Bilingualism and biliteracy are not prioritized as part of the definition of college and career success.
Common Core and Language-Focused Mathematics

“T: How do we find out mean? That’s another one of those multi-meaning words isn’t it? Am I talking about an attitude when I’m talking about the mean for numbers?

S: No

T: Whether someone is nice or mean—

S: No

T: What am I talking about...I’m looking for the mean value...”

Challenges of Word Problems

- Same pronoun is used to refer to different subjects

Suppose you and three friends buy a large pizza. You each pay with a $5 bill. The pizza costs $12.75. You will also pay $0.83 tax on the pizza. How much change will you and your friends get?

Complex Sentence Structures

- Prepositions
  6 divided by 12 is \( \frac{1}{2} \) (or 0.5).
  6 divided into 12 is 2.

- On Saturday, 203 children came to the swimming pool. On Sunday, 128 children came. How many more children came to the pool on Saturday than on Sunday?


“We Real Cool”
By Gwendolyn Brooks

_The Pool Players._
_Seven at the Golden Shovel._

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.
Linguistically Responsive Instruction for Generalists

- Understanding the Difference between Social versus Academic Language.

- Intentional language development across the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

- Understanding Language transfer.
# Examples of Spanish Cognates for Fractions Unit

<table>
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<th>Spanish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convert</td>
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<td>Triple</td>
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“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”

— John Dewey (1944)
Potential Policy Directions

(1) The standards movement in Illinois
(2) The potential for teaching standards to educate linguistically and culturally diverse students
(3) Promoting such standards across pre- and in-service

*Building coherence from preparation to practice.*
Pre-Service

- Establish policies and guidelines for
  - certification exams and performance-based assessments to determine readiness to teach
  - field experiences
  - work with higher education institutions to attract faculty with expertise in linguistic and culturally diverse students and communities.
In–Service

- Establish policies and guidelines for:
  - professional development for in–service teachers.
  - the design and implementation of a supplemental observational rubric for teacher evaluations built around the standards.
  - school– and district–level collaboration for educating linguistic and culturally diverse students.
Discussion
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