Preparing All Educators for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: A Policy Perspective

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March 29, 2014

Language Matters Conference
Loyola University Chicago
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.”

Challenges and Opportunities

What are the opportunities and challenges of federal and state policies intended to enhance teacher quality?

What impact will they have for educating today’s linguistically and culturally diverse students?
Policy Brief Series: Linguistic and Culturally Responsive Teacher Preparation

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

2. Growing scholarly consensus on the specified knowledge and skills all teachers need to be linguistically responsive.

3. Comprehensive Illinois policy agenda to promote linguistic and cultural competence throughout the teaching profession.
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

Analysis: Latino Policy Forum


Increase in ELLs in Illinois, 2004–2012

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

**ANALYSIS:** Latino Policy Forum

**Sources:**
ELL 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

ISBE "2005 ELL Student Statistical Report", ISBE "2012 Bilingual Education Programs and ELLs in Illinois"
Counties with New Presence of ELLs from 2005 to 2012

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

Analysis: Latino Policy Forum
Illinois ELLs PreK–3rd Grade, 2012

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

Analysis: Latino Policy Forum
Today’s Illinois Teachers

% of Illinois Teachers who are White:

a. 60%

b. 70%

c. 80%

d. 90%

“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”

— John Dewey (1944)
Policy Recommendations

(1) Implement teaching standards to influence pre–service coursework specific to educating linguistically and culturally diverse students.

(2) Implement pre– and in–service preparation guidelines so the standards influence the entire profession.

*Building alignment from preparation to practice.*
Establish policies and guidelines for:

- how certification exams and performance assessments reflect the linguistic and cultural standards. Establish the same for exam evaluators.
- field experiences that include linguistic and culturally diverse settings.
- work with higher education institutions to attract faculty with expertise in linguistic and culturally diverse students and communities.
Establish policies and guidelines for:

- how the standards will influence content for ongoing **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. This goal includes leadership that prioritizes and has expertise on linguistic and culturally diverse students to influence decision–making.
The foundation for teacher effectiveness is how well they are prepared to teach the children who are in front of them.

All educators – teacher, principals, service providers – need the same important training: they must be prepared to build on the cultural, linguistic, familial, and community influences their students bring to the classroom.
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