Human Resource Support for those Serving Young Dual Language Learners

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The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by the year 2030 the proportion of school age children whose home language is not English will increase from 22% to 40% (Center for Public Education, 2012). The increasing number of children whose language and culture is distinctive from US mainstream language and culture requires a reformulation of current approaches to teacher preparation to ensure the optimal development of this growing child population. In early childhood there is an extensive literature base that demonstrates that the quality of the teacher-child relationship across the early childhood years is a strong predictor of a child's future socio-emotional and academic development (Burchinal, 2011; NRC, 2001). However, the majority of theory and research about teacher-child relations and effective pedagogical practice has not focused on the needs young dual language learners (DLLs), and what we know about supporting those who educate young DLLs is limited and in need of concerted attention (Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker, & Lavelle, 2010).

The purpose of the present paper is to discuss the status of teacher preparation that promotes the capacity of individuals involved with the care and education of young dual language learners. The paper is divided into three general parts and describes two different contexts that encompass early childhood education. The first section focuses on teacher competencies for working with dual language learners. The second section discusses pre-service education and the third section focuses on the in-service education

and training that takes place while teachers are employed in the early care and education field. Pre-service education generally takes place in institutions of higher learning prior to formal employment. In-service education or training occurs after teachers have completed their pre-service education. However, in reality the division between pre-service and in-service is artificial since individuals often engage in both activities simultaneously because they are employed working with children while taking formal coursework in college. It should be noted that the term "professional development" is often used to describe activities that occur in pre-service and in-service, so for the sake of clarity, that term is not used here.

This paper also considers two distinctive contexts of teacher preparation. The first is that of the early years, typically focused on children age zero to five, and the second is the elementary school setting where teachers work with children ages five to eight from grades kindergartner to grade three. Although efforts to better align these two segments of early education are being advanced (Takanishi, 2010), it is important to note that each has qualitatively different historical and philosophical underpinnings that complicate the discussion of teacher preparation (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009a).

General Teacher Competencies

Before discussing pre-service and in-service teacher preparation, a brief review of factors critical in teacher preparation is discussed followed by a review of what we know to be important for teachers working with DLLs. One caveat here is that the little that we know about effective practice with DLLs in the zero to five age range is derived from studies with preschool age children (ages 3 and 4) and not infants.

Teacher competencies focus on what educators need to know and be able to do. In addition, competencies include the development of dispositions or the attitudes and beliefs that form the basis of behavior for effective interaction in an educational setting. States are increasingly developing early childhood educator competencies in order to be eligible for federal funds from the Race-to-the-Top program intended to improve early learning experiences for school readiness. An important criterion for federal eligibility is a statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

In 2001 the National Research Council's report *Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers* (NRC, 2001) delineated a set of competencies that preschool teachers should be able to demonstrate in order to be effective. Included in the list was a reference to children who could be categorized as DLLs. Specifically this reports mentions teaching practices for children who are not fluent in English and who come from different cultural backgrounds. More recently, the National Association for the Education of Young Children developed a set of Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation (NAEYC, 2009). These standards outline six core areas necessary for the preparation of effective early educators. The standards discuss the following general elements that lay the basis for elevating the quality of teacher preparation: (1) knowledge of child development and learning including knowledge of specific content areas, (2) the ability to build positive family and community relationships, (3) the capacity for meaningful observation and assessment of young children, (4) the ability to understand and use positive relationships with children and families, and (5) the ability to conduct themselves as members of a profession. Integrated within the NAEYC standards are statements addressing the needs of diverse learners, including dual language learners.

Also, within the standards are statements that have relevance for DLLs such as the provision of a more equitable learning environment, the importance of closing the learning gap between children and the value of partnering with parents for children's benefit.

Working in conjunction with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), NAEYC reviews early childhood associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree programs with respect to a specific set of standards for teacher preparation. Since its inception in 2006, 162 programs in 31 states have been accredited (NAEYC, 2014), however, there are approximately 1200 institutions of higher education that offer a degree in early childhood education (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009).

Although the NAEYC Standards are being embraced, albeit somewhat slowly, by institutions of higher education, there is a voluntary set of standards that confers certification on individual teachers in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Endorsed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), a focus on the primary grades underscores the belief that the early years are foundational to a child's learning (Sadowski, 2006). NBPTS (2013) notes that effective teachers have a good understanding of how children develop and use language. They remark,

> "Accomplished early childhood teachers have a clear understanding of how second languages are acquired. They value the home languages of children who are English language learners, and they understand that a child's native language is the foundation for literacy and learning. To the best of their ability, teachers seek ways to promote English language learners' home language development at the same time that they advance children's ability to communicate in English." (p. 27)

Both the NBPTS and NAEYC standards provide a basis for guiding teacher preparation and professional development during pre-service and in-service.

Teacher Competencies for DLLs

While national accreditation and certification organizations are incorporating important aspects of teacher practice relevant to young DLLs, experts in the dual language development field underscore critical factors for learning and instruction for DLLs. Not only is the issue of language development stressed in these discussions but also the concept of culture as a broad organizing factor is singled out as a way of informing and shaping pedagogical practice (Rueda, & Stillman, 2012; Castro, et al., 2012). In an analysis of key components needed for teacher preparation to serve dual language learners, Zepeda, Castro and Cronin's (2011) review of the literature identified six 6 content areas where specialized training is needed. They are: (1) understanding language development, (2) understanding the relationship between language and culture, (3) developing skills and abilities to effectively teach DLLs, (4) developing abilities to use assessment in meaningful ways for DLLs, (5) developing a sense of professionalism, and (6) understanding how to work with families. Zepeda and colleagues (2011) note that DLLs require additional support and pedagogical accommodations beyond what is often thought of as "good teaching" in order to reach similar gains in English as their monolingual English-speaking peers.

Because expectations for teacher competency interact with a teacher's personal attributes, consideration needs to be given to a teacher's background characteristics as these individual features present opportunities to build on their assets and support their development where needed. Teacher diversity in the US varies by educational segment. Whereas the majority of caregivers and teachers responsible for young DLLs in the primary grades are white (Feistritzer, 2011), one-half to one-

third of the zero to five workforce are individuals of color (Whitebook, et al., 2009b). Given a teacher's personal skills and abilities it is important to think about differentiated competencies based on a teacher's background. A "one size fits all" approach does not address nor builds upon particular capabilities that a teacher brings to their interactions with children.

In an effort to provide a more focused perspective on teacher competencies by individual teacher qualities, the Alliance for Better Communities (2012) in collaboration with the National Council of La Raza organized a group of national dual language learning experts to advise on the development of a set of competencies for the domains of language and literacy and socio-emotional development. These competencies are unique as they distinguish between teachers by language capability, acculturative status and years of experience in working with DLLs. Competencies with sample indicators are described for teachers who are monolingual English speakers, bilingual speakers of English and a child's home language and bi-literate in English and a child's home language. The organization of language abilities is cross-referenced by whether the teacher is mono-cultural (comes from a US mainstream perspective) or is bicultural (sharing socialization experiences from US mainstream culture and another culture). Included with these competencies is a presentation of dispositions needed when working in early childhood settings.

As US child demographics diversify, increasing consideration is being given to the development of cultural competence in the educational workforce. Cultural competence refers to a as a cohesive set of behaviors, attitudes, policies, structures, and

practices that allow for individuals to work effectively in cross-cultural circumstances (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Issaacs, 1989). Cultural competence, as a disposition, is an appropriate subject within a discussion of teacher competencies in general and certainly when thinking about DLLs. NAEYC through their Quality Benchmarks for Cultural Competence initiative (NAEYC, 2010) developed a self-assessment tool to review the presence of culturally competent practices. Reflected in this self-assessment are 8 core concepts that underscore the significance of culture and home languages and dialects. It should also be mentioned that the Office of Head Start's (OHS) updated multicultural principles stress the role of culture within teaching practices and the continued development of a child's primary language while learning English (OHS, 2009). The NAEYC's and OHS's suggested practices have implications for both program and teacher support and development.

Within elementary and secondary schools there has been an ongoing dialog about the importance of cultural competency in teacher preparation (Ambe, 2006; Gay, & Howard, 2000) and with the increasing number of dual language learners rising in our nation's schools, the urgency to provide appropriate and effective pedagogies intensifies. The concept of cultural competency is reflected in the teacher preparation standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (formerly the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education). CAEP has embedded references to diversity and dual language learners across their standards for accreditation. For example, in Standard 1 they note that " all students" are to be the focus of teacher preparation and references to "cultural competency" abound throughout the standards (CAEP, 2013). In a background paper on preparing globally competent teachers, the

Association for International Education recommends that CAEP needs to emphasize teacher standards that help students understand their own cultural identity and value and learn from diverse cultures (NAFSA, 2012).

Pre-Service Preparation

With growing public and policy attention to the importance of the early years, and with the qualifications of teachers viewed as key to young children's development, pressure for increased educational attainment of teachers has gained currency. This is evidenced by the 2007 reauthorization of Head Start that mandated that half of all lead teachers have a baccalaureate degree in early childhood or a related field by 2013 and according to the most recent data from National Institute of Early Education Research, 30 states oblige lead teachers in state funded preschool to possess BA degrees (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2012). Yet, workforce requirements remain low in many states and in privately funded early education programs.

Nationwide, workforce requirements for early childhood educators serving children age zero to five varies widely from state to state with requirements ranging from a high school diploma to a baccalaureate degree. Requirements may also differ based on the work setting such as a family child care home or a center-based environment. In California, for example, individuals qualify for teacher certification to work in a center based program with 24 units of specified coursework in early childhood or child development with 16 units of general education. Minimum requirements for a family child care teacher are that they are, at least, 18 years of age, pass a criminal background check, attend a 15 hour course on health and safety and pass a home visit by the State Department of Social Services.

Although the research on the relationship of a baccalaureate degree to improved educational quality is equivocal (Whitebook, et al., 2009a), recent research suggests that it may be particular teacher behaviors and practices and not educational degrees, per se, that predict desirable child outcomes (Rhodes, & Huston, 2012). Early childhood experts argue that the field needs to move beyond the debate regarding the value of a degree to more precisely delineating the nature of the education that prospective teachers receive in route to a degree (Burchinal, Hyson, & Zaslow, 2008). Early childhood teacher preparation programs in institutions of higher education have been criticized for relying on out-dated content and not providing adequate experiences working with children (Bruder, & Dunst, 2005). In their analysis of what constitutes critical components of pre-service education, Zaslow, Toute, Halle, and Starr (2011) point out that a reconceptualization of teacher preparation should take place that couples knowledge acquisition with a practice component. In fact, what these researchers perceive as the "active ingredient" of improved teacher pedagogy may likely stem from experiences where meaningful practice takes place with a supervisor or coach. Whitebook et al., (2009b) echo Zaslow and colleagues' conclusions regarding the importance of high quality practicums but points out that any teacher's ability to work effectively following degree completion rests heavily on their working conditions. They note,

> "Even with the best education and training, teachers may be stymied in applying what they have learned if workplace conditions do not support them. Teachers may be unable to apply the instructional approaches they have learned if their workplace uses different or conflicting methods." (p. 3)

In their analysis of 226 colleges and universities offering BA degrees in early childhood education (pre-K to 3rd grade), Ray, Bowman and Robbins (2006) found that, although programs indicate an interest in the needs of children of color and second

language learners, very few hours of coursework are offered (8.37 semester hours across the 11 diversity categories studied). These authors conclude that early childhood teacher preparation programs may say that they promote the importance of meeting the needs of children of color and second language learners but, in reality, they deliver little content or practical experiences to prospective teachers. Recommendations stemming from this study are that teacher preparation programs should require that all prospective teachers receive education and training in how bilingualism develops, provide fieldwork experiences with child populations that mirror more closely the population diversity in which teachers will likely work and develop metrics to assess how well teachers interact with children of color and second language learners.

In her review of how institutions of higher education can increase their capacity to educate teachers in working with dual language learners, Freedson (2010) notes the urgency to diversify the faculty. The National Prekindergarten Center's survey of early childhood teacher preparation in 2 and 4-year institutions of higher education, found that 8 of 10 faculty were White, non-Hispanic (Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006). One possible consequence of the lack of diversity in the higher education faculty is a failure to meet the needs of prospective or current teachers seeking degrees who themselves are members of ethnic and language minorities. It should be no surprise that a positive correlation has been found between the presence of diverse faculty in a teacher preparation program and coursework related to cultural or second language development (Lim, Maxwell, Able-Boone, & Zimmer, 2009).

Unlike the workforce focused on children age zero to five, teacher qualifications are relatively uniform within the Kindergarten to Grade 3 workforce sector. These teachers

are required to have a BA degree and hold a teaching certificate in the state in which they teach (Feistritzer, 2011). Most states require some form of field experience and supervised student teaching as a requirement of licensure. Some states have induction and mentoring requirements for beginning teachers that are regulated by designated state agencies. Although alternative routes to teaching have gained prominence (e.g., Teach for America), the majority of new teachers enter the profession through the traditional route of BA attainment in state supported colleges and universities (Loeb, Miller, & Strunk, 2009).

As the early childhood field moves towards the consolidation of the education and training of individuals serving birth to age eight[1], teacher preparation specifically for K through 3rd grade is being scrutinized. The New America Foundation reviewed teacher preparation policies in six states where publically supported preschool program are linked to the elementary school systems (Bornfreud, 2011). Their analysis found that pre-service licensure and hiring systems are not designed to ensure the optimal development of young children. They list a number of shortcomings including college course content with little focus on recent knowledge of developmental science, limited fieldwork in high quality environments and licensing and hiring practices that encourage prospective teachers to seek broad degrees and not specialized training. In California, where transitional kindergarten is gaining traction, a review of teacher preparation programs by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment found

[1] The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council's Committee on the Science of Children Birth to Age Eight is tasked with the preparation of a report on how the science of children's health, learning and development from birth through age 8 can be employed to inform how we prepare a workforce to seamlessly support children's health, development, learning, and school success from birth through age 8, including standards and expectations, instructional practices, preparation and professional development, and family engagement. across diverse contexts (e.g., rural/urban) and populations (e.g., special education, immigrant, dual language learners, sub-threshold children).

similar challenges including the need for teacher educators to understand pedagogical practice for DLLs (Austin, 2014).

Although challenges abound in both workforce sectors, the need for school districts to improve the achievement of students whose first language is not English has motivated institutions of higher education to respond by developing distinct coursework integrated into existing degree programs (e.g., Penn State; Washington State University) or certificates consisting of 4 to 6 courses that may or may not be credited to a particular degree program (e.g., University of Colorado, Denver; Colorado State University). The aforementioned programs do not single out the early childhood years in particular, however, there are growing number of undergraduate and graduate programs that do target the early years. One important example is occurring in Illinois, where the State Board of Education has mandated that preschools with DLLs be staffed with teachers who are certified in both Early Childhood education and an endorsement in English as a second language. As a result, colleges and universities such as the Erikson Institute, De Paul University and University of Illinois have established graduate and undergraduate programs to address this workforce need.[2] These developments are noteworthy in the face of the many "English only" state policies that have prompted the elimination of bilingual education which has negatively effected teacher preparation for DLLs.

Although it is a hopeful sign that teacher preparation programs targeting the needs of DLLs are occurring, it remains important that the quality of the content and the method of delivery are appropriate for the success of DLLs. Across both workforce sectors the literature (Freedson, 2010; Garcia, Arias, Harris Murri, & Serna, 2010)

[2] Other institutions are following suit including Bank Street College and the National Hispanic University that offer MA and BA degrees respectively with a focus on bilingual early childhood education.

suggests the following factors are important in the development of teacher preparation curriculum in institutions of higher education: (1) faculty professional development; (2) specialized coursework including practica focused on working with DLLs; (3) the infusion of content on cultural and linguistic diversity; and (4) support for prospective teachers who are already bilingual.

In-Service Preparation

In-service preparation refers to education and training that takes place while teachers are working with children. Given the varying course of preparation within the two workforce sectors, in-service activity can be viewed along differing continuums. For the K through 12 workforce, in-service takes place after licensure and teachers may be required to have a certain number of days per year with union contracts requiring a designated number of paid "professional development" days per year (Whitebook, et al., 2009a). In contrast, the zero to five workforce does not necessarily participate in pre-service and their education and training is often exclusively obtained through a variety of in-service of experiences such as workshops or short-term trainings.

As preschool teachers are being viewed as key in the improvement of child outcome, there is a concomitant focus on effective in-service experiences (Neuman, & Kamil, 2010). Zaslow and colleagues (Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker, et al., 2010) have identified four necessary activities that cut across both pre-service and in-service preparation. The first is strengthening early educators' human and social capital through increased educational attainment with attention to improved literacy capabilities and improvement of psychological well-being. Second, is strengthening approaches to the education of teachers in institutions of higher education and that of agencies delivering in-service education and training. Third, is the focus on teaching practice in relation to

specific content areas such as math and language and literacy. Fourth is improvement in overall classroom quality through the implementation of proven curriculum with on-site technical assistance or coaching.

Although all the areas mentioned by Zaslow and colleagues merit attention within pre-service and in-service, for teachers working with DLLs, there are additional considerations that need to be addressed. As mentioned earlier, the zero to five workforce is populated by a higher proportion of individuals of color. There has been some debate within the field that by raising educational requirements, the present diversity of the workforce would erode. However, there are examples of the success of so-called "nontraditional" students participating in specialized cohort programs with added guidance and support including assistance in languages other than English (see Whitebook, et al., 2011). The issue of who comprises the teacher educator workforce and how prepared they are to help students understand and address the pedagogical needs of DLLs is a long-standing concern of experts in the field (Freedson, 2010). As seasoned personnel age out, there is a pressing need to develop a cadre of teacher educators that have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to not only work effectively with 'non-traditional' adult learners but also have knowledge and experience with young DLLs. Teacher educators just like the teachers they prepare are themselves in need of in-service education and training (Whitebook, 2014). The last two areas mentioned by Zaslow and colleagues revolve around effective pedagogical practice and its relationship to children's learning. Although policymakers urge that pedagogical practice be "evidence based," this is made difficult by the limited empirical base for DLLs. Further complicating our understanding of curriculum and pedagogical practice is the perspective that "good

quality" is sufficient to improve DLLs' achievement (Peinser-Feinberg, et al., 2014). DLL experts argue that good quality is a necessary condition but not sufficient and special accommodations need to be made such as strategic use of the first language, explicit vocabulary instruction, small group and one-on-one instruction and ongoing and specialized assessment (Castro, Espinosa, & Paez, 2011).

Both workforce sectors utilize short-term trainings and workshops to assist teachers, however, these approaches by themselves have not been effective. In teacher preparation there is a renewed focus on mentoring and coaching as a method to individualize training within a supportive interpersonal relationship (Neuman, & Kamil, 2010). Although the terms mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably, mentors may have a more holistic focus on the teacher as an individual whereas coaches may have a fixed agenda of educational objectives (Whitebook, & Bellm, 2013). Research on the effects of coaching for preschool teachers suggests that where coaching occurs it may be its dosage and intensity that make a difference for improved practice (Neuman, & Kamil, 2010). An important innovation in coaching is MyTeachingPartner which focuses on improving teacher interactions through exposure to video examples of effective teacher interactions tied to the CLASS tool (an observation measure of teacher behavior) and face-to-face and online consultation. Research using MyTeachingPartner suggests that it improves teacher practice in classrooms where there are diverse children (Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008).

Although research on the effects of coaching in improving teacher practices holds promise, its use with teachers serving DLLs needs further study. Specifically, what are the qualifications of coaches who assist teachers in understanding DLLs? What types of

experiences do coaches have working in environments populated by DLLs? What are coaches' attitudes and beliefs regarding bilingualism and are those in sync with the teachers they assist? When coaching is done on-line, what do the coaches know about the neighborhoods in which teachers work? There are a myriad of questions that arise regarding the capacity of coaches and the medium through which coaching takes place.

In recognition of the need to understand pedagogical practices that enhance the school readiness of preschool DLL children, the National Institute of Child Health and Development supported three different curricular approaches for teachers working with Spanish speaking preschool children (e.g., Tools of the Mind, Literacy Express and the Nuestro Niños school readiness program). These approaches used varying methodologies such as short-term trainings, learning communities, mentoring and coaching to assist teachers in their implementation of either a specific curricular approach or enhancements to existing curricula. Currently, these projects are completing their analyzes and results hold promise for our understanding of the effectiveness of different in-service procedures and strategies for DLLs.

Conclusions

With the increasing number of DLLs in our nations schools, a more concerted effort must be made to strengthen the infrastructure that supports teacher preparation to work with linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Recognition of this need is reflected in the standards for teacher accreditation, the development of teacher competencies for DLLs and the development of undergraduate and graduate coursework in bilingual education. Emerging research and evaluation is pointing the way to methods that may be the most effective for in-

service and pre-service teacher preparation. However, one of our greatest challenges is the capacity of the infrastructure to support teacher preparation in general, let alone one that is relevant to linguistically distinct groups of children. This infrastructure includes institutions of higher education, federal and state agencies, school districts, and community agencies that are responsible for the development and support of the workforce. To what degree do individuals who have the understanding and skills to promote the development of DLLs populate our teacher preparation infrastructure? How do we strengthen the workforce pipeline that extends from the preschool classroom to the college and university classroom?

The marriage of the zero to five and K-3rd grade education worlds may eventually take place. The concern about this union should be about developmentally appropriate pedagogy AND linguistically and culturally appropriate practice. With increasing public awareness of the importance of the years prior to formal school entry and the primary grades for later school success, we are at a crossroads in education. Which road we take will have lifelong repercussions for many children.

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