eCOMMONS

Loyola University Chicago

Loyola eCommons

School of Education: Faculty Publications and Other Works

Faculty Publications

7-6-2018

Language Matters: Developing Educators' Expertise for English Learners in Linguistically Diverse Communities

Amy J. Heineke
Loyola University Chicago, aheineke@luc.edu

Aimee Papola-Ellis
Loyola University Chicago

Kristin J. Davin
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Sarah Cohen
Loyola University Chicago

Amanda Roudebush
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/education_facpubs

See next page for additional authors
Part of the Education Commons

Authors

Amy J. Heineke, Aimee Papola-Ellis, Kristin J. Davin, Sarah Cohen, Amanda Roudebush, Beth Wright-Costello, and Carol Fendt

Language Matters: Developing Educators' Expertise for English Learners in Linguistically

Diverse Communities

Amy J. Heineke, Ph.D. (corresponding author)
Associate Professor of Education
Loyola University Chicago
820 N. Michigan Avenue
Lewis Towers, 11th Floor
Chicago, IL 60611
P: (312) 915-7027
F: (312) 915-6660
aheineke@luc.edu

Aimee Papola-Ellis, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Kristin J. Davin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Sarah Cohen, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Amanda Roudebush, M.Ed.
Clinical Assistant Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Beth Wright-Costello, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor, Loyola University Chicago

Carol Fendt, Ph.D.
Research Specialist, University of Illinois-Chicago

Abstract

The population of English learners (ELs) continues to grow in schools across the United States and around the world. In this article, we share one urban university's collaborative approach to building educational capacity for cultural and linguistic diversity through professional development efforts that brought together stakeholders from classrooms, schools, communities, and districts. This grant-funded project aimed to build educator expertise to effectively support and positively influence students' language development and disciplinary learning. Grounded in sociocultural theory, we used an apprenticeship framework of teacher development, strategically planning and implementing collaborative capacity building efforts to foster learning across individual, interpersonal, and institutional planes. In this paper, we share the results of professional development efforts across three years of this project, drawing from observation, interview, and focus group data. Findings indicate that classroom-, school-, and district-level educators developed knowledge of discipline-specific language development, pedagogical skills for effective EL teaching and learning, and leadership abilities to positively shape institutional responses to their culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Implications focus on fostering teacher professionalism through bottom-up development of EL-specific expertise and expanded opportunities for leadership.

Keywords: teacher training, policy issues, teaching methods, multilingualism, professional development, school change

Language Matters: Developing Educators' Expertise for English Learners in Linguistically

Diverse Communities

As immigration and globalization prompt the population to grow more diverse,

nowhere is this reality more evident than in today's schools. In 2014 alone, the United States

experienced an 11% increase in foreign-born immigrants over 2013 (Zong & Batalova, 2016).

From New Mexico to New Hampshire, classrooms continue to diversify, with over 10 million

school age children speaking a language other than English at home (American Community

Survey, 2015). English learners (ELs) are a subgroup of this population, classified based on

English proficiency screening measures (Linquanti & Cook, 2013). Currently, ELs make up

approximately 10% of students in preschool-through-grade-12 (P-12) schools, having doubled

their number since the turn of the century (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES],

2015). In large urban areas such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Miami, and Houston,

percentages are even higher (Shin & Kominski, 2010). Despite this large and growing

population, the U.S. educational institution has largely failed to ensure their academic success,

as reflected in lower-than-average scores on standardized assessments and higher-than-

average dropout rates (NCES, 2015). Whereas multiple factors contribute to this *EL*

achievement gap (Fry, 2007), we look to the integral role of teachers, who are the number one

in-school factor influencing student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Recognizing the pertinent role of teachers in promoting EL student achievement,

scholars assert the need for educators to develop professional expertise for ELs, as students

within this sub-group have unique abilities and needs that vary from the larger English-

dominant population (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-

González, 2008; Nieto, Rivera, Quiñones, & Irizarry, 2013; Santos, Darling-Hammond, & Cheuk,

2012; Valdés, Bunch, Snow, & Lee, 2005). Lucas et al. (2008) and Valdés et al. (2005) contend

that teachers should understand the nuances of language and second language acquisition as a means to recognize ELs' diverse learning needs. Nieto et al. (2013) and Moll and González (1997) recognize the cultural diversity associated with the EL label and encourage educators to use knowledge of ELs' backgrounds as assets for learning. Insisting that ELs engage in rigorous learning alongside peers, Heritage et al. (2015) and Santos et al., (2012) put forth skills for teachers to support ELs' learning in disciplinary settings, such as analyzing language demands and scaffolding instruction. Merged together, these facets comprise what Lucas et al. (2008) refer to as *linguistically responsive practice*, where teachers use their multi-faceted expertise to mediate teaching, learning, and decision-making in diverse and complex classrooms.

In addition to defining facets of teacher expertise for ELs, scholars have considered how to foster teachers' learning and professional development (PD). Most research has focused on pre-service preparation, looking at program and course innovations to support candidates' future teaching (e.g., de Oliveria & Athanases, 2007; Nieto et al., 2013). However, with large numbers of practicing teachers without this background, scholars emphasize the need to address in-service teachers' abilities (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006). Various approaches have been researched, including book clubs (e.g., Rodgers & Mosely, 2008), literature circles (e.g., Heineke, 2014), and study groups (e.g., Musanti & Pence, 2010). In the aforementioned studies, researchers focused on small samples of teachers in singular settings to demonstrate the efficacy of one collaborative approach. This paper adds to the extant literature on in-service teacher learning for ELs by reporting on a large-scale study. We share findings from a multi-year project that encompassed multi-faceted collaborative PD. This included ongoing workshops, professional learning communities (PLCs), bi-annual conferences, and university coursework with the goal to develop linguistically responsive practice (see Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1 around here.]

In this article, we report on one university's efforts to build the expertise of P-12 educators to support students' learning and language development through the provision of high-quality, linguistically responsive practice (Lucas et al., 2008). We share empirical findings from a three-year project entitled *Language Matters* (LM), where university faculty partnered with educators at P-12 schools in linguistically diverse communities to improve practice for ELs. We begin by situating our study within the framework of sociocultural theory using the apprenticeship model as a lens for the development of expertise (Rogoff, 1995; Walqui, 2010). Next, we describe the qualitative methods used to collect data from multiple stakeholders, including teachers, leaders, and administrators. We then share findings on the development of educators' expertise to support their students' learning. We close with discussion on building professionalism in schools and implications for teachers of ELs.

Sociocultural Theory in Practice: An Apprenticeship Model to Teacher Development

Sociocultural theory recognizes that development occurs as a result of social interaction and is shaped by a variety of contextual factors (Vygotsky, 1978). For educators, development occurs through active collaboration situated in diverse and complex classrooms, schools, and communities (Heineke, Papola-Ellis, Cohen, & Davin, 2018; Rogoff, 1995). Drawing from Rogoff's apprenticeship framework (1995), we conceptualize teacher expertise as developing across multiple planes of practice: (a) *individual*, teachers' principled appropriation into classroom practice with students, (b) *interpersonal*, teachers' guided participation in shared practices, and (c) *institutional*, teachers' apprenticeship into the particular educational context.

Teachers are at the center of EL education by virtue of their direct and daily contact with students. Within the apprenticeship model, we contend that teachers develop on the *individual plane* as they grapple with big ideas related to ELs and language, develop understandings of linguistically responsive practices, and implement these practices in

responsive ways in their classrooms (Lucas et al., 2008; Rogoff, 1995). Drawing from Rogoff

(1995) and Levinson and Sutton (2001), we use the term *appropriation* to refer to teachers'

active and principled decision-making, including pedagogical choices like setting up learning

environments, using assessment data, and designing instruction. In other words, teachers use

their understandings of ELs and language to guide their daily work in disciplinary classrooms

(Heritage et al., 2015). As intellectuals and policy makers, they take the larger principles of

linguistically responsive practice and make them their own to support the learning and

language development of unique and diverse ELs (Lucas et al., 2008; Moll & González, 1997).

      Teachers individually enact principles in practice, but they develop those

understandings by learning from interactive experiences with colleagues, leaders, parents, and

students (Rogoff, 1995). Further, educators' individual decisions and actions are influenced by

shared school practices (Levinson & Sutton, 2001; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). On the

interpersonal plane, teachers learn as a part of participation in unique activities at their

particular school sites and engagement in collaborative work with peers and experts (Rogoff,

1995). In this way, to support professional learning in our approach to linguistically responsive

practice, we encourage school foundations and structures that prioritize language and foster

shared commitment to language learning and ELs. When collaborative structures are in place

that support ongoing professional learning with such a focus, teachers explore effective ways to

incorporate language across the curriculum (Heineke, Coleman, Ferrell, & Kersemeier, 2012).

      The larger educational institution also influences the development of educator

expertise. The *institutional plane* intersects with individual and interpersonal experiences and

encompasses teachers' apprenticeship into the holistic educational context (Rogoff, 1995).

When considering EL teaching and learning, macro-level policies and infrastructures influence

teachers' work to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction for ELs. With this in mind,

we recognize the need to consider larger educational initiatives and macro-level stakeholders as a means to sustain linguistically responsive practice in the aforementioned layers of sociocultural activity (Levinson & Sutton, 2001; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). In an effort to strengthen systemic structures, we engage district leaders in developing understandings of language development to prioritize language within initiatives and create policies that positively impact ELs. By virtue of ongoing and multi-layered dialog, linguistically responsive practice deepens within the broader system. Within this framework, we investigated the following research question: *How do educators in classrooms, schools, and districts develop expertise for teaching ELs?*

Methods

The LM project[1] ran from July 2013 to July 2016 and operated through mutually beneficial university-school partnerships to build capacity for ELs (Kruger, Davies, Eckersley, Newell, & Cherednichenko, 2009). As the third largest school district in the nation, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) welcomed students from an array of cultural backgrounds speaking over 150 languages (NCES, 2015). The grant team created PD opportunities for CPS educators focused on language development and instructional planning for ELs in response to the increased focus on disciplinary language found in the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards (Heritage et al., 2015). Situated in three regional networks of P-12 schools that operate within the larger institution of CPS, LM targeted schools in linguistically diverse communities and purposively included elementary, middle, and high schools serving the same students. Starting with six schools in 2013-2014, the grant expanded to 15 schools in 2014-2015 and 32 schools in 2015-2016. Partner schools served over 25,000 ELs from over 110

---

[1] For more information on the LM project, please visit https://www.luc.edu/education/languagematters.

different language backgrounds. While the percentage of all CPS students classified as ELs was 16.7%, the percentage of ELs at LM schools was nearly twice that proportion at 31.5%.

Grounded in the apprenticeship model (Rogoff, 1995), we strategically designed PD opportunities to cultivate expertise and commitment to ELs. See Table 1 for details on the multiple facets of PD. Drawing from research on practitioner expertise for ELs, we crafted a sequence of learning centered on recognizing the cultural and linguistic backgrounds, strengths, and needs of students, followed by designing rigorous and responsive environments, assessment, and instruction (Heritage et al., 2015; Lucas et al., 2008; Moll & González, 1997; Nieto et al., 2013; Santos et al., 2012; Valdés et al., 2005). We also tapped into research on effective PD, including the need for sustained, coherent, and challenging content that is reasonable in scope and aligned to practice, as well as time to collaborative, practice, apply, reflect, and receive feedback (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Guskey, 1995; Marshall & Smart, 2013; Smylie, Allensworth, Greenberg, Harris, & Luppescu, 2001). For in-depth exploration of the LM model, including PD content and design, see Heineke et al., 2018.

[Insert Table 1 around here.]

In this study, we draw from program evaluation data, including on-site observations, individual interviews, and focus groups (see Table 2). *Observations* were conducted of the various facets of PD, including cross-project institute sessions with educators across partner schools and networks, as well as school-specific PD and PLCs as educators engaged in site-specific work. During these observations, evaluators took detailed field notes and compiled artifact data to document the PD institutes and on-site partner supports. *Interviews* and *focus groups* were conducted at the close of each school year. In these settings, researchers aimed to capture insights and experiences of teachers, school leaders, and network leaders, who were

purposively selected to represent participants across contexts (i.e., networks, schools) and

project facets (e.g., PD institutes, graduate cohorts; Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011).

[Insert Table 2 around here.]

The research team thematically analyzed data (Erickson, 1986), using a coding scheme

based on (a) extant literature on features of effective PD (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 1995;

Marshall & Smart, 2013; Smylie et al., 2001) and (b) articulated goals of the LM project,

centered around the multi-layered capacity building approach (Heineke et al., 2018). Based on

emergent themes, researchers drafted assertions and triangulated findings across multiple

data sources, as well as member checked findings with LM faculty and partners. In this paper,

we focused on findings within four themes: (a) what participants learned (i.e., individual

plane), (b) collaborative learning with others (i.e., interpersonal plane), (c) supports and

constraints to teacher implementation (i.e., institutional plane), and (d) the match between PD

and teacher, school, and network goals (i.e., cross plane; Rogoff, 1995). We explore the

development of expertise of classroom teachers, school leaders, and district leaders in the

three sub-sections of findings below.

Findings

Developing Teachers' Expertise for English Learners

We conceptualize classroom teachers as the central component to school change for

ELs. The LM project prioritized the development of teacher leaders' expertise through two

structures: Teacher Leader Institutes and the English Language Teaching and Learning (ELTL)

graduate cohort. Attendees of the iterative leadership institutes, as well as teachers in the three

ELTL cohorts, were designated as teacher leaders at schools and looked upon as EL experts by

colleagues and administrators. As described in Table 1, Teacher Leader Institutes brought

teachers together for four full-day PD sessions focused on linguistically responsive practice in

diverse schools (Lucas et al., 2008). The ELTL cohort members engaged in bi-weekly, in-depth, learning in university coursework. Findings suggested that participating teachers developed expertise in many areas, but most significantly pertaining to: (a) the link between language and culture, (b) the consideration of language across disciplines, (c) shifts in pedagogical decision making, and (d) EL-focused leadership skills.

A foundational facet of linguistically responsive practice is recognizing and integrating students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in curricula and instruction (Lucas et al., 2008). As a result of PD that started with ELs at the center of all school-based work, teachers developed understandings about the link between language and culture, which they described as transformative to their work with students and families. Teachers specifically described "cultural and linguistic lenses" applied to their daily practice, as they made decisions based on students' diverse assets and abilities. For example, teachers became aware of cultural and linguistic biases in mainstream curricula, as well as culturally relevant and bilingual texts that better mediated ELs' learning. A full semester-long course on culturally relevant literature prompted ELTL cohort members to more deeply explore this facet of practice, detailing the need to reevaluate classroom libraries to reflect students' unique and diverse backgrounds, as well as include "more bilingual books and books in other languages." They developed knowledge about benefits of using texts that authentically reflect students' varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and set goals to help students become biliterate through the use of strategically selected culturally relevant and bilingual texts in multiple languages.

In addition to the selection of classroom materials, teachers developed understandings, knowledge, and skills about culture and language in relation to collaborating with students and families. For example, one ELTL cohort member described having used an interpreter to do a *funds of knowledge* interview with a Spanish-speaking parent to identify resources for learning

from home, family, and community (Moll & González, 1997). By virtue of this interview, the teacher learned that the parent had been anxious about coming to school, not envisioning herself as a contributor to school-based practice, imagining instead that her child was in trouble. This was an "eye opener" to the teacher who realized she needed to be more culturally cognizant, explicitly invite family engagement, and recognize students in positive ways throughout the year. She used this realization to develop a stronger connection with this parent, as well as improve communication with all families.

Another integral facet of linguistically responsive practice is attending to academic language in classroom instruction (Lucas et al., 2008). PD efforts prompted teachers from across grades and disciplines to espouse and maintain a language lens when planning for student learning, specifically through language objectives and related scaffolds. Findings indicated that teachers deepened understandings of academic language, specifically connecting to language domains (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing). One ELTL cohort teacher stated that by assessing students in all four domains across a range of disciplines, she gained a nuanced perspective of students' holistic abilities, strengths, and needs. Other teachers talked about their new understandings in this area:

Teacher A: Before the [LM] program, I didn't even distinguish between content and language assessments, to be honest. I just assumed they were one and the same.

Teacher B: This whole thing has led us to be more self-aware, self-critical. What am I doing that supports them [ELs], and what I'm not doing? Where is language hidden? How do I build a classroom with language and cultural support?

These new understandings about the pertinent role of language in all aspects of instruction, across linguistic domains and academic disciplines, signified important learning with potential to positively influence ELs' learning and language development.

Enacting the aforementioned expertise in classrooms, teachers described integral shifts in pedagogical decision-making for ELs in response to learning about facets of linguistically responsive instruction, such as effective assessment and instructional planning (Lucas et al., 2008). During an assessment course, teachers analyzed ELs' language proficiency to create performance assessments to monitor language development. Assignments such as this one required teachers to implement principles and practices learned through coursework. This application promoted teachers' evolving expertise, not only because of the immediate implementation but also from bringing classroom artifacts back to collaboratively discuss results. In this way, classroom practice and university coursework became interconnected and mutually beneficial. In addition to assessment, teachers expressed increased skill in drafting and using language objectives to plan differentiated instruction for students. PD and cohort participants listed an array of instructional strategies that they described as "opening doors for ELs," such as turn-and-talk, sentence stems, and word banks. Learning about these practices, including the theory and research behind them, benefited teachers and their students.

Beyond teachers' evolving expertise in linguistically responsive practice, they also developed leadership skills, as PD strategically integrated opportunities to plan and implement capacity building efforts at their school sites. Teachers participating in PD reported increased confidence in sharing their EL-focused learning with colleagues, and all ELTL cohort members described themselves as effective leaders and advocates for ELs within schools. Teachers attributed their self-efficacy to stronger understandings of (a) linguistic and educational research, (b) the connection between policy, practice, and research on ELs, and (c) how to use this knowledge to advocate for students. One teacher spoke about this impact on her teaching, saying, "That research background [means] not just doing things because it feels right, but because it's research-based. We know how to teach ELs, but that there's a [research] backing to

it. There are legitimate reasons." In other words, by extending their understanding and knowledge of EL-focused research, teachers strengthened their leadership identities.

Teachers also developed as leaders through hands-on opportunities at schools. Following PD sessions, they helped colleagues understand and apply linguistically responsive practice in classrooms, such as building on students' home languages and trying new strategies. Participants shared how they applied their learning within leadership structures at schools with a specific lens on advocacy for ELs. Many spoke of principals looking to them for leadership to push forward EL efforts at schools. One ELTL cohort member shared:

> At our school, we were given the opportunity to present on one of the last days [of school-wide PD] and to collaborate with bilingual teachers in our school who are not part of our cohort. Our bilingual coordinator and principal and assistant principal wanted us to relay all these great things we've learned over this past year to the rest of the faculty, to try to get them to see the shift that we want to make to language and content infused lesson planning.

By virtue of being given the space to share their expanding understandings of linguistically responsive practice, teachers developed as experts and leaders.

Building Leaders' Language-focused Expertise

In addition to developing teachers' expertise, PD efforts mediated the learning of school leaders with regard to linguistically responsive practice. Recognizing the need for school-level support, the PD scope and sequence began each year with School Leader Institutes, providing leadership teams with overarching understandings of the LM project goals and facets. Findings indicated that these sessions served to (a) ensure understanding and buy-in to the goal of improving instruction for all students by infusing language into instructional planning, and (b)

guide first steps for participation, such as building needed school foundations and selecting the "right" team of teachers to the subsequent sessions.

Principals who consistently attended these sessions deepened understandings of the role of language development in instruction, in addition to the purpose and structure of the grant work. This enabled them to connect their evolving expertise regarding ELs and language development to school-wide structures and support teachers' implementation of pedagogy that reflected new learning. One principal reported:

> We have a high EL population here. We wanted to be sure that we were meeting their needs. So with Language Matters, they [university faculty] did PD for us at the beginning of the school year and it really began with school-wide initiatives. What are we doing as a school in general to make sure that we are valuing language and supporting the different cultures here and that we are a welcoming school?

This principal's understanding and commitment to this work resulted in his effective support of teacher development. Another principal underscored her understanding of the need to attend to and support language demands across disciplines:

> It [classroom practice] isn't a reading written-text literacy but is also a listening literacy, a speaking literacy, a writing literacy, and how these language standards, WIDA and others, address those. I'm beginning to understand things like how every content lesson – chemistry, ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps], PE [physical education] – they all have academic language in every lesson like that, and we rarely plan it intentionally in any class, except in a language class where you are thinking of vocabulary. Every lesson should have language goals. Every lesson should identify key academic language.

This principal took this new expertise regarding disciplinary language demands to support all teachers' linguistically responsive practice.

At the School Leader Institutes, principals received explicit guidance in selecting EL teacher leader teams to participate in the above-described PD and subsequently build capacity at schools. For principals who did not attend or sent a proxy (e.g., bilingual lead teacher, assistant principal), challenges mounted due to misunderstandings around purpose, structures, and roles for capacity building efforts. Leaders who consistently attended recognized the whole-school approach to linguistically responsive practice. One principal reflected:

> We made a really big commitment to send 16 teachers for the 4 [teacher leader] sessions – a big commitment on our part to create the foundation for what we are trying to accomplish here, and to make sure that language issues are addressed very deliberately with the UbD [Understanding by Design] template and the units of study we are recommending. I think my teachers are doing a lot of these things, but it is the deliberate intentional planning that is going to make a difference. I am very grateful for Language Matters because it seems to mesh exactly with what we are trying to do here to make sure language was a part of all our units of study.

Data from on-site visits indicated that this particular school holistically implemented linguistically responsive practice across the school. Overall, findings confirmed that supportive and engaged principals resulted in schools that more fully appropriated linguistically responsive practice, demonstrating the pertinence of leadership buy-in.

Constructing Supports across Schools and Networks

In addition to teachers and school leaders, the focus on linguistically responsive practice called attention to the integral nature of network partnerships, with findings demonstrating the network as the connecting layer between partner schools and the larger entities of the university and CPS. As described above, CPS is organized into regional networks of P-12 schools. These networks both enforce top-down mandates from the district and

provide differentiated, bottom-up supports in local contexts. In the LM project, networks embraced the university's approach to bottom-up support with the prioritized group of ELs. We worked regularly with network leaders who in turn coached principals and teachers at schools. Network leaders provided targeted supports using institutional resources to contribute to LM work and build linguistically responsive schools.

With the multi-layered approach to capacity building, alignment across CPS as an institution emerged as integral to LM work. Participants across layers cited shared network and university goals as foundational to facilitate deeper implementation. This tied directly to the project's prioritization of responsiveness to partners' programs, initiatives, and needs. The linguistically responsive practice framework allowed flexibility to local settings and developed stakeholders' understandings of language development and meaningful instruction for ELs as aligned to current practices, such as the use of UbD to plan classroom instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). One principal spoke about the importance of aligned goals:

> We've been working very closely with the network on our units of study with backward design. There was a connection with our network and the university to make sure that we are using language objectives while we are creating our UbD. This has been… where Language Matters has been instrumental.

A network administrator described the purposive alignment between LM and network initiatives: "This year's PD focus on building culturally responsive classrooms by infusing WIDA standards and language objectives into teachers' planning [was] a perfect match [with the network focus on UbD]." Shared commitment across network, school, and university layers, including aligned messaging about importance and implementation, was seen as helpful in supporting the development of educator expertise for ELs.

In addition to our work at the network-level, institutional alignment and collaboration with the larger district supported capacity building efforts. School and network leaders noted that the work of LM maintained consistency with district priorities and initiatives via the Office of Language and Cultural Education (OLCE), which ensures compliance with state policies and outlines district-wide programming for ELs. Leaders shared that partnering with LM created conditions for improved compliance with district-level mandates from OLCE, but with a sustained emphasis on "the meaningful over the mandated." These included schools' adherence to guidelines regarding implementation of EL/bilingual programs, and an increase in teachers: (a) obtaining their ESL endorsements, (b) using WIDA standards and language objectives in instructional planning, and (c) incorporating culturally relevant texts and materials.

Another effect of the alignment of priorities and efforts was found in better-than-average buy-in for enacting shifts in practice in networks and schools, specifically due to the responsive and flexible nature of capacity building efforts based on the individual needs of schools. School leaders described feeling more engaged and less overwhelmed with the work, particularly due to the differentiation across schools. One principal, aiming to build capacity in his school through UbD, noted the intentional planning at the school-level to create units "infused with language at every stage." Other principals set goals to have all teachers use language objectives or WIDA resources in planning. This flexibility of implementation allowed schools to utilize pre-existing structures, such as instructional leadership teams and classroom coaches, to monitor and support teachers' learning. The leader of one network spoke about the value of the differentiated approach to linguistically responsive practice across schools.

What I learned when I became a chief is you have to know where your schools are and their needs. If you are going to deliver PD like every school is the same, without due respect to where their staff is and what they need, you start building walls. I get creative

as a chief. I have to understand how to differentiate. Some schools are ready, others [are] not. To me education has a lot more to do when you understand and respond to needs, where people set intentional SMART [specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely] goals.

Network leaders recognized the additional time commitment that came with allowing schools to chart their own path to linguistically responsive practice; however, they recognized and described the value of the LM apprenticeship model that prioritized the development of on-site teacher leadership as a means to build capacity. Based on these sentiments, both network and school leaders encouraged teacher leaders to utilize expertise from PD sessions to lead efforts to build linguistically responsive schools. Spanning classroom teachers, school leaders, and network leaders, PD efforts successfully built understandings, expertise, and capacity.

Discussion

As schools become more linguistically diverse, stakeholders increasingly recognize the value of educators' expertise for ELs (Heritage et al., 2015; Santos et al., 2012). We know that teachers are fundamental to improving student achievement, with the classroom teacher as the primary in-school factor influencing student achievement, particularly with the consistently marginalized sub-group of ELs (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). And yet, because teaching does not happen in a vacuum, involving administrators in schools and districts is equally fundamental to the success of this work (Levinson & Sutton, 2001; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Rogoff, 1995). Teachers – and other educators who support their daily work – require specific sets of expertise to effectively serve and support the increasingly diverse student body in schools, referred to in this paper as linguistically responsive practice (Heineke et al., 2012; Lucas et al., 2008).

Through strategically designed PD opportunities targeting curricular foci and collaborative facets of linguistically responsive practice, we aimed to develop educators' understandings, knowledge, and skills with an integrated theory of EL teaching and learning (Heineke et al., 2018; Lucas et al., 2008). Findings indicated that educators across classrooms, schools, and networks developed understandings and expertise to subsequently support the disciplinary learning and language development of ELs. The apprenticeship model built capacity through collaborative PD and institutional structures at the school- and network-level to purposively develop teacher leadership and expertise for ELs (Rogoff, 1995; Walqui, 2010). Furthermore, because of the apprenticeship model used, capacity-building and distributed leadership served to extend stakeholders' efforts moving forward.

Through participation in LM, classroom, school, and district educators developed expertise and practice. This expertise focused on (a) recognizing ELs' backgrounds, abilities, and needs, (b) analyzing the language demands inherent in disciplinary tasks, (c) scaffolding instruction to provide ELs access to learning, and (e) supporting students through effective curricula and programs (Lucas et al., 2008; Moll & González, 1997). Findings indicated the importance of strategic capacity building within unique and complex sociocultural contexts, including consideration of how to implement PD across multiple schools and communities (Walqui, 2010). Significant findings included the pertinence of PD and collaboration across multiple layers of stakeholders, including classroom teachers, school leaders, and district administrators. Grounded in the sociocultural paradigm and drawing from the apprenticeship model, we assert that efforts to improve EL teaching and learning must begin with those directly connected to students –teachers – but must also extend to intermediary actors who directly and indirectly influence classroom work (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Walqui, 2010). The multi-layered PD efforts in this study fostered alignment and collaboration across

stakeholders by responding to specific strengths and needs of schools and surrounding communities (Lucas et al., 2008; Santos et al., 2010; Valdés et al., 2005; Walqui et al., 2010).

Drawing from our findings, we argue for a *bottom-up approach* to bolster educators as experts, specifically when considering the marginalized sub-group of ELs (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Mehta, 2013). Educational reform should not be dictated from the top-down, with states or districts giving unilateral mandates to local educators; instead, stakeholders must collaborate with one another, embracing the strengths of local contexts and building upon the capacity and leadership that exists within schools (Mehta, 2013). Nevertheless, this runs contrary to the status quo in education, which consistently showcases reform efforts designed and implemented from the top down, with teachers conceptualized as "less than capable actors on the bottom of the policy chain" (Mehta, 2013, p. 6). Treating teaching like factory work, reformers seek to create system uniformity by dictating prescriptions and procedures failing to take into account teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and discretion (Mehta, 2013; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). To strengthen the profession of teaching and reverse the top-down nature of the educational institution, we must define "a well-developed knowledge base the practitioners are required to possess" (Mehta, 2013, p. 24).

Based on our work, we extend Mehta's assertion to EL teaching and learning. Currently, there is no consistent and well-developed base as to what practitioners need to understand, know, and do to support ELs' learning. As described here, we worked from the framework of linguistically responsive practice to develop what we perceived as the needed understandings, knowledge, skills, and mindsets (Lucas et al., 2008; Santos et al., 2005; Valdés et al, 2005). But with our work extending to only 32 schools in one region of Chicago, we must consider: What is perceived as teacher expertise for ELs on the south side, in the suburbs, downstate, or across the country? The call for a defined and shared knowledge base is important as we seek to

professionalize teaching and improve education for all students (Mehta, 2013). We contend that this call is particularly important in EL education, a field that has long been discounted as "just good teaching" (deJong & Harper, 2008, p. 1). Teaching ELs is in fact, much more than good teaching, just as it is more than a simple list of strategies or vocabulary terms. To shift educators' mindsets about the complexity of EL teaching and leading, we must start by defining the specific knowledge, skills, and mindsets that research has demonstrated as effective to support students' language development and disciplinary learning (Heritage et al., 2015).

In this project, we used a multi-layered apprenticeship approach to capacity building (Rogoff, 1995). Findings indicate our efforts supported teachers' and leaders' awareness and understandings of ELs and language. Recommendations focus on the need for multi-layered and multi-faceted partnerships using a framework that ties together this complex work. Mutually beneficial partnerships are integral, where all partners work toward goals for student learning through collaborative participation in PD work (Kruger et al., 2009). Partnerships must span institutional layers to involve multiple stakeholders to provide aligned messaging and consistent supports, particularly in the era of accountability where educators feel squeezed and under the microscope (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). PD must be flexible and multi-faceted to meet the needs of all partners and stakeholders, ranging from one-time workshops available to all teachers, to long-term spiraled content across years for teachers and leaders, to in-depth learning via university programming. Amidst the complexity of multiple partners, stakeholders, and facets of engagement, clearly and strategically defined frameworks align efforts to build teacher expertise (i.e., linguistically responsive practice; Lucas et al., 2008) and capacity (i.e., apprenticeship model of teacher learning; Walqui, 2010).

Beyond recommendations for practice, we assert the need for additional research. This study investigated the efficacy of PD on the north side of Chicago. While these findings cannot

provide a blueprint for other institutions, generalizations can *ring true* in other settings

(Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). To provide generalizable findings across contexts, future

research might involve multiple universities triangulating what works to develop teacher

expertise for ELs. Whether within or across institutions, future research must connect to EL

student learning to ensure the efficacy of these bottom-up efforts. While our findings indicated

that practitioners learned and developed professionally, we did not directly tie our efforts to

student achievement. This type of connection would be advantageous to strengthen claims that

purposeful and collaborative PD is indeed effective in fostering improved academic outcomes

for ELs. Working together, we can chart the knowledge base needed for teaching ELs, provide

high-quality PD for practitioners, and build linguistically responsive schools.

<div align="center">References</div>

American Community Survey. (2015). *Detailed languages spoken at home and ability to speak English for the population 5 years and over for United States: 2009 to 2013*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

deJong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly, 32*, 101-124.

de Oliveira, L. C., & Athanases, S. Z. (2007). Graduates' reports of advocating for English language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*, 202–215.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd edition, pp. 119-161). New York: MacMillan.

Fry, R. (2007). *How far behind in math and reading are English language learners?* Washington DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

Gándara, P., & Maxwell-Jolly, J. (2006). Critical issues in developing the teacher corps for English learners. In K. Téllez & H. C. Waxman (Eds.), *Preparing quality educators for English language learners: Research, policies, and practices* (pp. 99-120). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L. Birman, B., & Yoon, K. (2001). What makes PD effective? Analysis of a national sample of teachers. American Education Research Journal, 38, 915-945.

Guskey, T. R. (1995). PD in education: In search of the optimal mix. In T. Guskey and M. Huberman (Eds.), *PD in education: New paradigms and practices* (pp. 114-131). New York: Teachers College Press

Heineke, A. J. (2014). Dialoging about English learners: Preparing teachers through culturally relevant literature circles. *Action in Teacher Education, 36* (2), 117-140.

Heineke, A. J., Coleman, E., Ferrell, E., & Kersemeier, C. (2012). Opening doors for bilingual students: Recommendations for building linguistically responsive schools. *Improving Schools, 15,* 130-147.

Heineke, A. J., Papola-Ellis, A., Cohen, S., & Davin, K. (2018). Linguistically responsive professional development: An apprenticeship model. *Improving Schools, 21,* 32-47.

Heritage, M., Walqui, A., & Linquanti, R. (2015). *English language learners and the new standards: Developing language, content knowledge, and analytical practices in the classroom.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Hodkinson, P.,. & H. Hodkinson (2001, December). *The strengths and limitations of case study research.* Paper presented at the Learning and Skills Development Agency Conference, Making an impact on policy and practice, Cambridge, UK.

Kruger, T., Davies, A., Eckersley, B., Newell, F., & Cherednichenko, B. (2009). *Effective and sustainable university-school partnerships: Beyond determined efforts by inspired individuals.* Canberra, Australia: Teaching Australia – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited.

Levinson, B. A. U., & Sutton, M. (2001). *Policy as practice: Toward a comparative sociocultural analysis of educational policy.* Westport, CT: Ablex Press.

Linquanti, R., & Cook, H. G. (2013). *Toward a common definition of English learner: A brief defining policy and technical issues and opportunities for state assessment consortia.* Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M., & Freedson-González, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive teacher education: Preparing classroom teachers to teach English language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*, 361-373.

Marshall, J. C. & Smart, J. (2013). Teachers' transformation to inquiry-based instructional practice. *Creative Education, 4*, 132-142.

Mehta, J. (2013). *The allure of order: High hopes, dashed expectations, and the troubled quest to remake American schooling.* New York: Oxford.

Moll, L. C., & González, N. (1997). Teachers as social scientists: Learning about culture from household research. In P. Hall (Ed.), *Race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism* (vol. 1, pp. 89–114). New York: Garland.

Musanti, S.I. & Pence, L. (2010). Collaboration and teacher development: Unpacking resistance, constructing knowledge, and navigating identities. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *37*, 73-89.

National Center for Education Statistics (2015). *2015 mathematics & reading assessments: National results overview*. Retrieved January 7, 2016, from http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#reading

Nieto, S., Rivera, M., Quiñones, S., & Irizarry, J. (2013). Conclusion and recommendations. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 6(3).

Ricento, T. K., & Hornberger, N. H. (1996). Unpeeling the onion: Language planning and policy and the ELT professional. *TESOL Quarterly*, *30*, 401-427.

Rogers, R. & Mosely, M. (2008). A critical discourse analysis of racial literacy in teacher education. *Linguistics and Education, 19*, 107-131.

Rogoff, B. (1995). Observing sociocultural activity on three planes: Participatory appropriation, guided participation, and apprenticeship. In P. M. J. Goodnow & F. Kessel (Eds.), *Sociocultural studies of mind* (pp.139-164). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center.

Santos, M., Darling-Hammond, L., & Cheuk, T. (2012). *Teacher Development to Support English Language Learners in the Context of Common Core State Standards.* Stanford University Understanding Language. Available at http://ell.stanford.edu/papers.

Shin, H. B., & Kominski, R. A. (2010). *Language use in the United States: 2007*, American Community Survey Reports, ACS-12. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

Smylie, M. A., Allensworth, E., Greenberg, R. C., Harris, R., & Luppescu, S. (2001). *Teacher PD in Chicago: Supporting effective practice.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Valdés, G., Bunch, G., Snow, C., & Lee, C. (2005) Enhancing the Development of students' language. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do.* (pp. 126-168). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walqui, A. (2010). The growth of teacher expertise for teaching English language learners: A socioculturally based PD model. In T. Lucas (Ed.), *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms: A resource for teacher educators.* London: Taylor & Francis.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd edition). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Yonezawa, S., Jones, M., & Robb-Singer, N. (2011). Teacher resilience in urban schools: The importance of technical knowledge, professional community, and leadership opportunities. *Urban Education, 46*, 9-13.

Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2016). Asian immigrants in the United States. *Migration Policy Institute.*