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Developing Responsive Teachers: A Challenge for a Demographic Reality

Eugene García[1], M. Beatriz Arias[1], Nancy J. Harris Murri[2],
and Carolina Serna[3]

Abstract

In this article, the authors reflect on the preparation of teachers for English learners (ELs) and articulate the importance of enhancing teacher knowledge through contact and collaboration with diverse ethnolinguistic communities. The authors build on recent research on the preparation of teachers for cultural responsiveness and linguistic diversity and recommend a situated preparation within EL communities that fosters the development of teacher knowledge of the dynamics of language in children's lives and communities. The authors begin their review by summarizing recent demographic developments for ELs. This section is followed by a brief review of the context of education for ELs. The authors summarize the most recent research on culturally and linguistically responsive teacher preparation and focus on a framework that includes developing teacher knowledge through contact, collaboration, and community.

The education of English learners (ELs) has attracted national attention recently with the Supreme Court ruling in *Horne v. Flores* (2009). This case, the first funding case on behalf of ELs to reach the Supreme Court, challenged Arizona's formula for adequately funding programs for ELs. Adequate resources have been identified as key for effective program implementation (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Reeves, 2004; *Williams v. State of California*, 2005), and many would argue that the focal resource is the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Faltis & Coulter, 2007). Research indicates that there is a critical shortage of teachers prepared to respond to the needs of ELs (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). In this article, we reflect on the preparation of teachers for ELs and articulate the importance of enhancing teacher knowledge through contact and collaboration with diverse ethnolinguistic communities. We build on recent research on the preparation of teachers for cultural responsiveness and linguistic diversity and recommend a situated preparation within EL communities that fosters the development of teacher knowledge of the dynamics of language in children's lives and communities. We begin our review by summarizing recent demographic developments for ELs. This section is followed by a brief review of the context of education for ELs. We summarize the most recent research on culturally and linguistically responsive teacher preparation and focus on a framework that includes developing teacher knowledge through contact, collaboration, and community.

How we define ELs and the labels we ascribe to their diversity can be confusing. Who teaches these students can be just as confusing and diverse. And there are often inconsistencies across schools, districts, and states. Therefore, a brief clarification of terms is in order before proceeding. Several terms are used in the literature to describe U.S. schoolchildren whose native language is other than English. A common term is *language minority*, which is used to describe children whose native language is other than English, the mainstream societal language in the United States. This term is applied to nonnative English speakers regardless of their current level of English proficiency. Other common terms are *English language learner* (ELL) (or, shorter, *English learner* [EL]) and *limited English proficient* (LEP). These two terms are used interchangeably to refer to students whose native language is other than English and whose English proficiency is not yet developed to a point where they can profit fully from English instruction or communication. They have not developed academic English

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proficiency. In this introduction, the term *English learner* and its respective abbreviation is used rather than *limited English proficient* as a way of emphasizing students' learning and progress, rather than what they lack—their limitations.

Teachers who are assigned as instructors of these students can have no formal preparation, minimal formal preparation related to workshop training, or substantial coursework and experience that can produce a state-issued credential. They may be labeled *English-as-a-second-language teacher* (*ESL*), *bilingual teacher* (*BLE*), *English language development teacher* (*ELD*), *or sheltered English immersion teacher* (*SEI*). These are only representative terms. Yet they all are expected to take the special responsibility of implementing instruction for EL students. Overall, too many EL students are provided instructors who themselves admit they are not prepared for effective instruction of these students (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Nonetheless, recognizing, emphasizing, and strategically integrating children's knowledge, skills, and abilities is central to the teaching and teachers needed in schools and classrooms to improve educational opportunities for ELs (Genessee, Lindholm-Leary, Sanders, & Christian, 2006).

A Demographic Imperative for Enhanced Teacher Development

The common phrase "demography is destiny" is applicable to the present teacher development circumstances. Two useful reports outlining the demography of EL students are *The New Demography of America's Schools* by demographer Randy Capps and colleagues (2005) at the Urban Institute and *Children in Immigrant Families* by Donald Hernandez and his colleagues (2008) at the University at Albany, State University of New York. These reports use Census 2000 data to describe the ethnic, linguistic, economic, domestic, educational, and geographic (including their origins and destinations) variations among immigrant children and families. Whereas the data authors analyze and interpret in these reports are nearly a decade old, the information provided is useful to project the future demographic characteristics of the U.S. student body. Certainly, Census 2010 will shed further light and, in some cases, correct misguided projections based on 2000 data. Until then, however, these reports continue to be helpful tools in orienting our understanding of the future challenges and opportunities for educators serving children of immigrant origins who learn English as an additional language.

Currently, at least one in five children ages 5 to 17 in the United States has a foreign-born parent (Capps et al., 2005), and many of these children learn English as their second language, though not all. It is important to note that EL students and children from immigrant families (i.e., a child with at least one foreign-born parent) are not synonymous populations, but certainly they are closely related. Most children from immigrant households are considered ELs at some point in their lives. Yet a majority (74%) of school-aged children (5 to 17 years) from immigrant families speak English exclusively or very well according to the Census 2000 data.

The overall child population speaking a non-English native language in the United States rose from 6% in 1979 to 14% in 1999 (García & Jensen, 2009), and the number of language minority students in K-12 schools has been recently estimated to be greater than 14 million (August, 2006). The representation of ELs in U.S. schools has its highest concentration in early education. This is because EL children from preschool or kindergarten tend to develop oral and academic English proficiency by 3rd grade. The EL share of students from prekindergarten to Grade 5 rose from 4.7% to 7.4% from 1980 to 2000, whereas the EL share of students in Grades 6 to 12 rose from 3.1% to 5.5% during the same time period (Capps et al., 2005). Young ELs (ages 0 to 8 years) have been the fastest growing student population in the country over the past few decades, due primarily to increased rates in (legal and illegal) immigration as well as high birthrates among immigrant families (Hernandez et al., 2008).

Although a majority come from Spanish-speaking immigrant families, ELs represent many national origins and more than 350 languages. In 2000, more than half of ELs came from Latin American immigrant families (Capps et al., 2005). Mexico led the way with nearly 40% of children from immigrant families (Hernandez et al., 2008), and Spanish was the native language of some 77% of ELs nationally during the 2000-2001 school year (Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003). Following Mexico, EL students find their origins around the globe. The Caribbean, East Asia, and Europe (combined with Canada and Australia) each account for 10% to 11% of the overall population of children from immigrant families, whereas Central America, South America, Indochina, and West Asia each account for 5% to 7% of the total; and the former Soviet Union and Africa account for 2% to 3% each. At least 3 in 4 children in immigrant families are born in the United States (Capps, 2001), though U.S. nativity is higher among elementary-age children of immigrant families than those attending secondary schooling (Capps et al., 2005).

As immigrant families are settling new destinations in response to labor demands (Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2005), EL students are increasingly attending school in districts and states that served few to no EL children in the 1980s and decades previous. Although immigrant families continue to be concentrated in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey (Capps et al., 2005), several states witnessed rapid increases in their immigrant populations. Indeed, seven states experienced over 100% increases in the number of children from immigrant families attending pre-K-through 5th-grade students from 1990 to 2000 including Nevada, North Carolina, Georgia, Nebraska, Arkansas, Arizona, and South Dakota (from greatest to lesser percentage

increases) (Capps et al., 2005). This led several school districts and states to frantically search out, identify, and provide educational resources to children learning English as a second language. During the 1990s, Nevada, Nebraska, and South Dakota saw increases of 354%, 350%, and 264% in their EL populations, respectively.

In addition to the demographic reality that ELs constitute a growing number of students in the nation's schools and across the country, there are other reasons for their increasing numbers in mainstream classes. Lucas and Grinberg (2008) asserted that due to the diminished number of bilingual programs (which began in the 1980s), classroom teachers are increasingly responsible for providing most of the instruction to ELs. Furthermore, requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for testing have pushed districts to speed up the process of enrolling ELs in mainstream classes. Cost factors associated with providing special services for ELs fuel the urgency of transitioning them to mainstream classrooms (Cornell, 1995). These factors led Lucas and Grinberg to conclude that regular teachers may spend more time with ELs than teachers who have specialized preparation.

Educational Context

The academic performance patterns of EL students as a whole cannot be adequately understood without considering their social and economic characteristics in comparison with native English speakers, the characteristics of the schools they attend, and the institutional history of U.S. schools (Jensen, 2008; Márquez-López, 2005). Although a great deal of socioeconomic variation exists among ELs, they are more likely than native English-speaking children, on average, to live in poverty and to have parents with limited formal education (García & Cuéllar, 2006). In addition, EL students are more likely to be an ethnic/racial minority (Capps et al., 2005). Each of these factors—low income, low parent education, and ethnic/racial minority status—decreases group achievement averages across academic areas, leading to the relatively low performance of EL students.

In their analyses of a national data set of elementary academic performance in early elementary schools, Reardon and Galindo (2006) found reading and mathematics achievement patterns from kindergarten through third grade to vary by home language environments among Hispanic students. Those living in homes categorized as "primarily Spanish" or "Spanish only" lagged further behind White children than did Hispanics who lived in homes where primarily English or English only was spoken. Given the associations among educational risk factors for EL students, the impact of language background on achievement outcomes should be contextualized. The interrelationship of risk variables has been documented in several reports (Collier, 1987; Jensen, 2007; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1995).

Thus, rather than pointing to one or two student background factors that account for the low achievement of EL students, it should be understood that educational risk, in general, is attributable to a myriad of interrelated out-of-school factors. These factors may include parent education levels, family income, parent English language proficiency, mother's marital status at the time of birth, and single- versus dual-parent homes (NCES, 1995). The more risk factors the child is subject to, the lower the probability the child will do well in school in terms of learning and attainment in the standard educational environment. Because EL children, on average, exhibit three of the five risk factors at higher rates than native English speakers, they are generally at greater risk for academic underachievement (Hernandez et al., 2008). Capps and colleagues (2005) found that 68% of EL students in pre-K through 5th grade lived in low-income families, compared to 36% of English-proficient children. The percentages changed to 60% and 32%, respectively, for 6th- to 12th-grade students. Moreover, 48% of EL children in pre K through grade and 35% of ELs in the higher grades had a parent with less than a high school education, compared to 11% and 9% of English-proficient children in the same grades, respectively (Capps et al., 2005). Teachers for EL students must be able to address these challenging educational circumstances.

The characteristics of schools ELs attend are cause for concern. ELs do not attend the same schools as other students (Fry, 2008). ELs are concentrated in a subset of low-achieving schools (Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005) with less experienced principals and teachers located in the urban cores. Most ELs attend linguistically segregated schools and live in linguistically isolated families (Capps et al., 2005). Seven dimensions of inadequate schooling for ELs have recently been documented (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Rumberger, 2008). These include (a) inadequate access to appropriately trained teachers, (b) inadequate professional development opportunities to help teachers address their instructional needs, (c) inequitable access to appropriate assessment, (d) inadequate instructional time to accomplish learning goals, (e) inequitable access to instructional materials and curriculum, (f) inequitable access to adequate facilities, and (g) intense segregation into schools and classrooms that place them at risk. Throughout the literature on the context of schooling for ELs, the theme of the need for well-prepared teachers resonates. Gándara and her colleagues (2003) concluded that "Students with limited English proficiency are the least likely of all students to have a teacher who is actually prepared to instruct them."

Developing Teachers for ELs

The preceding section highlighted the critical need for enhanced teacher development based on the demographic imperative. This need has been documented for close to 20

years. Eugene García (1990) reviewed and discussed the research pertaining to educating teachers for language minority students. García noted the growing presence of students with Spanish language backgrounds and the critical need to prepare teachers for their diverse educational experiences. He emphasized that language minority students can be taught in schools through effective teaching practices characterized by culturally appropriate interactions and instructions. This concern for effectively preparing teachers for language minority learners continues today (Márquez-López, 2005). Teachers who are ready to handle this demographic reality are no longer a luxury but a necessity (Menken & Antunez, 2001). The reality of teacher demographics is that they are very different from the students they serve.

As noted earlier, the demographic imperative is reflected not only in the growth and dispersal of ELs across the nation. The other demographic fact is that the teacher corps lacks diversity. According to data gathered by the U.S. Department of Education's NCES (2006) on the Schools and Staffing Survey, the public teaching workforce is predominately female (75%), of non-Hispanic White background (83%), and this trend continues. Teachers who were racial and ethnic minorities rose from 13% in 1993-1994 to 17% in 2003-2004.

Overall, the demography of the U.S. teaching workforce is rather homogeneous, and students attending schools are growing in their diversity, culturally, racially, and linguistically (Capps et al., 2005; NCES, 2007; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Growing racial differences between teachers and students continue, and diversity is viewed as an obstacle to overcome (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Rather than teaching students in the way they were prepared, current and prospective teachers often revert to the traditional ways in which they were taught as students.

Knowledge for Teachers

Effective teachers are key to meeting the needs of diverse learners and critical in preparing these learners for the 21st century. Teacher preparation programs can help prepare prospective teachers to teach these learners successfully. Darling-Hammond (2006) has described seven highly successful teacher education programs that have prepared teachers to teach diverse learners to achieve high levels of performance. These colleges and universities include Alverno College, Bank Street College; Trinity University; University of California, Berkeley; University of Southern Maine; University of Virginia; and Wheelock College. Darling-Hammond summarized common features of exemplary teacher education programs. Four of the seven common features connect specifically to the preparation of teachers working with ELs:

- a common, clear vision of good teaching permeating all coursework and clinical experiences;

- curriculum is grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning, social contexts, and subject matter pedagogy, taught in the context of practice;
- extended clinical experiences are carefully developed to support the ideas and practices presented in simultaneous, closely interwoven coursework; and
- explicit strategies help students confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and learn about the experiences of people different from themselves.

Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) presented a framework for exploring the kinds of knowledge, skills, and commitment that enable teachers to be effective. Specifically, these scholars identified three general areas of knowledge that teachers must acquire:

- knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social context,
- conceptions of curriculum and social purposes of education, and
- understanding of teaching.

This framework may be used to support teachers in improving their teaching practice.

Knowledge Related to ELs

Research on teacher preparation for ELs includes both prospective and practicing teachers (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Data indicate that teachers are not well prepared to meet the needs of ELs (NCES, 2001; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). A series of conceptual pieces have recently emerged that identify aspects of the knowledge base, skills base, and attitudes and dispositions necessary to effectively work with ELs (Ballantyne, Sanderman & Levy, 2008; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-González, 2008; Merino, 2007; Téllez & Waxman, 2006). According to Lucas and Grinberg (2008), teachers should have language-related experience, linguistic knowledge, and opportunities to participate in programs that collaboratively prepare teachers across disciplines to instruct ELs in mainstream classrooms. They argued that effectively prepared teachers of ELs need specialized training within these areas.

Current research on teacher preparation for ELs reports inconsistencies in the way teachers are prepared due to state mandates (e.g., Proposition 203 in Arizona, Proposition 227 in California) and other larger policy implications (e.g., NCLB, Reading First). Gándara et al. (2005) reported variations in the preparation of teachers for ELs stemming from the impact of such larger social policies and state initiatives. Nevertheless, common practices necessary for effectively teaching ELs have been identified (Faltis, Arias,

& Ramirez-Marin, 2009). In their synthesis of research on effective practices for ELs, Waxman and Téllez (2002) reported several strategies, which included collaborative learning communities, multiple representations, building on prior knowledge, instructional conversation, culturally responsive instruction, and technology-rich instruction.

We argue for situating teacher preparation within ELL communities in school settings linked to university teacher preparation. We support partnerships between universities and school districts, which can foster collaborative efforts in teacher preparation and socialization. We are in concert with the work of Lucas et al. (2008) and Lucas and Grinberg (2008), who argued that teachers need specialized preparation that includes language-related experience and linguistic knowledge. We assert that this specialized preparation should occur, at least in part, in the communities where ELs attend school.

In our review of the most recent research on the preparation of teachers for ELs, we find much in common with the factors represented in high-quality teacher preparation as noted by Darling-Hammond (2006) and Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005). Table 1 illustrates these common factors.

Table 1 summarizes main themes of developing teacher knowledge in the broad literature (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), in the literature on developing culturally responsive teachers (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b), and in the literature on preparing teachers for ELs (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). We highlight the commonalities between the knowledge related to learners, curriculum, and understanding teaching as they are applied to developing knowledge for culturally responsive teachers and knowledge of ELs. The literatures on preparing culturally responsive teachers and knowledge related to ELs focus on contextualizing knowledge of students within their communities, along with understanding the nexus between identity and language and the sociocultural impact of communities on students and classrooms. We recognize that teachers develop this knowledge by guided experience situated in EL communities, and we call for teacher preparation to promote understanding of ELs through field experiences grounded in EL communities.

Responsive Teacher Preparation

We frame this discussion in a broad theoretical continuum. At one end of this continuum, it is argued that addressing linguistically and culturally diverse populations calls for a deeper understanding of the interaction of a student's language and culture and the prevailing school language and culture (García, 2001). This cultural significance position is supported by a rich body of research, which suggests that the educational failure of "diverse" student populations is related to this culture clash between home and school. These researchers have suggested that without attending to the distinctiveness of the contribution of culture, educational endeavors for culturally distinct students are likely to fail.

To facilitate the discussion of how considerations of cultural diversity can be integrated into the development of a pedagogy and practices that improve the educational conditions of diverse students, Table 2 depicts the continuum of approaches suggested by the literature reviewed briefly here. At one end of this continuum is the notion that preparation of teachers is based on specific understandings of what works with diverse populations—one size does not fit all. Teachers must understand diversity and be responsive in the pedagogy that they utilize to serve their students. At the other end of this continuum is the notion that we can prepare a teacher from some generic principles that would serve the teacher no matter the population served—one size fits all. We assert here that teacher development must prepare teachers that are responsive to the diversity of their students.

Preservice and practicing teachers must be given opportunities to explore and comprehend their own cultural and personal values, their identities, and their social beliefs. It has been well documented in the literature that teachers' attitudes and beliefs serve as filters for what they learn, what they teach, and how they manage their classroom (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). In addition, research suggests the influence of teachers' attitudes and beliefs on their expectations of ELs, interactions, and instructional practices (Garcia-Navarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005; Reeves, 2004). In their study of mainstream teachers' attitudes towards ESL students, Youngs and Youngs (2001) found that teachers who had taken foreign language classes were significantly more positive towards teaching ELs then those teachers who had not taken such courses. Based on the results of their investigation, they suggested that both inservice and preservice teachers would benefit from more opportunities with diverse learners and diverse experiences.

García (2005) referred to a "pedagogy of empowerment" as a responsive pedagogy that expands students' knowledge beyond their own immediate experiences while using those experiences as a sound foundation for appropriating new knowledge (p. 76). He characterized the schoolwide and teacher practices that reflect this pedagogy. Included in the schoolwide practices are a school vision that values diversity and professional collaboration and teacher practices that focus on language development through meaningful interactions and communications and awareness of the role of language and language policy in schools.

Knowledge Base for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The work on culturally responsive pedagogy can be divided into two broad categories: beliefs and values of teachers and characteristics of culturally responsive teaching practices. Based on her work with African American students, Ladson-Billings (1995) stated that teachers must "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce

Table 1. Preparing Teachers for English Learners

Knowledge for teachers	Knowledge related to culturally responsive teaching	Knowledge related to English learners
1. Learners	Build on what students already know	Students' funds of knowledge
	Know about the lives of their students	Families, communities, and the role of home culture impacting school outcomes
2. Curriculum	Understand how students construct knowledge	Connections between language, culture and identity
	Demonstrate a sociocultural consciousness	Sociocultural factors situated in communities, classrooms, and schools
3. Understanding teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005)	Affirm the views of students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b)	Culturally responsive classrooms, instruction, and cultural sensitivity (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008)

and maintain social inequities" (p. 162). Through their review of the research and work with teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, to become culturally responsive teachers, Villegas and Lucas (2002a) proposed that teachers develop a "sociocultural consciousness," recognizing that each individual's "perspective reflects his or her location in the social order" (p. 42). They stated that the task of teacher educators is to help prospective teachers move towards a greater consciousness that includes understanding themselves as individuals (race, class, ethnicity, gender) and developing an understanding of the distribution of power in society that causes inequities and oppression.

In her review of the research and her work with national projects, Gay (2002) defined culturally responsive teaching as

> using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly. (p. 106)

Culturally responsive teaching practices must be grounded in an understanding of students' cultural background (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b). Villegas and Lucas (2002a, 2002b) reported common characteristics of culturally responsive teaching practices that include building on what students already know, understanding how students construct knowledge, demonstrating a sociocultural consciousness, knowing and understanding about the lives of their students, and affirming the views of their students. These practices cannot be conducted in isolation but rather must be supported and situated within specific learning communities. In teacher preparation programs, this speaks to field placements where prospective teachers may actively participate in the community within

which they teach and their students live. Research strongly suggests the benefits of experiencing such culturally diverse field placements (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Zeichner, 1996). These experiences provide opportunities for prospective teachers to change the way they think about their students.

Situated Learning in EL Communities

One route to responsive pedagogy is to propose that teacher preparation needs to include a service-learning component, which situates teaching and learning in the EL community. Boyle-Baise and McIntyre (2008) reviewed the research on preparing teachers in two contexts for teacher education, one professional development schools and the other community settings. Professional development schools focus on student academic achievement, develop teachers' academic expertise, and "aim to be centers of educational excellence" (p. 313). The authors further stated that service learning "eases a community orientation into teacher education," "allows preservice teachers to work with and learn from local youth and adults while doing something worthwhile," and "fosters greater comfort with people unlike oneself" (p. 309).

Service learning experiences provide opportunities for prospective teachers to engage in the schools' communities. For example, in the American Indian Reservation Project, Stachowski and Frey (2005) reviewed the service learning activities performed by student teachers placed in the Navajo Nation. Student teachers were immersed into the lives and cultures of the people with whom they lived and worked. Through community involvement, student teachers gained cultural insights, developed a deeper appreciation for other people's lives, experienced the multiple realities of the classroom and community setting, and in turn gained acceptance by community members. Cooper (2007) described ways preservice teachers responded to cultural immersion, community-based activities located in the home communities of their

Table 2. Addressing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: A Continuum of Theoretical Perspectives

School culture/home culture	Responsive pedagogy	Generic principles for teaching
One size doesn't fit all	Understanding diversity	One size fits all
Differentiation	Meaningful contexts	Just good teaching

learners that challenged their previous beliefs and stereotypes about the students they teach. Results from her study suggest that community experiences incorporated in teacher preparation programs may facilitate new discoveries about the students, their families, and the community's strength. Additionally, Seidl (2007) explained how a group of prospective teachers participating in an African American community began to develop culturally relevant pedagogies. Voluntary internships were arranged at an African American Baptist church where preservice teachers worked with adults from the church in projects for children such as tutoring and other community-sponsored events. Students also completed coursework and readings on African American history, racism, culture, and privilege. Through these guided experiences, preservice teachers were engaged in the community and began to implement culturally responsive approaches in their teaching. These preservice teachers were immersed in the cultural experiences of the community with situated educational opportunities and as a result learned to personalize cultural and political knowledge.

Language, culture, and their accompanying values are acquired in the home and community environment. Teachers must be aware that children come to school with some knowledge about what language is, how it works, and what it is used for; that children learn higher level cognitive and communicative skills as they engage in socially meaningful activities; and that children's development and learning is best understood as the interaction of linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive knowledge and experiences. García (2005) further emphasized that students learn best and teachers feel most satisfied when both become allies in the learning process and are encouraged to actively cooperate and share. A more appropriate perspective of learning, then, is one that recognizes that learning is enhanced when it occurs in contexts that are both socioculturally and linguistically meaningful for the learner.

Such meaningful contexts have been notoriously inaccessible to linguistically and culturally diverse children. On the contrary, schooling practices and teachers, who are the architects and engineers of instruction, often contribute to educational vulnerability. The monolithic culture of U.S. schools, which is a poor fit for culturally diverse students, is reflected in such practices as

- the systematic exclusion of the histories, languages, experiences, and values of diverse students from classroom curricula and activities;

- "tracking," which limits access to academic courses and justifies learning environments that do not foster academic development and socialization or perception of self as a competent learner and language user; and

- a lack of opportunities to engage in developmentally and culturally appropriate learning in ways other than by teacher-led instruction.

Practices such as these perpetuate inequitable school experiences and hinder student progress and achievement (Nieto, 2004).

Teachers Who Construct Responsive Pedagogy and Learning Communities

This rethinking of teacher preparation has important implications for the teaching/learning enterprise related to culturally diverse students (García, 2005). This new pedagogy redefines the classroom as a community of learners in which speakers, readers, and writers come together to define and redefine the meaning of the academic experience. It may be described as a pedagogy of empowerment, as cultural learning, or as a cultural view of providing instructional assistance/guidance. In any case, it argues for a teacher who respects and integrates students' values, beliefs, and histories; patterns of thoughts and behaviors; and experiences and recognizes the active role that students must play in the learning process. In addition, teachers must also recognize that what each student brings to the classroom is continually influenced by family norms and the larger society (Cloud, 2002). This kind of instruction takes into account what students know and can do. It is therefore a *responsive pedagogy*, one that encompasses practical, contextual, and empirical knowledge and a worldview of education that evolves through meaningful interactions between teachers, students, and other school community members.

Of course, a teaching and learning community that is responsive to the dynamics of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity within the broader concerns for high academic achievement both requires and emerges from a particular schooling environment. Whereas considerable work has been devoted to restructuring schools and changing the fundamental relationships that exist between school personnel, students, families, and community members, seldom have these efforts included attention to the unique influences of the linguistic and sociocultural dimensions of these same

relationships and structures. The environments that potentially support and nurture the development of responsive learning communities are not unlike those promoted by leading school reform and restructuring advocates. The incorporation of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity concerns creates a set of educational principles and dimensions that are more likely to address the challenges faced by schools that must attend to the needs of growing populations of diverse students.

Responsive Learning Communities

The learning environments that we consider essential to the development of a responsive pedagogy are referred to as *effective schooling* (García, 1999, 2001, 2005). The focus on the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity represented by students in today's public schools further challenges us to consider the theoretical and practical concerns relative to ensuring educational success for diverse students. That is, responsive learning communities must necessarily address issues of diversity to maximize their potential and to sustain educational improvement over time.

Examples of responsive learning communities are found in the work of Michelle Fine and her colleagues (2007), who illustrated successful public school models for working with ELs in New York City. These schools work against the negative effects of high-stakes education policy and "produce strong academic and civic outcomes with English Language Learners." Their schoolwide practices were grounded in understanding the student population and their commitment to maximizing students' potential. At these schools, teachers and staff focus on supporting students in the use of their individual experiences to benefit themselves and their classmates.

University-school partnerships are an example of collaboration that supports teacher preparation in communities. One example of such a partnership is provided by the Arizona State University (ASU) Office of the Vice President for Educational Partnerships in eight urban districts. This long-term community collaboration involved various opportunities to support the development and enhancement of early childhood programs; supporting teachers by providing endorsements for SEI and ESL to prepare them for working with ELs; providing scholarship opportunities for student teachers to teach in partnership schools; supporting educational leaders by providing leadership institutes and leader certification; and providing support to students, schools, and families. The goal of the partnership was for all students attending these schools to attain educational success.

Specifically, the work conducted in the ASU Educational Partnerships created critical linkages between the university, prospective teachers, and their placement settings: urban schools with high populations of ELs. Preservice teachers were placed in cohort groups. For example, one semester

three student teachers were placed in one elementary school in early elementary settings (K-1). Beyond the traditional triad (student teacher, mentor teacher, and university supervisor), student teachers were provided with a district coach. These student teachers often presented questions that went beyond simple management concerns to ones that questioned why (Arias, Harris-Murri, Estrella, & García, 2007). The role of the district coach was to create a context where questions, as well as district beliefs, state/district/school policies and practices, and community orientations could be shared (Arias et al., 2007). This mediated situation also encouraged student teachers to engage in rethinking their university learning around language issues and rethinking their own teaching in English only. The success of this approach has led to many of these student teachers' remaining within their student teaching placement district. Some have gone on to become mentor teachers and leaders in the school community. Through our research, we began to understand the multiple aspects needed to transition the student teacher from the preservice level to the novice level. To prepare teachers for the growing diversity faced in the classroom's of today, we must consider the support system in place, the changes necessary for programatic improvement, and the fostering of responsive learning communities.

Conclusion

In summary, we suggest that developing responsive teachers requires a setting for developing teacher knowledge that has its roots both the school community and the university setting. A focus on developing responsive teachers encourages teacher educators to support prospective teachers to construct and reconstruct meaning and to seek reinterpretations and augmentations to past knowledge within compatible and nurturing schooling contexts. This mission requires an understanding of how individuals with diverse sets of experiences, packaged individually into cultures, make meaning, communicate that meaning, and extend that meaning, particularly in the social contexts we call schools. Such a mission requires in-depth treatment of the processes associated with producing diversity, issues of socialization in and out of schools, and a clear examination of how such understanding is actually transformed into pedagogy and curriculum that result in high academic performance for all students.

Our review of the literature underscores the need to prepare all teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse students. We have presented evidence that there is a demographic and intellectual imperative that motivates teacher preparation to become more connected to the schools and communities where ELs reside. Concurrently, we are aware that developing teacher knowledge through guided contact in EL communities requires teacher educators who are engaged in reflective practice. We envision EL communities as sites for guided teacher preparation that require collaboration

between universities and school districts and look forward to building the knowledge base that supports teacher learning in EL communities.

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