

Practices of Exemplary Elementary School Teachers of Second Language Learners

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Teachers across the nation are finding themselves facing classrooms of students where several languages and cultures are represented. There are an estimated 2.1 million school children in the United States who have limited English language skills which affects their ability to participate effectively in education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). It is expected that by the year 2000 one in 12 elementary school students will be a second language learner (Day, 1992). In California, 1,151,819 students (one-third of all students) speak a language other than English. Of this figure, 887,757, or approximately three-fourths, are Spanish speakers; however, nearly 100 other languages are spoken by school age children in the state (California Department of Education, 1993).

The majority of English language learners are being served by teachers who do not speak their language. Indeed, it is estimated that only ten percent of the estimated 2.1 million children who could benefit from bilingual education actually receive it (Faltis, 1991). In 1991-92, California experienced a shortage of 9,800 Spanish-English bilingual teachers, and 4,500 teachers to teach students who came to school speaking other languages (California Department of Education, 1991). Statistics similar to these are re-

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flected in major metropolitan cities and regions throughout the nation.

The multilingual, multicultural reality of today's classrooms makes it imperative that researchers examine the conditions and contexts that enhance learning among second language learners and that teacher educators prepare new teachers to effectively teach the diverse linguistic and cultural student populations.

The purpose of this exploratory study was to begin to examine the practices of exemplary elementary school teachers of second language learners in order to address the question: What practices and behaviors do these teachers engage in to promote learning for second language students in their classrooms? While the literature suggests strategies to use with second language learners, it does not examine actual practice. Also missing in the literature is a contextualized, finer-grained analysis that provides insights into the conditions and contexts that promote second language learning. The present study offers a view of the practices, conditions, and contexts in which exemplary teachers of second language learners engage to enhance learning for their students.

Method

Subjects

We began by asking a total of 12 site administrators and classroom and resource teachers at schools in southern California with at least a 40 percent second language learner population to identify one classroom teacher at his or her site whose instruction for second language learners could be described as exemplary. We asked the nominators to consider the teacher's abilities based on classroom observations and as reflected in their students' English language development and content area learning. We interviewed each nominator to discover if there were additional reasons for having nominated that particular teacher. What consistently emerged was a profile of a teacher who is well-based in content knowledge, sets high expectations for all the students, is well-prepared on a day-to-day basis to meet the students' learning needs, and is respectful of students. A sample quote from a resource teacher follows:

Nominator: She [the nominee] is child-centered, not curriculum-centered, although she knows the curriculum. She uses a lot of literature and she integrates the arts. Her students share their personal experiences with her, and she uses them in the lessons she teaches. There's a lot of mutual respect in that classroom.

We then informed each nominee that he or she had been selected by the principal or a colleague as exemplary in working with second language learners, and asked permission to visit for a get-acquainted classroom observation. Eleven agreed. Two of these were not included in the study because one taught only in the students' primary language and the other had only one second language learner in the classroom this year. A third teacher was discouraged by the district's central administration from participating in the study.

Of the remaining eight teachers, three have been district teachers of the year. Five have been master teachers and/or district mentors for non-tenured teachers in their respective districts. All have conducted district-level or county-level inservices, been recognized as content specialists, or been sought out by other teachers for teaching suggestions and materials. Six have earned a Master's degree in education, and two others will finish their Master's degree in the next year. The teaching experience of the teachers ranges from five years to 20 years, with a mean of 11.75 years, and each teacher has had experience teaching second language learners throughout his or her career.

Currently, six of the teachers have students who are Anglo and Hispanic, or a mix of linguistic or cultural backgrounds, and two of the teachers have classrooms with 100 percent Hispanic student population. All of the students are at the low end of the socioeconomic scale, as determined by free or reduced lunch and aid to families via a variety of social agencies. The mean number of second language learners in each classroom is 13.5, ranging from three to 30. These students fall along a continuum of English language abilities. Four of the teachers have received a minimum of 20 hours of district inservice training on working with second language learners. The remaining four have received specialized training in bilingual education including knowledge about the home culture of a specific cultural group, and training in methodologies to teach students in their native language and in English.

Two are first grade teachers, one is a second grade teacher, two are third grade teachers, one is a fourth grade teacher, and two are fifth grade teachers. Three of the teachers are Hispanic and five are Anglo. Seven are women and one is a man.

From interviews with the teachers and their nominators, we learned that all of the teachers participate in professional activities that extend beyond their individual classrooms. They are professionally active and connected, and they continually seek professional growth.

Procedure

Four hour-long observations scheduled at intervals of about one per week were made in each of the eight classrooms. The teachers identified times when students would be engaged in text or text-based activities in English for our observations, including reading/language arts, social studies, and science lessons. Initial observations were made in each classroom to ensure that the students were comfortable with the researchers' presence prior to the formal four hours of data collection. Each subsequent observation was audiotaped and videotaped. Field notes were also taken during or immediately following each taping session in order to capture contextual information. In addition, teacher interviews were conducted in order to obtain the teachers' perspectives of learning activities in their classrooms. (See Appendix for interview questions.) Finally, each teacher was asked to view and comment on two videotaped lessons from one other teacher in the study, focusing on the question:

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What did the teacher do in each lesson to make it successful for second language learners?

Data Analysis

The data corpus was collected and analyzed within the tradition of ethnography of communication (Jacob, 1987) or microethnography (Erickson, 1977), relying on participant observation, field notes, and detailed analysis of videos of everyday occurrences in the school (Erickson & Wilson, 1982). The data corpus was reduced to segments of tapes that particularly related to the inquiry under study. These segments were repeatedly and independently reviewed by the two researchers who individually identified initial categories of common practices among the teachers. The researchers then discussed their initial categories, and repeatedly tested and revised these initial categories by applying them to larger segments of the corpus, and finally refined them to describe five teacher behaviors and practices evident throughout the entire corpus of data. Data triangulation (Erickson, 1986) was provided through field notes, interviews with teachers and their nominators, and teachers' comments on each others' lessons.

Results and Discussion

Our analysis of the observational and interview data revealed that these eight teachers engage in five practices in common, listed below. A discussion of each practice and salient examples follow the listing.

1. The teachers maintain enabling behaviors, language, and attitudes toward their second language learners, coupled with high student expectations.
2. The teachers activate their students' prior knowledge and help them develop general knowledge and the language with which to express it.
3. The teachers use current instructional strategies and techniques in the language arts.
4. The teachers embed instruction in a context that fosters respect and mutual accommodation.
5. The teachers engage in reflective practice.

1. The teachers maintain enabling behaviors, language, and attitudes toward their second language learners, coupled with high student expectations. We draw on Diana's classroom for the first examples. Her fifth grade classroom consists of about 80 percent second language learners who are at various stages of English language acquisition. Diana is an English only speaker. Observing in her classroom, one very quickly becomes aware that she uses many teaching techniques to help the students understand key concepts without compromising content knowledge. It also becomes quickly evident that the second language learners take many linguistic risks by engaging in and contributing to meaningful classroom discussion, as evidenced by the first example below. All students are

expected to participate and are included in learning activities, and Diana makes an effort to ensure that content knowledge is comprehensible for them.

Diana's students were engaged in a Know-Want-Learn activity (Ogle, 1989) on the Westward Movement. This strategy engages students in articulating what they know about a topic, what they would like to learn, and a post-study discussion on what they have learned. As various class members contributed to the "know" and "want to know" columns of the chart taped across the chalkboard, Diana began asking several second language learners what they would like to add. Within the context of questions about covered wagons, one student raised his hand and said simply, "Why?" as he moved his hand in a choppy circle.

Diana: Oh! Why did the wagons form a circle? (Student nods.) Good question.

Diana has accepted the intended meaning of a second language learner, complimented him for his contribution, and provided a linguistic model for expressing his intended meaning.

During this same lesson after several students had offered contributions, she called on a second language learner and asked her if she would like to add something. The student shook her head no. Diana told her that she thought she might have something to contribute later to the chart, to think about what that might be, and that she would ask her later. When Diana asked her again, this is what occurred:

Student: They have to look for a work...a...a...work...yeah.

Diana: A job?

Student: Yeah! A job! They have to farm...they have to ...live by their own.

Another student then speaks:

Student: Just like she said, they would have to work the land, build their own crops, and stuff like that. Plant their own crops, build their own houses. They would have to start from scratch.

Diana: Starting from scratch. Good.

Here we see an example of a teacher who gently urges a quiet second language learner to contribute to a whole-class discussion. Two interesting elements are evident in this brief episode: (1) a teacher who knows a child's capabilities and holds certain expectations for her, and (2) validation and verbal expansion of the child's contribution, not by the teacher, but by a fellow student. This type of peer validation happens in a classroom where the teacher fosters respect and recognition for everyone.

During another session in Diana's room, small groups of students were preparing to present skits in English, with memorized parts. Diana said to one group that the second language learner in their group had not yet completely learned her part and that they needed to work with her. One student in the group responded, "Yeah, we already planned a meeting for her." Again, an enabling attitude with high expectations is evident, coupled with a sense of inclusion and shared responsibility on the part of the student's peers.

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In an after-school conversation, another teacher, Karyn, discussed one of her Spanish-dominant students. Erika had been reading in Spanish with the bilingual instructional aide. The teacher observed that Erika was learning English very quickly, and so she had her begin to read in the English language reader. While she recognized that Erika was challenged by the third grade reader, she saw that many of the words or concepts that were hard for her (such as “arabesque” and “encore”) may have been due to experiential or cultural differences. Karyn worked with Erika on building the necessary vocabulary to understand the reading passages. The teacher was so impressed with Erika’s abilities that she scheduled Erika for testing for giftedness, even though the testing would be carried out in English, Erika’s second language, as Spanish language giftedness testing is not conducted in Spanish in the district. This example reveals that Karyn believed that the student was capable of high academic achievement and provided various means that enabled the student to be successful, including building background knowledge that promoted understanding of the text and recommending her for special testing.

2. The teachers activate their students’ prior knowledge and help them develop general knowledge and the language with which to express it. We found numerous examples of general knowledge being activated and created, and efforts to assist students in developing the language with which to express this knowledge. Ana Maria, for example, asked her students to share their experiences with board games prior to their reading of *Jumanji* (Van Allsburg, 1981), a piece of children’s literature about an adventure based on a fantasy board game. Karyn’s students relied on knowledge about school experiences in order to write cinquains (a five-line poem) about third grade. In discussing the word “pioneer,” Diana pointed out to her students that it had another use besides referring to people who were the first to go to a new land.

Diana: Benjamin Franklin was a pioneer in the field of...
Student: Electricity.
Student: Yeah, he flew the kite and electricity came down...(inaudible)
(Other students respond, sharing classroom created knowledge.)
Diana: And Beethoven was a pioneer in the field of...
Students: Music.

In this example, we see Diana asking the students to make links to previously studied material to enhance their understanding of the word “pioneer.”

In Karyn’s room, the children were studying silkworms. There was a container of them in the middle of a large table that also held a supply of mulberry leaves and several relevant science books. One student, a recent arrival from Venezuela, explained the following to one of the researchers:

Student: Dark points—is the man. No points—is the woman.

The student was explaining that if a silkworm has dots on its back, it is a male,

and that no dots on the back indicates a female. The student then returned to her desk, but a short while later was drawn to the silkworm table again, and engaged another student in a conversation in English about silkworm cocoons. Here the teacher had created an environment of high interest that motivated the student to express what she had learned.

Karyn's students engage in many writing activities. She is considered a writing specialist in her district and has given several inservices on poetry writing to promote language development and students' self-esteem. Our interview with her revealed that her students' writing is usually related to a piece of children's literature the class is reading and that she typically introduces a poetry pattern (such as cinquain, diamante, formula poem) and provides an example on the board. The children then use the example to write their own poem, repeating the pattern and adding their own ideas.

On the day of one taping, the class was engaged in a literature unit on the story of Tom Thumb. The students were discussing the giant's bad mood, and Karyn expanded the conversation to the students' own motives for good and bad moods, thus having the students draw on their own experiences—their prior knowledge of good and bad moods. The discussion was followed by asking the students to write poems about their moods. Providing the language with which to share their ideas, Karyn wrote this formula poem on the board in English and Spanish:

I get in a bad mood when ____
But ____ makes me smile.
Me pongo de mal humor cuando ____
Pero un(a) ____ me hace sonreir.

One student, Samira, had been in the United States for about three months, and had apparently had very little previous schooling in Mexico. She was placed in third grade because of her age. On the day of this taping, Karyn said she was delighted with Samira's progress and said she was "absorbing a lot and [is] blossoming." A fragment of Samira's poem about moods is below.

Me pongo de mal humor cuando me pegan
Pero una paloma me pone de guen [sic] humor.
I get in a bad mood when they hit me
But a dove puts me in a good mood.

The teacher developed general knowledge about writing a particular form of poem and invited the students to write poetry expressing their own moods and experiences. This fragment shows that Samira adapted the model from the chalkboard to express herself. The teacher had created a context in which Samira could create her own language, and furthermore, Samira utilized her own dialect of Spanish ("guen" rather than "buen") to do so. The teacher had also provided a language choice for her students as well as support for writing attempts in English.

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3. The teachers use current instructional strategies and techniques in the language arts. The teachers in this study use a variety of techniques and strategies to help their students learn from text while developing second language skills. Ana Maria uses story grammar to help her students develop and understand story structure. She also engages her students in story retellings to check for comprehension and to help them develop language abilities. Diana uses the know, want to know, learn strategy, “a strategy that helps teachers and students take an active role in reading and learning from expository text” (Ogle, 1989, p. 205). Yolanda frequently uses big books with her transition readers. We happened to be taping in her classroom one day when she conducted a lesson with a big book. She engaged the students in predicting, choral and paired reading, and using text-as-resource for a follow-up art activity. All of the teachers in the sample use thematic teaching and integrated literature-based units, and they all provide language-rich classroom environments, most notably Ana Maria and Karyn who use charts, word lists, posted student writing, strip charts, books, and story charts.

Yolanda was the first in her school to use student portfolios in her classroom, and she encourages other teachers to do the same. She maintains a file in which students and the teacher place sample work. Once a month, the teacher and each student together review the work placed in the file, and note areas of growth and weakness. Yolanda commented that the students are frequently amazed at the growth they see in their work, and that this type of review spurs them on to improving the quality of their writing.

Diana makes extensive use of strategies that provide comprehensible input for her second language learners and that scaffold meaning for them through making text and real-world connections. We draw from a taped lesson when the students were reading an article about stingrays because it illustrates several strategies that she utilizes.

Diana: If a stingray sees you coming, is it going to come at you and sting you?

Student: Not unless you bother him.

Diana: Right. Fourth line: “They will not go out of their way to attack you.” That means that they’re not going to think, “I’m going to get him [uses pinching hand movement].”

The stingray article pointed out that when wading, it is wise to be alert and to prod a stingray with a stick to make it move away. To reinforce this point, Diana engaged the students in a brief role play of two “waders” and a “stingray.” The “stingray” was on the floor, “hiding” under the sand.

Diana: O.K. Gabriel. You’re our wader. Now you’re wading in the water. Do one of the two things it [the text] tells us. (pause) What are you going to do that the story says? What’s the word it [the text] uses?

Students: Prod.

Diana: What’s another word for “prod?”

Students: Poke.

Gabriel prods the “stingray” with a yardstick and it moves away.

Diana: O.K. Carmen. You’re our next wader. What are you going to do?

Student: Step it. [sic]

The student “steps” on the stingray and it “cuts” her.

In this short episode, we see two examples of text expansion or explanation through words and hand motion and student dramatization of a key point in the text, both strategies suggested in the literature for enhancing comprehension (Davies, 1990; White, 1984). In addition, we see a student who takes a linguistic risk in a safe environment created by the teacher.

Two of the teachers teach and model metacognitive processes for their students, who in turn use the strategies themselves and with other students. For example, Ana, a cross-age helper in Ana Maria’s room was working with a small group of children whose task it was to collectively write a retelling. At one point, when the group seemed unable to move the story along, Ana said, “OK, look at the information you wrote on the board and let’s use it in our story [retelling].” Ana was referring to the story grammar that the class had just completed collectively and that the teacher had written on the board.

4. The teachers embed instruction in a context that fosters respect and mutual accommodation. Another practice we found common to the eight teachers was that they engage in what Stephen Diaz, Luis Moll, and Hugh Mehan (1986) describe as **mutual accommodation**. Mutual accommodation occurs when “both teachers and students modify their behaviors in the direction of a common goal” (Nieto, 1992, p. 258). This includes social, cultural and linguistic accommodation.

During the interviews, many of the teachers expressed the need to approach their teaching with a mindset that is different from working with a class of mainstream students. It is not that these teachers necessarily use artifacts from their students’ cultures. Indeed, most of these teachers did not. Rather, many of them discussed thinking through their teaching in a different way, and the importance of developing alternative perspectives and broad cultural understandings.

Jerry realized in his first weeks of teaching that what he had learned in his own upbringing and professional preparation had not adequately prepared him for his teaching assignment:

I grew up in an anglo-centric environment where you sit down, you think things through yourself, and you do your work. It worked for me. When I came here to teach, I found I had to **re-orient my thinking**. (emphasis added). I reorganized the room [so that] we interact with one another (pause), and it is a different way of doing business. Also, we try to develop different perspectives. Our Vietnamese student believes in ghosts. On *Dia de los Muertos* [“Day of the Dead,” a day celebrated in Mexico to honor deceased relatives], we discussed ghosts. Could they exist? Who believes in them? We talked about this.

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He continues:

Phi was different. She was the object of cruel jokes and name calling. We have spent a lot of time discussing “different is O.K.” Phi is different culturally, physically, and she has different understandings. We have discussed differences and spiraled this to a larger perspective of differences. A lot of respect has emerged.

Another example of recognizing and accommodating differences comes from Diana’s classroom. She told us in an interview that she only accommodated differences by including information from her students’ backgrounds when it fit the standard curriculum. However, in further conversation, she revealed that she does far more than that. An example of this is evident in her description of an incident that arose when her students viewed the mini-series *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. As a result of a classroom conversation about slavery, which is part of the fifth grade social studies curriculum, she decided to show the segment of *Roots* that dealt with the middle passage. The students were fascinated with the segment, and they pleaded with her to let them view all of the episodes. Parental permission obtained, she and her students viewed the entire series over several days. One brief scene included bare women in West Africa. There were snickers from some of the students. “Don’t laugh,” rebuked one of the students. “That’s the way it is in their country. It’s hot and that’s a part of their culture.” No student made a further comment. This accepting attitude arises in a classroom climate where the teacher fosters a high level of respect for all.

Mutual accommodation is not effortless. It takes a great deal of thought and careful planning to create a classroom ethos in which learning occurs in a context of mutual accommodation and respect. As Karyn stated:

It’s hard. As a teacher, you’re having to think things through in different ways. You have to prepare things differently.

Linda said:

I really stress that we are here for each other. We are here to help each other. That’s what it’s all about.

There also exists a need for mutual accommodation beyond the classroom. Indeed, the role that parents and the community play is critical to a student’s success in school. Our data reveal that the teachers in this study work toward enhancing parent-community involvement in school activities and serve as advocates for their students and parents in ways that were similar to bilingual teachers (Faltis & Merino, 1992; Flores, Cousin & Diaz, 1991).

Yolanda developed an impressive parent involvement program at her school site and was featured in the *Los Angeles Times* (Duke, 1992, May 8) for this exemplary program. “We were discovering that the PTA didn’t seem to attract parents anymore,” she said, and she set about to make a change. The school has a large population of language minority parents (Spanish and Vietnamese speaking).

Yolanda found speakers of these languages to come to the school on the same nights to address relevant topics such as earthquake preparation and how the educational system works in this country.

Yolanda: Most American parents talk to their kids about college. The parents of our students do not because they don't know what to tell their children.

The program has grown from about 20 to 200 parents in two years.

Our observations of the teachers in this study did not reveal that they engage in practices that exhibited knowledge of specific aspects of a particular culture, as do exemplary bilingual teachers who work with students of a common culture (Faltis & Merino, 1992). However, the teachers did stress the importance of flexibility in organizing for instruction and in teaching, and the importance of accepting diverse ways of learning and expressing knowledge. Further, they stressed the development of a broad sense of acceptance of others, and they were advocates for students and their families.

5. The teachers engage in reflective practice. Data for this category was taken largely from interviews from teachers. However, their thoughts and words as reflected here are ultimately evident in their classroom-based practices. The teachers in our sample articulate a high level of awareness about their classroom practice; that is, they think carefully about what they learn as professionals and how this affects their classroom practices.

Since we were particularly interested in examining language and literacy in these classrooms, we asked the teachers to discuss their knowledge of language arts instruction and their approach to language arts instruction in the classroom. Six teachers indicated that they use an eclectic approach with an emphasis on whole language strategies. They described what they find useful about whole language strategies, and how they use them in conjunction with other instructional strategies and practices.

Researcher: How would you categorize your approach to language and language arts?

Karyn: Probably eclectic is the closest. I think that whole language is a real important component. Our district is jumping on that bandwagon, but part of that comes from me. That's the way I see it. That's the way I'm comfortable. Another part is using literature as a focus point. That is a general approach, but there's also decoding. I use every chance I get and get as much in as I can in a gentle way. We don't do drills, but we have a number of games that we play. And it's multifaceted. Some kids are going to learn physically. I do everything I can think of to get it [learning] into the body one way or another, trying to meet all of their learning styles.

The teachers expressed concern about making sure they use the best methods for literacy instruction.

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Rita: I had a credential from Argentina. I was a school teacher over there so I learned how to teach reading and writing in Argentina. They were not doing it the same way [here], but I couldn't say that it was right or wrong because I did not know their way. So I went to sit in the schools to observe.

The teachers are aware of relevant research and specific ways to apply it in their classrooms. For example, Rita discusses Stephen Krashen's (1981) concept of the affective filter (low stress, high motivation, and high self-esteem). She has thought about how best to implement this concept with her second language learners:

The real purpose of that song is because we're going to do [perform] it in English and some of them are very anxious, you know, they're very afraid. They know it is a foreign language. They know they can't speak it very well. So what we do is we **lower the filter** (emphasis added) doing that [singing]. So once they're playing and they're acting and they're singing, they forget about the English. They repeat the song, and then we use it as a review of the vocabulary that they already know. And, you know, they're having fun.

They think about where they are going and set goals for their students and for themselves:

Researcher: Any improvements you'd like to see?

Yolanda: Always improvements. I could see dealing more with technology and second language learners. I could see that as a second language to them. It could be used as a universal language to them to encourage higher level thinking. Motivation, too. That's my goal—instill it [technology] more into my classroom. I'd like to have Macintoshes. Actually, I wrote a grant for a Mac. I'm working on it. That's a big deal to me. I hate to see a classroom where second language learners are set apart and not given access to computers. Those children need to be exposed to those things even more. So technology is a real big push for me. That's my goal as a teacher.

These teachers have spent time reflecting on how their professional knowledge is connected to the classroom and why they engage in certain practices. They articulated their thinking about language and literacy instruction from the perspectives of their professional preparation and their observations, and they developed what they believe are the most effective approaches based on these. One teacher expressed her belief in the importance of providing increased computer access for second language learners. She described her efforts to make this technology goal a reality. Every teacher in the study was able to engage in reflective practice—how professional knowledge is related to their classroom practice, and many discussed particular practices for second language learners.

Conclusions

As more and more teachers face classrooms of students from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, it becomes imperative to study the practices of

those teachers who work effectively with second language learners. The purpose of this investigation was to get a view inside the classrooms of eight elementary school teachers who were selected as exemplary in working with second language learners in order to identify their common practices. Five practices were identified: (1) The teachers maintained enabling behaviors, language, and attitudes toward their second language learners, coupled with high student expectations; (2) they activated their students' prior knowledge and helped them develop general knowledge and the language with which to express it; (3) they used current instructional strategies in the language arts; (4) they embedded instruction in a context that fosters respect and mutual accommodation; and (5) they engaged in reflective practice.

Does effective teaching with second language learners merely reflect utilizing effective strategies that all good teachers use? The statements made by teachers in this study would suggest not. These teachers see their teaching in a broader context than just good teaching. They view their teaching in a social, cultural, and linguistic milieu that must occur in a broad context of mutual accommodation—a context that seems to necessitate a rethinking of their teaching practices, or in the words of one teacher in this study, “thinking things through in a different way.” They work at developing effective approaches that include understanding and valuing the cultural perspectives their students bring to school. They strive to accommodate and develop an understanding of diverse views and to help all their students do the same. Further, they make connections with other contexts in which their students function, most especially the home. Teachers who engage in these practices reflect what literature on teaching in multicultural contexts promotes as beneficial for students of diverse backgrounds (Grant & Secada, 1991).

While our purpose was the identification of common practices among exemplary teachers of second language learners, future research might examine the diversity of practices and teaching styles among exemplary teachers in multilingual settings. Additionally, an evaluation of the impact of the specific practices and behaviors on student learning would be worthy of study, as would a closer examination of each of the practices identified here.

The changing demographics in this country mean that, in many regions, teaching second language learners has become the norm for teachers rather than the exception. While we value education in the native language of the student and support its implementation wherever possible, we cannot assume that our schools will be fortunate enough to have a sufficient number of qualified bilingual teachers who speak the native languages of the students in their classrooms. We must learn from the teaching strengths and expertise of teachers who have been identified as effective in enhancing learning for second language learners, and this information must be a part of professional preparation programs and continuing professional growth opportunities.

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Appendix: Protocol for Teacher Interview

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. How many of these have included teaching second language learners?
3. Do you have a Master's degree?
4. Are you a district mentor or master teacher?
5. What do you do to make your program successful?
6. Do you believe you receive adequate support from your principal and the district?
7. Do you have any instructional aide time?
8. What kinds of evaluation do you use? for reading? for E.S.L.?
8. Describe your approach to language and literacy development.
9. In what ways do you believe you adapt or modify your teaching to work with this particular group of students?
10. To what extent do you believe you use knowledge of your students' sociocultural background in your instruction?
11. How frequently do you believe you make use of this type of information?
12. Have you done any reading or sought any information about sociocultural differences of students who come from a variety of backgrounds?
13. How easy is it to use this type of information for instructional purposes?