

!What deliches tortillas! Preparing Teachers for Literacy Instruction in Linguistically Diverse Classrooms

By Jill Kerper Mora & Dana L. Grisham

“!What deliches tortillas!” A teacher candidate in our elementary literacy methods class was asked to closely examine this text, written by a third-grade English Language Learner (ELL). What could the candidate-teacher determine from this text about the educational strengths and needs of this child? What strategies should the teacher use to help this student? How would the needs of an ELL student differ from the needs of a native English speaker? Most importantly, what responsibility should the teacher candidate expect to assume for this child’s language and literacy development? Issues like these challenge teacher education programs throughout the nation to expand the literacy knowledge base of students and help new teachers become more accountable for the literacy development of

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all learners. According to a national survey, while 54 percent of public school teachers have students with limited English proficiency in their classrooms, only 20 percent believe that they are well prepared to teach them (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999). In California, the need for teachers with specialization in cross-cultural teaching is especially acute because of a mismatch between teacher expertise and student need. Thirty-eight percent of the total student population are native speakers of a language

!What deliches tortillas!

other than English. However, only 30 percent of these students are in classrooms taught by a teacher with a specialized cross-cultural teaching credential (Rumberger & Gándara, 2000).

The purpose of this article is to describe the evolution of two teacher educators at a major California university in restructuring a literacy methods course to empower new teachers with explicit knowledge and a reflective problem-solving orientation toward teaching in diverse contexts. We explain how we collaborated to better prepare teacher candidates to meet the challenges of literacy instruction with linguistically and culturally diverse school populations. We present a qualitative analysis of teacher candidates' response to our redesign and teaching of a literacy methods course to include a greater emphasis on cross-linguistic and language proficiency factors in literacy instruction for second-language learners. We explain how teacher candidates in a Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) emphasis credential program performed a language assessment and analysis assignment and focused on specific reading instruction methods for teaching literacy to limited English proficient students. We utilize qualitative research methodology to document and describe the impact of our course redesign and team-teaching to enhance our credential candidates' competencies for addressing the needs of diverse learners. We believe that by studying both the process and product of our efforts to refine the teaching and content in our CLAD credential programs, we may provide an example of innovative learning activities that can be applied in teacher education to enhance instruction for diverse student populations.

Qualitative Study Research Questions

The questions we formulated for this qualitative study of our collaborative teaching effort arose out of on-going program evaluation and teacher candidates' expressed needs and concerns about their CLAD teaching. We undertook the redesign of the literacy methods course in response to program evaluation data and the changing legal and sociocultural context in which our teacher candidates would be expected to perform effectively in the public schools (González & Darling-Hammond, 1997). Factors that motivated our investigation into ways to enhance CLAD teacher preparation included advent of the Reading Instructional Competency Assessment (RICA) examination required for the Multiple Subjects (elementary school) credential and changes in the law regarding instruction of ELL following passage of Proposition 227.

We also wished to reexamine and augment our knowledge base for CLAD teaching in light of recent research and changing philosophies of CLAD instruction reflected in public policy. Questions that we considered in planning our course and the research on our efforts included the extent to which change needs to occur in the knowledge base and teaching repertoire of teacher candidates for culturally and linguistically diverse classroom settings (Cochran-Smith, 1997; Darder, 1991;

Hollins & Oliver, 1999; TESOL, 1997). We wanted to know to what extent changes would occur in the attitudes and instructional competencies of teacher candidates participating in a specially designed reading/language arts methods course. We investigated how well we could prepare our teacher candidates to assess the second-language learner and plan linguistically and developmentally appropriate literacy instruction. We sought to determine to what extent, as a result of our revised course, the teacher candidates would consider themselves to be well prepared to meet the challenges of teaching in diverse classroom settings. Finally, we were interested in changes that might occur during the course in teacher candidates' perceptions of second-language learners and the level of responsibility they would acknowledge for these students' language and literacy development. González and Darling-Hammond (1997) documented the importance of this problem-based inquiry process for teacher candidates in becoming "managers of their own inquiry" (p. 50) for teaching diverse student populations.

Need for CLAD Credential Program Refinement

CLAD Program Evaluation Data

San Diego State University's (SDSU) College of Education has been a leader in designing and piloting course work for the Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) credential that is now required by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (August & Hakuta, 1997; Mora, 2000). Consequently, our continuing efforts to improve and refine our programs in bilingual and second-language education have served as a model for other institutions at various stages of program development and implementation (Ross, 1994; Walton & Carlton, 1997). The CLAD credential provisions establish the course requirements and competencies we develop in our teacher education program for monolingual English language development teachers to address the special needs of diverse student populations in literacy instruction in various classroom contexts. In 1999, a comprehensive survey of our CLAD credential program documented a high level of satisfaction among teacher candidates with the content and field experiences preparing them for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. Sixty percent of the CLAD candidates indicated that they were very satisfied and 36 percent were satisfied with their level of preparation in teaching strategies for ELL. These competencies were addressed in our teacher education program through various program structures where bilingual education faculty, CLAD specialists and literacy faculty collaborate across departments and areas of expertise. However, cooperating teachers who worked with these candidates indicated that 66 percent of the teacher candidates assigned to their classrooms lacked skills to address the needs of English learners. Discrepancies made apparent in on-going program evaluation and self-study have guided us in making program revisions (Kitano, Lewis, & Lynch, 1996; Mora, 2000; Pang, Anderson, & Martuza, 1997).

!What deliches tortillas!

As qualitative researchers using our natural setting as the source of our data, we were concerned with the *process* of enhancing the second-language and literary acquisition content of our required reading methods course within the context of our CLAD credential. How we structured our course revision as “problem-solving” was a critical element of our study. As well, we wished to carefully document the outcomes and *products* of our team-teaching activities (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992). Zeichner (1999) points out how self-study examines the complexities of teacher education from the inside are valuable for identifying key elements of program coherence, commitment and success. Since the primary objective of our team-teaching experiment was to infuse the second language literacy content more intensely into the language arts methods class, we collected several types of data to address our research questions, including team planning notes and old and revised syllabi. We sought to respond to evaluative data collected from teacher candidate and master teacher surveys of our CLAD program as well as addressing state mandates affecting our teacher candidates.

According to former California Secretary for Education Gary Hart (1999, August 22), fewer students (10-20 percent) are arriving in their English-only classrooms already able to read and write in their native language. Consequently, we perceived a need for our CLAD teacher candidates to acquire increased knowledge and skills specifically focused on issues of teaching second-language learners. We diagnosed a particular need to augment the knowledge base of our teacher candidates in content-specific assessment and instructional strategies for second-language readers. We wanted them to fully appreciate the complex interaction of linguistic factors in developing second-language literacy.

Proposition 227

There are additional challenges to teachers posed by dramatic changes in laws governing the education of language minority students in the public schools across the nation. In June 1998, California voters approved Proposition 227, a ballot initiative that severely restricts bilingual education programs in the state’s 1,047 school districts. Rather than simply mandating restrictions on bilingual education, Proposition 227 required fundamental changes in instruction for the 1.38 million students throughout California classified as English language learners. Proposition 227 requires that these students be placed in a one-year program of “sheltered immersion” to gain English proficiency before being transferred to mainstream classrooms. The new law, in effect, shifted responsibility for literacy instruction for ELL students to bilingual and English language development teachers initially, with the major responsibility for content-area learning and overall academic achievement for students who have been “transitioned” after one year falling on mainstream teachers (Mora, 2000). After passage of Proposition 227, in light of the increased demand for teachers with preparation for diverse student populations, many teacher education programs are undertaking analyses of their programs to

determine the level of congruence of course offerings with standards for effective teaching practices for second-language learners (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1999). Most of the teacher candidates in our credential program are monolingual, European American, middle-class and female. Most of them have had limited experience working with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, our teacher candidates need specific knowledge and skills to assess students' levels of English proficiency and judge how children's linguistic skills affect their ability to perform various literacy tasks in their second language. Beyond an increased awareness of appropriate pedagogy for second-language learners, our goal was to deepen our teacher candidates' appreciation of the complexities of teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms. We wanted them to assume the responsibility for targeting instruction for ELL rather than simply modifying the strategies used for native English speakers to "accommodate" the needs of second-language learners (See for example Zuniga-Hill & Yopp, 1996).

RICA Examination Requirements

In addition, we shared concerns for our teacher candidates' level of preparation for the RICA. The RICA includes essay questions based on cases that require teacher candidates to analyze second-language readers' strengths and needs and to recommend appropriate instruction. We targeted the second-language acquisition principles and related teaching competencies covered by the RICA exam. Table 1 lists the domains and content area of the RICA examination and describes how we designed the activities and assignments for our reading methods course to provide teacher candidates with the requisite knowledge base needed for reading instruction with English language learners (ELL).

Focus on Second-language Reading

Our multifaceted efforts to improve and refine our program's preparation of teachers for diverse student populations have focused on improving literacy instruction, based on theory and research in biliteracy and second-language reading (Bernhardt, 1991; Williams & Snipper, 1991). A perspective on second-language acquisition and the reading process that informs literacy instruction for teachers of English learners is the cross-linguistic transfer hypothesis (Hornberger, 1994; Koda, 1997, Odlin, 1989). Several philosophical perspectives are operative in the polemics over the effectiveness of various approaches to biliteracy and second-language reading instruction. Of particular relevance to literacy instruction for language-minority students is research into effective practices that focuses on the commonalities as well as the differences between reading in the first and second languages of the bilingual child and the cross-linguistic transfer of literacy skills. This theory posits that knowledge is transferred from the learners' first language into the performance of cognitive and linguistic tasks in the second language. The cross-linguistic hypothesis suggests that the greater the similarity in the orthographic

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Table 1
California Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA)
Content Domains and Literacy Knowledge Base
for English Language Learners (ELL)

RICA Domain & Content Area	ELL Knowledge Base
<p>Domain 1: Planning and Organizing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment</p> <p>(1) Conducting ongoing assessment of reading development (2) Planning, organizing, and managing reading instruction</p>	<p>Knowledge of language assessment of ELL provides information on language proficiency and first-to-second language transfer that may enhance or impede literacy development. Language assessment provides the basis for targeting areas of weakness and patterns of errors and to monitor oral language development in relation to reading and writing skills.</p>
<p>Domain 2: Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading</p> <p>(3) Phonemic awareness (4) Concepts about print (5) Systematic, explicit phonics and other word identification strategies (6) Spelling instruction</p>	<p>Language assessment and miscue analysis provide clues to areas of weakness in phonemic discriminations based on contrasts in phonology of ELLs' first language and English. Phonics instruction can be tailored to the features of English that are distinct from the child's L1 based on detection of omissions, substitutions, syllable juncture and other errors that appear in students' writing</p>
<p>Domain 3: Developing Reading Comprehension and Promoting Independent Reading</p> <p>(7) Reading comprehension (8) Literary Response and analysis (9) Content-area literacy (10) Student independent reading</p>	<p>Language assessment data inform teachers about the reading level the ELL can achieve for instructional reading based on their oral proficiency and comprehension. Text can be matched to proficiency levels so as to maximize students' success in independent reading.</p>
<p>Domain 4: Supporting Reading Through Oral and Written Language Development</p> <p>(11) Relationship among reading, writing, and oral language (12) Vocabulary development (13) Structure of the English language</p>	<p>Language assessment serves to identify grammatical errors and syntactic patterns where ELL require instructional support and/or intervention. Knowledge of the natural progression of L2 development and interlanguage helps teachers set realistic expectations for growth in literacy. Formal and informal assessment of vocabulary indicates areas for targeted instruction in pre-reading activities.</p>

systems of the two languages, the greater the degree of transfer. This transfer of similar written symbol systems and orthography between students' L1 and L2 reduces the time and difficulties involved in learning to read and write the second language.

Specific studies (Cisero & Royer, 1995; Corneau, Cornier, Grandmaison, & Lacroix, 1999; Durgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin, 1993; Goswami, 1999; Koda, 1997) report evidence of cross-linguistic transfer of literacy skills such as phonemic awareness and word recognition strategies. These studies tend to support the premise that phonological awareness that is developed in bilingual readers' first language facilitates reading in L2. This body of research also points to relationships between the regularity of orthographic and morphological systems of bilingual learners' languages and the level of transfer and/or interference between his or her two linguistic systems in literacy tasks. Other researchers (Bernhardt, 1991; Devine, 1988; Langer, Bartolomé, Vásquez, & Lucas, 1990; Muñoz-Swicegood, 1994) have focused on metalinguistic skills and metacognitive strategies among bilingual readers to devise holistic theories of L2 reading. Moll (1988) reported that bilingual readers' receptive language competencies manifested in their ability to comprehend oral and printed language surpassed their ability to express themselves orally in their second language. These theories and research studies laid the foundation for the emergence of holistic models of biliteracy and second-language reading, as more investigations focused on the interplay of bilinguals' language proficiency and cognitive abilities in meeting the demands of literacy tasks.

CLAD Literacy Methods Course Prior to Redesign

To address the teaching skills in literacy and the RICA competencies in the first semester taught on-site at a Professional Development School, our teacher candidates administer a number of assessments to young children in areas such as concepts about print and phonemic awareness. Teacher candidates learn how to take and interpret a running record and to administer and analyze an informal reading inventory. Teacher candidates work with native English speakers in order to learn the assessment instruments, although the needs of ELL are also discussed. The two-semester course is designed to immerse students in school contexts, to have them work extensively with children, and to provide a forum for situating theoretical and practical knowledge in classroom contexts. Table 2 outlines the content of the two semester, 6 unit literacy methods course sequence.

CLAD Literacy Methods Course Innovations

Although we were pleased with the two-semester literacy methods course sequence overall, a survey administered to 25 teacher candidates at the conclusion of the course in spring 1998 indicated that only 68 percent of the students felt prepared to begin teaching ELL students. We felt that that this need could be addressed through the design of specific course content on cross-linguistic transfer

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Table 2
Two-Semester Literacy Methods Course (K-8 Credential)

Fall Semester Course Outline (3 Semester Units)	Spring Semester Course Outline (3 Semester Units)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Focus on Early Literacy</u> • Oral Language • Assessment for Teaching the Individual Student (Ethnographic Approach) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Concepts About Print — Running Records — Informal Reading Inventory — Phonemic Awareness Assessment — “Kidwatching” or Observation • Cultural Diversity (e.g., specific cultural and linguistic groups) • Language Development (L1 and L2) • Phonics and Word Study • Writing as a Process and Reading/Writing Connections • Classroom Organization and Reading Programs (e.g., basal, literature-based) • Children’s Literature • RICA Domains 1, 2 & 4 Emphasized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Focus on Middle Grades Literacy</u> • Content-Area Literacy and Text Structures • Children’s Literature • Literature Response Circles/Reader Response • History of Reading and Programs • Reading Comprehension and Strategies • Writing as a Process/Writing Across the Curriculum • Phonics and Word Analysis • Interventions for Troubled Readers • Special Populations • Individualizing • Bilingual and ESL Programs • RICA Domains 2, 3 & 4 Emphasized

and language and literacy development of second-language learners. We also had substantial evidence from course and program evaluations that our teacher candidates wanted a more specific and in depth focus on children’s developing language proficiency as a factor in their literacy achievement. Also, as a result of the passage of Proposition 227 limiting the role of bilingual education, increased demands on CLAD teachers required them to assume greater responsibility for children’s English language development. We concluded that oftentimes, students approached instruction of second-language speakers of English with the same body of assumptions with which they planned instruction for native speakers. We drew this conclusion from our evaluations of credential candidates’ products, such as thematic units and lesson plans in their CLAD courses, as well as their analyses of literacy assessments of children conducted in their first semester methods course. Consequently, their literacy lessons were too complex for English language learners, lacked proper modifications, or were too unfocused on students’ particular learning needs to be truly effective. Teacher candidates tended to overlook aspects of students’ developing English language skills and proficiency that are indicators of possible reading and writing difficulties requiring instructional support or intervention.

In contrast to methods courses, two additional CLAD courses are taught on the university campus for teacher candidates who are assigned to different student teaching sites, and consequently are not part of an on-site program. One CLAD course, three semester units in multicultural education address socio-cultural issues in education. The other CLAD courses, four semester units of program design and methods for linguistically diverse student populations, focus on English language development and strategies for teaching academic content. Neither of these CLAD courses focuses on a specific content area. Rather, they prepare teacher candidates for instruction at any elementary grade level and in all subject areas. We observed that teacher education students oftentimes do not make the connections between the content of the generic CLAD courses, the literacy methods course content, and the needs of particular students they work with in their student teaching. Our experiment with the second-semester reading methods course sought to address these concerns by focusing on second-language literacy through case studies conducted with ELL students from the Professional Development School in bilingual and sheltered immersion.

Qualitative Research Methodology

The redesigned course content and its impact on students were the subjects of a qualitative study that took place during the spring semester of 1999 to document the process and outcomes of this innovative approach to preparing CLAD credential teacher candidates for literacy instruction with English language learners through a reflective and problem-solving stance to teaching and a commitment to learner-centered practices.

Participants

Professor Grisham teaches literacy methods courses in the Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) credential program, including methods courses on-site at two Professional Development Schools. “Buena Vista” has been a PDS site for fourteen years and is an award-winning technology magnet school. Located in the southern part of the county, Buena Vista is also the Bilingual Magnet School for the district. Professor Mora is a specialist in bilingual cross-cultural education. She teaches the core courses for the CLAD credential, including foundations of bilingual education and a CLAD methods course that includes English language development and content-area instruction for ELL learners.

Twenty-seven teacher candidates comprising an intact class of multiple subjects (K-8) fifth-year credential candidates at the Professional Development School took the revised course and agreed to participate in the study. Four randomly selected teacher candidates participated in the focus group interviews two weeks after class had ended. Focal group participants included: Joe, a white male, previously an attorney; Barbara Faith, a white female, also embarking upon a second

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career; Renee, a Jewish-American in her early twenties; and Kimberly, a Latina in her early twenties. Names are pseudonyms selected by the teacher candidates.

Treatment: Course Content and Assignments

As part of the revised course, the English language development specialist in our team of literacy professors designed an assignment for our teacher candidates to complete a case study of a student from a second/third grade combination bilingual classroom. Our CLAD credential students were required to administer a language assessment interview using the Primary Acquisition of Languages (PAL) test developed and validated by the El Paso Public Schools (1978). This instrument was selected because the test materials are in the public domain, thus making the set of materials required for interviewing and scoring children's language affordable. Professor Mora had also used this test extensively during her early career in bilingual education and was familiar with the test and scoring procedures. The PAL test consists of a series of picture prompts and 28 questions designed to elicit certain vocabulary and grammatical forms from the subjects. The test administrator records the child's responses verbatim. The full responses are then scored based on grammatical correctness and the number of words in the response according to a scoring rubric, which places the child's language proficiency on a scale from one to five, ranging from limited to native-speaker equivalent proficiency.

The ELL assessment assignment also included analysis and scoring of a writing sample for each child based on a rubric. Our students were encouraged to compare the child's level of writing skills with his or her oral language proficiency, and to examine the child's writing for evidence of errors that were detected in his or her oral speech production. This procedure gave teacher candidates the opportunity to study a child's language in detail, as well as to look for overall characteristics of fluency. Our teacher candidates were guided to pay close attention to indicators of cross-linguistic transfer in linguistic and literacy skills between these bilingual students' Spanish and English (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 1996; Bernhardt, 1993). This combination of data from formal assessment instruments and authentic student-product assessment gave our CLAD teacher candidates a comprehensive overview of the multiple sources of information they would most likely have available in planning instruction for English language learners (O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996).

A third component of the language assessment case assignment suggested by Professor Grisham, was a review of the child's school records from the cumulative folder, conducted under the supervision of the teacher candidate's classroom teacher. This review allowed teacher candidates to compare their PAL test results with previous language and standardized reading and subject area test scores. The cumulative record also provided insights into the child's program placements and overall academic progress. In addition, class time was spent discussing models of second-language reading and biliteracy development focused on the particular difficulties that a child

with lower levels of English language proficiency might encounter in learning to read and write, along with appropriate instructional interventions.

Data Collection

We made informal observations of the teacher candidates during the administration and analysis of the PAL with children and during analysis of the cumulative folders at the Professional Development School. Additional documentation was provided through our analysis of the completed case studies themselves, course evaluations, and a focus group interview conducted two weeks after the class had ended (See Appendix A). Four (4) randomly selected teacher candidates participated in the focus group interviews, which were tape-recorded.

Data Analysis

We analyzed data for all participants from multiple sources independently and collaboratively to discover consistent threads in teacher candidates' responses and comments. Our research questions provided the basis from which we drew most of the evidence. For example, we looked specifically for strategies that teacher candidates described and applied in their case studies or in their interviews to answer the question about whether teacher candidates had learned additional instructional strategies for teaching ELL. Each of the research questions was addressed in this way independently by the researchers, then collaboratively for confirmation. In addition, each researcher discovered other themes (such as the students' perceptions about the success of the team teaching) and confirmed these with each other and through triangulation of the data. All data were triangulated (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). We also searched diligently for disconfirming evidence regarding each of our questions.

First, we examined the case studies, looking for teacher candidates' application of the principles of CLAD literacy instruction in strategies they described as appropriate for the children they had studied. Each of us separately read and reread the case studies and analyzed them. We then collaboratively analyzed the data to ensure the reliability of our findings. We also discussed and reviewed the observation notes we had made about students' behaviors during the course, and particularly during the administration of the PAL. For example, our notes indicated whether students exhibited resistance to ideas about modifying content for second language learners. Two weeks after the course ended, we conducted a focus group interview using open-ended questions (See Appendix A). We carefully read and reread the transcripts of the recorded session and reviewed the results, again looking for issues that emerged as the teacher candidates reflected on what they had learned from the course content and assignments. We next reviewed the course evaluations when these became available to determine whether the same issues were present among their comments about the course. The collection and analysis of data is summarized in Table 3.

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Table 3
Description of Data Sources and Three-stage Data Analysis

Stage 1: Pre-intervention Analysis

Data Source	Analysis	Number of Cases
CLAD Program Evaluations	Content Analysis	400 Multiple Subjects Candidates from 1998
CLAD Program Syllabi	Content Analysis (Compared to RICA Domains and Content Areas)	TE 930 A/B Reading and Language Arts Methods; PLC 914 English Language Development/SDAIE
Language Arts/Reading Methods Course Survey	Content Analysis of Teacher Candidates' Self-reported Efficacy in Teaching ELLs	25 Teacher Candidates in TE930 A/B from 1998

Stage 2: During Intervention Analysis

Data Source	Analysis	Number of Cases
Observations	Anecdotal Records Examined For Evidence of Teacher Candidates Learning	By Both Professors During Classroom Instruction and Activities i.e., Administration and Scoring of the PAL Assessment

Stage 3: Post Intervention Analysis

Data Source	Analysis	Number of Cases
Case Studies	Content Analysis (Examined for Evidence of Application of Theoretical Principles and Attitudes Toward ELLs)	27 Case Studies
Interviews	Transcribed and Highlighted Evidence of Application of Theoretical Principles and Attitudes Toward ELLs	Focus Group of 4 Randomly Selected Teacher Candidates
Course Evaluations	Content Analysis (Outcomes of the Course in Teacher Candidates' Written Comments)	27 Teacher Candidates

Findings and Discussion

Multiple sources of data indicate that the inclusion of explicit content and field-based learning activities with second language learners was effective in increasing teacher candidates' knowledge and problem-solving abilities for literacy instruction in multicultural classrooms. Across all sources of data, teacher candidates expressed how their need for greater competence in teaching ELL were addressed in the second semester reading methods course. We looked for examples of teacher candidates' development in perceptions of their own competence in teaching students with limited English proficiency, as well as in their ability to identify and describe specific literacy teaching strategies to address linguistic factors in children's processes in learning to read and write in a second language. Equally important in our investigation of course outcomes were indicators of teacher candidates' ability to make connections between cognitive and linguistic development theories and practical applications based on assessment data they collected for a particular ELL.

Interactions with English Language Learners

Several teacher candidates spoke of their increased confidence in their ability to teach English Language Learners. In her case study, one teacher candidate described her growth in knowledge and confidence in teaching ELLs with these words:

Before this activity [completion of case study] I did not have a lot of confidence in my ability to evaluate second language learners. Over the course of the semester I have become more aware of strategies for working with second language learners, and in turn I have become more confident in my ability to work with these students. Before I did not want to work with second language learners because I did not know how. I feel that everything regarding working with second language learners has really come together for me this semester and has helped me to feel more competent in that area.

Implications for CLAD Program Refinement

We designed the specific second-language learner content of our course based on the observation that the on-site generic CLAD methods course cannot focus only on literacy. The CLAD methods course's role in our teacher education program is to prepare our teacher candidates to teach many subject areas to second language learners. Consequently, the focus in the CLAD methods is on thematic instruction and lesson planning across the content areas for students with various levels of language proficiency. Students had commented in program and faculty evaluations that sometimes the general CLAD class becomes too diffuse for students to connect to their teaching experience, particularly in Reading/Language arts instruction. This perception was confirmed in the focus group interview. Two teacher candidates reflected that the content of the CLAD course would have been more meaningful

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and applicable had the course been more closely coordinated with language arts and reading methods. Consequently, teacher candidates appreciated the specific focus on factors in literacy development of ELL.

Based on reactions from students, we concluded that the CLAD course content might be more effectively taught in the student teaching blocks at the school sites where our students were doing their second semester student teaching. The issue here is the mode of delivery of CLAD content in a manner that supports students in making the connections between theory and practice. It appears that the concepts and skills of CLAD teaching are more comprehensible and easier to apply when students have already had substantial field experience and contact with students. Working with teacher candidates in the Professional Development School context, we found that these concrete experiences helped teacher candidates make these connections as they applied specific strategies and techniques to assessment and instruction of students with diverse levels of fluency and literacy skills in English.

Another goal that was fully met by our team-teaching arrangement was meaningful interaction of preservice teachers with children in the Professional Development School. We believe that it is critical for new teachers not only to possess knowledge about second language learners, but to take professional responsibility for their learning rather than relying on specialist teachers outside the regular classroom (Allington, 1994). In our specially-designed methods class, teacher candidates focused on what the assessments of the children told them about these students' language development and literacy achievement in order to match learners' skills with what they might teach. Through reflections in the case studies and comments in the focus group interview, teacher candidates indicated they were willing to take responsibility for the language development and literacy learning of the second language learners. For example, in the scenario presented to them in the focus group interview, teacher candidates demonstrated awareness of multiple appropriate instructional strategies to use with English Language Learners at various levels of development. All four of the teacher candidates stressed the need for multiple assessments of students prior to planning instruction. They mentioned the importance of observing students' behavior and providing individual attention. The focus group members also described a number of specific strategies for literacy teaching such as use of realia, word walls, flexible grouping, word study, vocabulary development and the investigation of students' cultural backgrounds.

Examination of the case studies proved that teacher candidates were able to do a fairly detailed analysis of phonemic awareness problems that could account for spelling errors. For example, one preservice teacher noted that her case study student made five separate spelling errors such as "cuk" for cook and "hans" for hands and "hat" for "hot." She hypothesized that this pattern of errors indicated that the child may not be hearing phonemes that exist in English but do not occur in spoken Spanish (Cisero & Royer, 1995). The teacher candidate concluded that the student

needed “listening skills [that] focus on extending new vocabulary with an emphasis placed on phonemic awareness.”

Making Connections Between Theory and Practice

The theoretical basis for CLAD instruction includes explanations of students’ relative progress in oral language and academic language proficiency proposed by such linguists as Stephen Krashen (1983) and Jim Cummins (1984). Although the CLAD methods course addresses theories of second language acquisition and cognitive development, our teacher candidates often find the theories difficult to interpret in the case of individual students. The experience of administering a language assessment instrument and comparing the results with a child’s writing skills gave our prospective teachers a chance to observe first-hand the contrasts between students’ oral language proficiency and their ability to perform the more complex and abstract tasks involved in composition. Joe understood the application of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) with respect to his case study child. “Simply because a student communicates easily in everyday conversation does not mean he or she can communicate effectively in academic or abstract tasks. A teacher needs to know what level a student is at to design an effective instructional program.”

We were surprised when the completed case study assignments and focus group interview revealed clearly that none of our students had prior experience with examining children’s cumulative folders. They found the opportunity to trace a student’s academic history and to observe congruence and discrepancies across different forms of evaluation very informative. The teacher candidates were able to confirm their findings from their assessment of the ELLs they studied by cross-referencing various assessments and making judgments about the coherence and continuity of the child’s academic experiences and progress over time. For example, Joe traced the language and bilingual program history of his case study child from the cumulative folder, and utilized these data to check and corroborate his own assessment findings: “While I had previously been informed about the four basic language skills and the progression from listening, speaking, reading, and writing, administering the PAL [language assessment instrument] and using the writing rubric vividly showed that progression.”

Kimberly clearly takes on responsibility for teaching second language learners when she says, “I really believe that in teaching L2 learners, a teacher has to find ways to engage all students and not just a few of them. If possible, she must relate new ideas and concepts to prior knowledge.” Barbara Faith states, “Throughout this process I discovered that there is a discernible reason behind most language errors by second-language students and plan to use this information to improve my teaching methods. Through better understanding of my students and their needs I believe I will be able to choose appropriate instructional strategies to aid in language acquisition.”

New Assessment Tools

Zuñiga-Hill and Yopp (1996) found that effective teachers of second-language learners had several characteristics in common. They maintain enabling behaviors toward their ELL students, coupled with high expectations. They are conscientious about activating their students' prior knowledge and building the language with which to express it. They embed instruction in a context of respect and mutual accommodation, and above all, they are reflective about their teaching practices with their bilingual learners. In other words, effective teachers in a multicultural context are able to think things through in a different way to make connections with their students' needs and motivations to enhance their learning.

In the focus group interview, Joe mentioned strategies such as whole group instruction for ELD/SDAIE and homogeneous small group instruction for specific levels of language and literacy development. Barbara Faith stated she would use realia and do extensive work with vocabulary development. All of the students appreciated having the new ability to use ELL students' writing as a diagnostic tool. Renee mentioned the need for ongoing, multiple assessment strategies to use with students to help her know what to teach.

The teacher candidates in our focus group demonstrated these characteristics in reflecting on their role as teachers of language minority students. In general, teacher candidates felt well prepared to address the needs of second language learners. They felt they had been equipped with the tools necessary to dig deeper into their students' strengths and weaknesses. They expressed confidence in their ability to teach ELL because they had a place to start gathering information about their students' learning needs in their own classrooms. In his case study, for example, Joe states,

While the PAL [language assessment instrument] measure is a useful tool, it is only one of many tools and must be viewed along with the teacher's daily observations of the child and other informal measures of the child's English proficiency. In addition to simply supplying a level, the PAL also helps to identify language strengths and weaknesses and detect patterns of systematic errors. The PAL is hence a useful tool in helping the teacher to institute an effective program of instruction.

Renee's case study clearly reflects an increase in her knowledge base with respect to the relationship between spoken and written language. She notes that her case study child's oral proficiency is deceptive in predicting his level of writing proficiency and notes accurately that it is normal development for writing to lag behind oral proficiency in the second language. "In addition, theories state that a child needs to be fluent in their dominant language to help transfer those skills to another over time. Donaldo is transferring his skills from Spanish to English over the course of his literacy development. In all, Donaldo is continually progressing and becoming more fluent in English."

A Valuable Experience

One teacher candidate's case study child wrote as a conclusion to his composition on how to make tortillas the line “!What deliches tortillas!” Through her analysis of this student's writing sample, our teacher candidate discovered how the child was using his phonemic awareness in Spanish to approximate the spelling of the English word “delicious.” She also noted how the child applied the Spanish punctuation rule that requires an exclamation mark to introduce an exclamation—no doubt right side up in English so that it would be the opposite of the inverted mark in Spanish. While this represents only one English language learner and one teacher candidate's interpretation of that student's writing, we are encouraged by her thoughtfulness in applying cross-linguistic transfer theory. The balanced analyses in these case study assignments provided our teacher candidate and her classmates with a different perspective on children's application of cross-linguistic skills in their literacy development. We believe that these new insights led them to appreciate their bilingual learners' strengths as well as their weaknesses.

What our teacher candidates learned from this process can be summed up in Renee's words as she reflected on what she learned from the course and the challenges facing her as a beginning teacher. Renee explained:

With Proposition 227 at teachers' heels and the heavy burden of accountability from low reading scores by the state, good teaching has never been so important, especially with second language learners. As I have come to find out, second language learners need specific programs, such as bilingual or sheltered [instruction], to build first language skills for transference to English. Second-language learners need direct instruction in grammar, writing, and vocabulary development; they need repetition and reinforcement. They also need an atmosphere that promotes learning and risk-taking.

Still a Lot to Learn

While the teacher candidates who participated in the focus interview feel well prepared to teach second language learners, there are a few things they mention that they still need to know. The most frequently mentioned aspect of teaching linguistically diverse students that teacher candidates wanted to learn more about was motivational factors for second language learners who have become discouraged. As Barbara Faith put it, these students have been “pushed down” as they progress through the schools without the language skills they need to keep up with their English-speaking peers.

The teacher candidates also wanted more specific information about the different cultural and linguistic groups they would encounter in their teaching. They were particularly interested in learning about their students' cultural backgrounds, customs and traditions, and some history and folklore from their culture of origin. The other important issue mentioned by teacher candidates in the focus group was the need for additional knowledge and tools for remedial instruction with

!What deliches tortillas!

students who lagged behind because of their English language development level, specifically how to “catch them up.” This desire for more knowledge to help them as teachers connect with their students’ prior experience and address their specific learning needs was another example of their commitment to on-going development of their CLAD teaching repertoire.

Our initial belief seems justified, that the infusion of CLAD content into the subject-specific methods courses such as Reading/Language Arts through specially designed field-based assignments improved our teacher candidates’ abilities to identify linguistic factors in literacy learning and pinpoint appropriate instructional intervention strategies. We are optimistic that changes will be made to support the continuation of team-teaching and collaborative efforts among faculty to achieve the goals of coherence and infusion of cross-cultural content in our teacher education program. Much more needs to be done in order to fully prepare teachers, particularly at the elementary level, for teaching effectively in all subject areas in linguistically diverse classrooms.

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Jill Kerper Mora & Dana L. Grisham

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Appendix A

Focus Group Protocol and Interview Guide

Professor Mora will be the moderator who will ask the questions. Professor Grisham will be the observer, who will take care of the tape recorder and make notes about the interactions, including body language and other non-verbal signs.

Introduction: "Before we begin let's go around and introduce ourselves for the tape recorder. Please just say your name and tell one professional thing that is occurring in your life right now."

(1) "As you know, Professor Grisham and I planned the second semester language arts & reading methods course that you took in Spring 1999, to include more specific information for you on the needs of English language learners. When you reflect on that course, what are the things that come to mind most clearly?"

(2) If they haven't done so, focus them on the ELL case study assignment. "What did you find most useful about the case study assignment that you completed?" [Least useful?]

(3) "Here is a scenario for you. You are hired and are given a fourth-grade class in which there are 28 students. Fifteen are native English speakers and thirteen are native Spanish speakers. What steps would you take to plan instruction and how would this be different from teaching a classroom of all English speakers?" [Probing questions might include: What would your responsibility be? What sources of evidence would you use for this? What resources might you need or use?]

(4) Following up, if the issue has not arisen: "In the scenario I just described for you, what do you see as your responsibility in terms of the language and literacy development of your English language learners? How will you know if you have succeeded or not?"

(5) How might you explain your classroom curriculum and instructional practices to the parents of native English speakers? Native-Spanish speakers?

(6) What do you think you still need to know about teaching second language learners in your classroom?

(7) What suggestions might you have for us to improve the course next year?