Chapter 3

Preparing Educators for Emergent Bilingual Learners in Initial Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

As classrooms continue to diversify, teachers require preparation to serve emergent bilingual learners (EBLs). This requires a shift in traditional approaches to teacher education, embracing collaboration among faculty, candidates, educators, and students to design and implement programs that integrate this lens across licensure areas. Drawing from a longitudinal study conducted in one field-based program that integrates EBL content, this chapter explores one collaborative model of teacher education seeking to develop candidates' expertise through strategically designed curricula and field experiences. Drawing from artifacts of 29 candidates completing the four-year program, followed by surveys and interviews with focal cases one year after program completion, findings detail learning during the program and into the first year of teaching with attention to the efficacy of specific collaborative features. Implications inform collaborative efforts to prepare teachers for EBLs.

INTRODUCTION

Students labeled as English learners (ELs) comprise 10% of the student population in US public schools, with 20% of students using languages other than English at home (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2018). Based on standardized proficiency tests of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, this label indicates potential challenges as students develop English simultaneous to learning and demonstrating achievement in math, science, social studies, and other subjects -- often in the language that they are still developing (Linquanti & Cook, 2013). With increasing linguistic diversity across the United States, including urban, suburban, and rural regions from New Mexico to New Hampshire, there is a pressing need to prepare a larger corps of teachers to effectively support this large and growing sub-group, referred to in this chapter by the more strengths-based term of *emergent bilingual learners* (EBLs; Coady et al., 2016; García, et al., 2010).

In this changing context, many schools have shifted to instructional models of inclusion where EBLs learn in general education settings spanning preschool-through-grade-12 (P-12), rather than utilizing self-contained bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms (Villegas et al., 2018). These shifts necessitate the preparation of *all* teachers to work with EBLs in preservice and inservice settings (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2018; Lucas et al., 2008), moving beyond siloed approaches that maintain focus on individual licensure areas. But initial teacher education programs have been slow to respond, with only 38% of US public-school teachers indicating any level of preparation for EBLs prior to teaching (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2018). Knowing that a teacher's preparation is integral to their efficacy in the classroom in facilitating students' learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Islam & Park, 2015), teacher educators must come together and tap into one another's strengths to collaboratively prepare all teacher candidates for EBLs.

Research on preparing all preservice teachers for EBLs is still in its infancy with existing studies centering on shifting candidates' beliefs about EBLs (Feiman-Nemser, 2018; Villegas et al., 2018). Studies have shown the value of particular coursework and fieldwork in promoting teachers' inclusive mindsets (Jiménez-Silva & Olson, 2012; Pu, 2012; Virtue, 2009) and deconstructing deficit perspectives that situate EBLs as being less capable than peers (Kolano & King, 2015; Markos, 2012). Shifting beliefs is tantamount to preparing general education educators due to the siloed nature of schools that often leads educators to believe that teaching EBLs is someone else's responsibility; however, only a handful of studies have extended beyond beliefs to focus on pedagogical practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2018). For example, studies

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