Contents

6 Editorial
8 Letters
9 News
12 Source
13 Indigenous Languages
14 The World as We Speak
19 Cutting to the Common Core
   Moving Pedagogic Mountains
   Reyes Quezada and Cristina Alfaro stress the importance of
   developing culturally and linguistically proficient biliteracy teachers for
   the new generation of ELLs
24 Cutting to the Common Core
   Let's Get Specific
   Jack Umstatter delves into the Standards to find some clear
   examples of what will be required of English Learners
26 Social Climbing
   Yue Meng and Niki Stanley see the educational value in social
   networking sites
30 Using All Gears
   Language Magazine asks developers how technological applications
   can assist in the teaching of diverse student groups
32 How Humans Write
   Language Magazine offers a roundup of some of the most interesting
   products that can aid teachers in the instruction of writing
37 Looking Cool in Arabic
   Raisa Zaidi talks type with font designer Mourad Boutros
41 Jobshop
44 Newsbytes
45 Reviews
46 Last Writes Richard Lederer and the Eyes Have It
In order to effectively roll out the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to teach the new generation of English Language Learners (ELLs), now more than ever, it is critical for current and future teachers to have a deep understanding of language learning research-based theory and practice. In order to remain relevant, teachers need to be well prepared to address the linguistic and cultural diversity in their classrooms. Therefore, preparing culturally and linguistically proficient teachers is urgent. As previous ELLs ourselves and now as biliteracy professors in teacher education we know, first hand, of the many challenges that are encountered by ELLs when learning a new language and the academic content at the same time. Educators should recognize that ELLs are doing “double the work” of their English-fluent peers because they must learn English while learning academic content (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). For this reason, the focus of this article centers on the pedagogical and ideological shift necessary to create access for ELLs to the CCSS.

New Generation of English Language Learners
Teachers need to be prepared to address the linguistic and cultural diversity in their classrooms — we cannot afford to repeat the inadequate instruction that has created Long Term English Learners. Although the majority of ELLs are born in the U.S., there is a growing number of ELLs labeled as “Long Term English Language Learners,” or students who have had the official Limited English Proficient designation for seven years or more (Olsen, 2010).

“Given the current demographic shifts in the U.S. population, it is likely that all teachers at some point in their careers will encounter students who do not yet have sufficient proficiency in English to fully access academic content in traditional classrooms. Many teachers do not have preparation to provide high-quality instruction to this population of students” (Ballantyne, K.G., Sanderman, A.R., Levy, J., 2008).

Recent studies indicate that low academic achievement among ELLs is a structural problem that must be addressed along the entire educational pipeline (Olsen, 2010).

A deliberate and strategic effort on the part of educators, specifically teachers and administrators, is necessary for improving ELLs access to the CCSS in all content areas through literacy and biliteracy development. The new generation of ELLs enter our schools with different educational needs as well as with assets and “funds of knowledge” brought forth by the students and their families (Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N., 2005). ELLs are a heterogeneous group of students with varying degrees of primary language, English language, and academic language proficiencies. Limited degrees of English language development (ELD) and academic language development (ALD) restrict English learners’ access to grade-level academic content areas. ELLs are a diverse group — variables that account for their diversity include: Place of Birth; Developmental Differences; Language Exposure (primary and second language); Parental Education; Community Attitudes; Socio-Economic Status; Time in the United States; and Experience in Formal Schooling (Bailey, Heritage & Butler, in press).

These are the new generation of English Learners in our American schools who need to gain access to the CCSS in order to be college- and career-ready. Imagine this scenario: “you are a teacher, counselor, or administrator; you are mindful of the students in your school whose proficiency in English is not what you want for them. Take a moment and focus on one or two such students. The students you selected may be immigrants, they may be second-generation or third-generation residents, or they may speak a form of English considered nonstandard in some circles” (Quezada, Lindsey and Lindsey, 2012 p. 5). What do you do with these students? How do you meet their educational, language, and cultural needs? How do you address the major shifts and the increased rigor in the CCSS for this growing population of students?

Common Core State Standards
The CCSS are deeper, wider, higher, clearer, and fewer than the previous standards. They represent an astronomical reform for K-12 education in the U.S. We are concerned with
the most critical part of the CCSS; the aspect that has not yet been addressed — the implementation for ELLs. We see this as a momentous opportunity to shift the paradigm of a largely underserved student population — Long Term English Learners constitute the most rapidly growing segment of students in schools across the nation. Heated debates and concerns revolve around how to best implement and assess the CCSS as well as provide the needed professional development to effectively address the linguistic and cultural needs of ELLs. The educational needs of ELLs can no longer be considered a boutique proposition concentrated within a handful of states (Santos, M., Darling-Hammond, L., & Cheuk, T., 2012 p. 3).

The challenges for American teachers working with ELLs have become greater, now that the CCSS have been adopted by 46 states. The Standards provide guidelines as to what knowledge and skills are needed to succeed in English Language Arts and mathematics that will be needed as students graduate from high school and move on to college or a career. The guidelines provided fall short of providing a comprehensive support mechanism in order for ELLs to succeed. There are six major shifts in English Language Arts:
1. Increased Reading of Information Text
2. Text Complexity
3. Academic Vocabulary
4. Text Based Answers
5. Increased Writing from Sources
6. Literacy Instruction in all Content Areas

Although these shifts are critical to the success of all students in general and ELLs in particular, we offer what we consider to be an equally important shift for educators at all levels — **Shift 7: The Ideological shift.**

**Shift 7: The Ideological Shift**

**New Generation Teachers**

Teachers with degrees, a multitude of professional development, and competencies have minimal academic impact when working with ELLs when beliefs about their students’ learning potential and low expectations are prevalent. The new generation of teachers must work hard to develop ideological clarity with respect to their personal and professional beliefs and core values, particularly when it comes to working with ELLs and poor children (Alfaro, 2008).

Teachers need to embrace ELLs from a constructivist perspective that view ELLs funds of knowledge — the assets and resources they bring from their individual contexts as strengths upon which to build. This ideological shift in the context of rolling out the CCSS for ELLs must be inclusive of the following five areas:

**Developing Culturally and Linguistically Proficient Teachers**

**Shift from being a traditional teacher to a “culturally proficient biliteracy teacher” whose belief system will hold students’ cultural backgrounds of language, race, gender, and socioeconomic status as assets on which we**

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are to construct their educational experiences" (Quezada, Lindsey and Lindsey, 2012 p. 6). It is well documented that students should be able to use their first language and incorporate their cultural aspects in class to help aid comprehension (Verpiaetsse & Migliacci, 2008; Crawford & Krashen, 2007), particularly in English Language Arts.

Teachers as Researchers
Shift their role from the technician who follows a one-size-fits-all curriculum to a researcher of students' cultural and linguistic background as well as the content standards. Teachers shift from consumers of prepackaged material to producers of culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum that prepares college- and career-ready students. In this manner, teacher and student engage at a deeper, wider, greater, and higher level.

Teachers as Facilitators
Shift their role from depositories of knowledge to facilitators of knowledge as it relates to ELLs' work in learning the language and content simultaneously. Teachers facilitate the necessary language demands, progressions, scaffolds, and supports necessary to provide access to the curriculum.

Teachers as Students/Students as Teachers
Shift to creating interactive relationships between student and teacher. Teacher creates a classroom environment in which the learning is reciprocal. A teacher/learner continually improves practice by learning from students' success and challenges — this is a daily mindset. Conversely, students understand that as they learn they also teach their peers and their teacher. In this manner, teaching and learning becomes an authentic dialogical process.

Teachers as Collaborators
Shift from working in grade level silos to vertical and horizontal collaboration. The major change here is that teachers cannot afford to ignore what goes on in grades above and below their assignment. Similarly, content area teachers must go beyond their comfort zone to strategically integrate literacy, math, science, and social studies.

In summary, a whole child-centered approach is needed when serving ELLs as the CCSS do not meet the spirit of the policy in this aspect. This whole child-centered approach will endure policies, practices, and relationships to ensure each child, in each school, in each community, is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged (Carter, 2010). Although the CCSS are deeper, wider, clearer, and fewer it does not mean that they address the needs of a new generation of English Language Learners. National education reform movements do not necessarily improve schools — the teachers who teach at them do. By creating culturally and linguistically proficient teachers who shift their role as teacher researchers, who act as teachers and students and use students as teachers.
and learn to be teacher collaborators, we can then ensure that each English Language Learner, challenged for long-term success in college, career, and civic life (Carter, 2011).

References

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