

Addressing the Cultural and Linguistic Needs of English Language Learners in Our Public Schools: Report and Recommendations

Executive Summary

Juan Guerra

Between January and June 2006, members of the Study Group on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD) met 9 times and worked to address the four goals proposed by TNE—some of which were slightly modified by the group over the course of its meetings—as the charge for the Study Group on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:

1. To examine the range of services and models available to address the needs of English language learners at both the national and local levels.
2. To consider the impact of local conditions on the potential implementation of any of these services and models in local P-12 schools.
3. To develop a set of recommendations for providing professional development on ELL issues for faculty members engaged in the preparation of teachers, for reconfiguring the curriculum in the College of Education's (CoE) Teacher Education Program (TEP), and for identifying or developing courses in A & S departments to better prepare pre-service teachers who are increasingly being called upon to address the needs of English language learners in local P-12 schools.
4. To identify ELL resources that the 19 members of the Ackerley Partner School Network can use immediately to provide professional development for in-service teachers already working to meet the needs of English language learners in their P-12 schools.

While the primary goal of the charge for the Study Group is to make recommendation about the ways in which the existing TEP curriculum can be modified to best address ELL-related issues, there is no question that the ELL needs of in-service teachers at the partner schools where TEP students will be doing their student teaching must possess the expertise to support pre-service teachers in the course of their training. For this reason, it's important to first identify the mentor teachers currently in place who have some practical experience addressing the needs of ELL students effectively.

The Study Group then developed the following set of recommendations to provide participants in this effort with a plan of action to fulfill its goals. To assure implementation, the Study Group urges the immediate establishment of a CLD Review Committee whose job it will be to implement these recommendations. It should be noted

that resources for these activities will be made available by the College of Education with what we hope will be additional support from the UW's Center for Teaching and Learning. The Study Group's seven recommendations are as follows:

- The CoE must develop and fill a tenure-track faculty appointment for someone who does scholarly work in cultural and linguistic diversity and who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of ELL-oriented changes in the TEP curriculum.
- TEP must redeploy or hire an additional graduate student who will work directly with the new CLD faculty member to implement ELL-oriented curricular changes and organize workshops to familiarize TEP faculty with the implementation of these changes.
- Under the direction of the CLD faculty member and his or her specially designated graduate assistant, TEP will develop ELL courses or infuse ELL issues into the overall TEP curriculum.
- To insure that pre-service teachers are getting the most out of their ELL-related coursework, the TEP Director will develop and institute a pedagogy assessment instrument under the direction of the CLD Review Committee soon after ELL-related coursework has been implemented.
- TEP and its range of partners must identify existing ESL personnel and services available in the partner schools, the school districts, and the university-at-large.
- We strongly recommend that a specially designated graduate student be appointed to work exclusively with the Ackerley Partner Schools Network to develop new resources for professional development in cultural and linguistic diversity, especially as those resources address the needs of ELL students in our public schools.
- A CLD Review Committee consisting of 2 representatives each from P-12 schools, the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the community-at-large will be established to work with the TEP Director in an effort to develop, implement, and assess the implementation of the recommendations of the Study Group on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

In the Study Group's view, the basic building blocks for developing a pathway for undergraduate English majors are currently in place. There is a need, however, to integrate the various elements in more intentional ways so that colleagues in the various units will become increasingly aware of what each other is doing to improve the learning opportunities available to undergraduates in the College of Education's Teacher Education Program who wish to become P-12 educators. None of this, of course, will be possible until CoE hires a CLD tenure-track faculty member to contribute to and provide support for the project.

Members of the Study Group on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:

Lila Chin, Lauri DeWhitt, Sue Dorer, Jennifer Geist, Juan Guerra, Julia Herschensohn, Farin Houk, Yasuko Kanno, Anita Morales, Cap Peck, Maria Ramirez, Beth Roodhouse, Sandra Silberstein, Tom Stritikus, Manka Varghese, Jennifer Velling