Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction

Roundtable Discussion
Friday, June 5, 2015
Welcome & Greetings

• Eva García, NYC RBE-RN Executive Director

• Dr. Anita Vazquez-Batisti, Associate Dean Graduate School of Education

• Nancy Villarreal de Adler, NYSABE Executive Director
State of the Field Address

Angélica Infante-Green,
Associate Commissioner, NYSED/OBE-WL
Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Tazi
Associate Professor, Mercy College
Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Tazi, Mercy College

- **Purpose**: “to help organize the efforts to provide effective instruction and programming for the growing number of multilingual children entering preschool programs at this time of rapid expansion of UPK.”

- **Process**: Convening scholars, leaders, and practitioners in a roundtable to articulate recommendations to the field.
Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Tazi, Mercy College

• **Terms**: There are currently many terms to define the same population – multilingual learners, emergent bilinguals, dual language learners. We find the term “English Language Learner” inadequate and so we abandon that term.

• **Starting Point**: We promote bilingual education, that’s where we begin. Conversations revolve around implementing bilingual education.

• **Recommendations and Target Action**
Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Tazi, Mercy College

• Format
  – Main Session
  – Roundtable discussions in Break-outs

• Protocols
  – Essential questions to guide thinking
  – Feedback, consensus on general recommendations
  – Identification of target action for the field

• Archives
  – Video recording
  – Audio recording
  – Websites: [www.nysabe.net](http://www.nysabe.net);
    [http://www.fordham.edu/info/21065/nysnyc_regional_bilingual_education_resource_network](http://www.fordham.edu/info/21065/nysnyc_regional_bilingual_education_resource_network)

• Dissemination
  – Statewide networks
History & Collaborators
Panel Moderator

Dr. Luis Reyes
Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College
History & Collaborators

Latino Coalition for Early Care & Education (LCECE), policy initiative of The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF) held Public Forum at Baruch College, CUNY, 2008

Key Issue Areas in Early Care & Education: language access, opportunities for professionals in the field, school readiness, family engagement, a Quality Rating & Improvement System, & community involvement & outreach.
History & Collaborators

LCECE Forum Recommendations:

• unified & more efficient data & information collection system,
• hiring & developing diverse, linguistic & culturally competent workforce,
• QRIS incorporate cultural aspects that affect learning, language acquisition & cognitive development,
• adequate resources & funding for such programs,
• effective outreach strategies focused on Latino & multilingual-learning families, &
• better coordination among state & city agencies & school districts & between school districts, family day care providers & child care centers.
History & Collaborators

- NYS Board of Regents (2005) *ECE Policy Statement*
- Pre-K Now (2006): *Pre-K & Latinos* (García & González);
- Reyes (2007): Recommendations for Commissioner’s Pre-K Regulations (signed by leaders of 21 organizations in NY);
- Natl. Women’s Law Center (2007): *Providing State Pre-K in Child Care Centers*;
- NYS CR on Contracts for Excellence: additional state school aid) model programs serving ELLs allowable, including in full-day UPK programs;
History & Collaborators

• Scholastic, Verizon & NCLR: *Lee y serás/Read and You Will Be*;
• Colorín Colorado (Spanish-English bilingual website created by WETA/PBS for educators and parents);
• Office of Children & Family Services/OCFS: began piloting QRIS in 2009 7 provides manuals, surveys and training in English & Spanish for EC programs in NYS;
• Espinoza (2008): *Challenging Myths about Young ELLs* (FCD);
• NYSABE (2014): *Position Statement on Bilingual Education in Early Childhood/Preschool Programs*. 
History & Collaborators

• Ronald Woo, Esq. (March 2014): 2-page brief on New York Prekindergarten (NYS and U.S. legal and policy documents re services to “ELL/LEP” children, including Part 117 of the Regulations of the Commissioner, New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, & Universal Prekindergarten Program Implementation Guidance:

• Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (2005): Six Research-Based Guiding Principles Serving the Needs of English Learners in Preschool “School Readiness” Programs

• LCECE panel presentation at NYSABE 2012 Annual Conf.: Walking the Walk: Building on our Children’s Languages & Cultures”;

• Maggie Severns (2012): Starting Early with English Language Learners: First Lessons from Illinois (New America Foundation);

• Zoila Tazi (Oct. 2014): Board of Regents handout: Identification of ELLs in Pre-K.
Panel

Dr. Luis Reyes

• Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Instruction & Programming
• Jorge Saenz de Viteri, Leadership & Policy
• Danielle Guindo, Community Partners
• Dr. Juan Morales Flores, Higher Ed & Teacher Preparation
• Dr. Zoila Tazi, Research
1. Alternate Interim Placement classes promote English-only language instruction and the majority culture.

2. There is a lack of parent education programs specifically targeted to immigrant families and to building parental engagement.

3. There is a general failure to consider the achievement gap for multilingual learners in UPK programs: Effective teaching should be experiential and framed within Universal Design for Teaching, Funds of Knowledge, and Translanguaging.
Alternate Interim Placement Classes

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

• There are unclear guidelines for UPK teachers on how to work with multilingual learners.
• Responsibility for the home language is placed on teaching assistants who are only required to have a high school education.
• Limiting the presence of parents and not including families’ funds of knowledge disempower parents and foster divisions between home and school.
Lack of Parent Education Programs for Immigrant Families

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

• Parents are often ambivalent about using the home language when all therapies and instruction for their children are provided in English.
• Parents often have limited understanding of language and communication disorders and how to support their child’s development.
• Parents often have a limited understanding of their rights, their responsibilities, and U.S. institutions.
Closing the Gap: Universal Design for Learning, Funds of Knowledge, Translanguaging

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

- Instruction should include multiple ways of representation, expression, and generalization. There is current underutilization of technology and lack of guidance for teachers and parents.
- There is a need to learn about families’ funds of knowledge and how to integrate this knowledge into the classroom curriculum.
- There is a need to integrate the home language(s) as a means of communication and learning for multilingual learners.
Leadership & Policy

Jorge Saenz De Viteri
Latino Coalition For Early Care and Education (LCECE)

http://jorgesaenzdeviteri.com
"The Prekindergarten Learning Standards are intended for all children regardless of economic, linguistic, and cultural differences or physical, learning, and emotional challenges."

Leadership & Policy
Jorge Saenz de Viteri, LCECE

A Systemic, Comprehensive Approach to High Quality Early Care and Education

Currently, too many governmental and regulatory entities have oversight of the various early care and education settings in NYS.¹⁶ Our ECE delivery system is fragmented and challenging to navigate for both parents and providers alike. Complex regulations, funding gaps and eligibility requirements exacerbate this problem.
Leadership & Policy

Jorge Saenz de Viteri, LCECE

- Salary parity across New York City’s entire publicly funded early care and education system.

- That funding is set aside for ongoing preparation and professional development of the professional prekindergarten workforce with coursework on dual language acquisition and effective teaching practices for DLL students.

- That New York City promotes specific strategies that encourage parent involvement and support Latino parents in creating engaging language and literacy experiences at home to reinforce children’s learning at preschool.

- That the New York City Department of Education’s web-based systems expand to encompass all schools and providers who administer Universal Pre-K services and incorporate child outcomes data being collected through the various online systems that pre-kindergarten programs are currently using.

- That New York City ensures that the web-based information is also available in print-format in the parents’ home language.

- That New York City’s early education programs ensure that children have opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language, and utilize assessments in both English and the home language that help determine what the child has learned and is capable of doing as well as the child’s level of language development.

- That Mayor Bill de Blasio creates the Office for Early Care and Education.
Community Partners

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- CBO Partnerships in Public Schools
- NYC Early Education Centers (NYC EECs)
- Improving outcomes across settings
- Promoting bilingual education in CB settings
- Challenges to Access, Diversity and Quality
- Partners – untapped potential
Public Schools – CBO Partnerships

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

• Social – emotional supports for vulnerable students and families
• Seamless integration in school governance and overall school culture to foster welcoming and inclusive school environment
• Increased student and family engagement
• Cultural and linguistic competency to reduce typical barriers to access and enrollment, and increase diversity in Pre – K classrooms
Community Based Pre-K  (NYC EECs)

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Imbedded and integrated into communities
- Provide continuity for families receiving other services from CBO
- Prioritize admissions for currently enrolled 3 year olds, children who have siblings enrolled, or are otherwise receiving services from the CBO
- Knowledgeable of and integrated in communities, with access and ability to reach isolated, vulnerable and diverse populations
Improving Learning Outcomes Across Settings

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Incentives for professional development to increase number of teachers certified to teach in dual language classrooms
- Promotion of ideal that the use and development of home language is an asset
- Incentives to recruit diverse workforce
- Common Core alignment
- Data collection across settings to identify language status, ethnicity, gender, etc
Promoting Bilingual Education in CBO Settings

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- CBOs have added benefit of close connection with community
- Most effective CBOs are also networked with other nearby resources that can help spread the word (libraries, district offices of elected officials, CBO partners, hospitals)
- Parent education curricula that reaches parents where they are, in their own language, to empower them as advocates for their child; town halls or info events to educate parents about their rights, what they should expect from public school settings, and the elements of the common core state standards
Challenges to
Access, Diversity and Quality
Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Salary disparities between settings
- Elevating quality of staff in dual language programs must be done in a way that preserves the positions of existing teachers and encourages and motivates professional development and career “ladders”
- Insufficient demographic data on public schools and NYC EECs that can be used to examine diversity and access within classrooms and in various neighborhoods
- So far, only 10 “dual language Pre-K program” in Chinese or Spanish – other rapidly increasing populations must also be represented (ie Bengali). NOTE – this designation came from applying K-12 standards to the Pre-K
- DOE is unclear about the meaning of “enhanced language programs”
Challenges cont’d

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

• Prioritization of enrollment for existing clients in NYCEECs can reduce socioeconomic diversity in these settings (both low income and higher income groups)

• NYCEECs that receive funding from ACS or HeadStart can extend hours of Pre-K through blended funding streams, also available only to income eligible families

• To maximize ability of CBOs to effectively serve school communities, common indicators must be known about the school population that can inform practice, hiring, and coordination of resources
Untapped Partners

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRRs) are experts in provision of professional development for early childhood educators, and can train Pre K teachers in effective integration of emergent bilinguals; also directly communicate with parents to provide referrals and information and demystify the process of enrollment as well as support through
- Health Care providers (neighborhood doctors and community based clinics can be hubs of info)
- Consulates
- Funders and Foundations to build on the momentum of interest in early education
- Grass roots organizations can recruit teachers as well as families
- Research institutions to facilitate data collection and analysis, and recommendations for policy and practice in UPK
Higher Education & Teacher Preparation

Dr. Juan Morales Flores, Kingsborough Community College

How do we elevate the status of early childhood educators and professionals?

Main Focus:
Educate all sectors of our society about the importance of providing high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs.

At the same time, continue to:
Teach pre-service teachers and teachers about self-evaluation: being able to identify their strengths, areas in which they can improve, and their unconscious biases. Curriculum needs to reflect the diversity in our communities, cities, country and the world.

Work hand in hand with families at all levels of education: curriculum, policy, funding, and allow them to be part of the decision making process.

Serve as mentors. Identify, motivate and encourage students. Generate change one student at a time.
Put emphasis on the impact that civic engagement activities and volunteerism can have in our schools, families and communities.

Big Goals:
True collaboration between government, private sector, and families.

Develop an equitable system of funding schools and education. Funding dependent mainly on property taxes needs to change in order to provide all children with an equal opportunity to succeed.

Develop programs to empower teachers and communities.
Example: The Respect Initiative to Transform Teaching and Leading

Result: An equitable early childhood educational system, equitably funded, in which families, government and the private sector collaborate for the well being of the children. Allowing for the development of programs that would best fit the families and communities in which they are located. They need to be quality programs that teach all students about multiculturalism and respects and fosters multilingualism.
What can teacher preparation programs do to promote bilingual education for multilingual learners across diverse settings?

Help develop consciousness regarding the characteristics and needs of the children in the different sectors (families, neighborhoods, towns, cities) of our country.

Develop and conduct learning experiences in all subject matters in which the pre-service teachers participate in activities dealing with multiculturalism and multilingual learners.

Help them understand themselves in order to become effective educators.

Share Demographics: As an example, Census 2010 indicated Majority of children, age 5 or under, belong to a racial and/or ethnic minority group. The number of immigrants has increased, especially Hispanics.

Advocacy through campus and community events, educational, and human rights organizations.
Final Argument:

Not to foster bilingual education and to ignore multilingual learners, in my opinion, is an attack to the human rights of the children. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), article 30: The Right of Children of minorities/indigenous groups to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one’s own culture, language and religion applies to everyone, even in instances in where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country.
Research

• Settling the Bilingual/English-only question – what are the advantages?
• What does the research suggest about bilingual instruction at the PreK level?
• Specific areas of need for multilingual learners:
  – Incidence of poverty
  – Immigrant populations
  – Oral language development
  – First assessments
  – Inconsistent programming
  – Access to preschool
Research

Dr. Zoila Tazi, Mercy College

• Specific areas of strength for multilingual learners:
  – Emergent literacy
  – Prognosis on achievement

• Understanding school readiness – the movement & the expectations
Research

Dr. Zoila Tazi, Mercy College

• Implications for Practice
  – Identification of multilingual learners
  – Instructional approaches

• Emphasis for research
# Roundtable Discussions

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<td>Research</td>
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Conclusion & Next Steps

Eva García, NYC RBE-RN & Zoila Tazi, Mercy College

• Reporting from each group
• Final Document
  – Posted on nysabe.net & NYC RBE-RN
  – Proceedings published in JMER
• Dissemination
  – Via Email to participants
  – Our networks
  – Statewide