

The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, v14 p255-268, Winter 1994.

RECRUITING AND RETAINING BILINGUAL TEACHERS: A COOPERATIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY MODEL

Lynne T. Diaz-Rico, Jerilynn Smith

Note: Every attempt has been made to maintain the integrity of the printed text. In some cases, figures and tables have been reconstructed within the constraints of the electronic environment.

The Bilingual Teacher Shortage

Severe understaffing of bilingual classrooms has plagued California classrooms in the wake of increasing immigration (Banks, 1989), and demographic changes in California indicate population trends which the United States as a whole will experience in the 1990s. In the 1980s, 6 million immigrants moved to California, increasing the number of limited English proficient students in the public schools to nearly 750,000 by the end of the decade (Anderson, 1990). Macias (1989) estimates that the United States had between 3.5 and 5 million limited English proficient students in 1989.

The current California population of language minority students with limited English proficiency is 1,151,800 (California Department of Education, 1993). In addition to immigration from Mexico, large numbers of Asian, Central American, and Caribbean peoples have resettled in America, heavily affecting the public school system (Olsen, 1988). The biggest demographic change predicted for the last decade of this century is an unprecedented growth in the Hispanic population of the United States. With the current median age for a Hispanic woman at 23 years compared to an Anglo American woman at 31.3 (Kellogg, 1988), and the birthrate for Hispanics (2.7 children per female) exceeding that of Anglos (1.4), Blacks, and Asians (1.8) (Haycock & Navarro, 1988), the U.S. Hispanic population has a tremendous potential for growth and is growing five times faster than the population of the rest of the country (Vobejda, 1990). The number of school age children representing linguistic minorities, especially Spanish-speaking, will remain high for an indefinite period. The increase in non-Anglo enrollment in the public schools is expected to continue: Between 1980 and the year 2000, the number of Hispanics in California will double, from 4.5 million (24% of the population) to 9 million (Haycock & Navarro, 1988), and the number of Asians will almost triple from 1.3 million to 3 million. The education challenge is daunting: 43% of Hispanic students drop out before graduating (Highsmith, 1990), and the achievement of African American and Hispanic students consistently lags behind that of Anglos (Haycock & Navarro, 1988). The difficulties faced by the California public school districts providing quality education in response to these demographic pressures are challenges which will ultimately come to many other districts all over the United States (Henshaw, 1989). Hiring qualified staff for American schools to meet the needs of school children with limited English proficiency is an educational problem that will profoundly influence life in America in the coming decades. Hiring bilingual teachers presents a particular challenge for school districts. The nation needs between 100,000 and 200,000 bilingual teachers, depending on the estimate of students with limited English

proficiency and the desired student-teacher ratio.

California's difficulty in credentialing bilingual teachers presages the nation's. In 1990, the California Superintendent of Schools commissioned a special 29 member task force to report on the preparation of teachers qualified to serve the growing population of language-minority students. According to the California Department of Education's report, *Remedying the Shortage of Teachers for Limited English Proficient Students*, only 7,775 classroom teachers hold bilingual credentials and certificates, nearly 12,000 short of the 19,500 needed (Holt, 1990). To mandate change, the report calls for increased funding to train additional teachers quickly to increase the number and to improve the quality of teacher-training programs and to institute financial incentives to keep teachers in the classroom. Recruiting bilingual teachers is a challenge, particularly for the largest limited English proficient population, those who are Spanish-speaking. Because the majority of bilingual teachers are representatives of cultural minorities, the shortage of bilingual teachers may be a continuing problem. At the time when the school-age population is becoming increasingly non-Anglo, minorities (especially Hispanic) are decreasing in representation in the teacher candidate pool (Zapata, 1988). Across the nation, ethnic or language minorities make up just over 9% of all teachers, down from 17% in the mid-'70s (Harris, 1989). The National Education Association predicts that by the turn of the century only one public school teacher in 20 will be a minority, while nearly one of every three school children will be African American, Hispanic, or Asian. By the year 2000, minorities will account for only 5% of public school teachers, compared with 21% today (Minorities need, 1987). Part of the challenge in recruiting bilingual teachers is low enrollment of Hispanics in higher education. In 1985, only about 4% of undergraduate students were Hispanic (Santos, 1986), and only 2,533 Latino students received teaching certificates (Harris, 1989). Since structural barriers exist all along the teacher preparation pipeline such as poor K 12 preparation for prospective minority teachers, financial barriers to advanced schooling, and competition from other professions (Fields, 1988), obtaining university academic advisement may be a particular challenge for minority candidates. A survey of 156 Latino teachers found that 58% reported that insufficient individualized university faculty counseling was a barrier to achieving a teaching career (Monsivais, 1990). Clearly, universities have an important role to play in the recruitment and preparation of bilingual teachers. The same study (Monsivais, 1990) reported that 51% of respondents planned to leave classroom teaching within the next five years; of those leaving the classroom, half plan to leave education completely. Thus, the recruitment of bilingual teachers is not only a great difficulty, but the retention of bilingual teachers is also clearly in jeopardy.

The shortage of bilingual teachers has been felt particularly in those areas within California which bear the brunt of immigration. San Bernardino County, California, has been heavily affected by non-English-speaking immigrants. In square miles, San Bernardino is the largest county in the United States; its proximity (directly east of Los Angeles County) to inner-city Los Angeles and slightly lower cost of living makes it a magnet for new arrivals to California. The populations of San Bernardino County and its neighbor, Riverside County, have grown by 63% since 1980, adding 1 million residents in ten years (Garson, 1990). The San Bernardino County school districts have grown by 100,000 students since 1980 (Raney, 1990); the addition of 15,000 students in the 1990-91 school year necessitated hiring 500 new teachers. San Bernardino County schools average 50.1 students with limited English proficiency per each credentialed bilingual teacher (Kalbus, Duffy, & Schwabe, 1990). The shortage of bilingual teachers is difficult to remediate through local teacher training: California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), one of the top three California universities in the number of teachers educated each year, graduated 440 certified teachers in 1989, of whom 10 qualified for the multiple subjects (K-8) teaching credential with bilingual emphasis.

Despite the 42% minority student enrollment in the 34 school districts in San Bernardino County, only 13.1% of certified teachers represent linguistic or cultural minority populations (Kalbus, Duffy, and Schwabe, 1990). School districts find that it is not easy to recruit or retain bilingual teachers in this climate of scarcity and demand. Creative strategies are needed to attract bilingual teachers and to prevent their loss to competing districts after they are hired.

Cooperative Models for Teacher Recruitment and Staff Training

Cooperative programs between university schools of teacher education and school districts are growing in importance nationwide (Diaz-Rico, 1993). At present, several programs show promising cooperation between universities and local schools in the preparation of increased numbers of minority teachers.

Jefferson County Minority Teacher Recruitment Project

The search for potential candidates for bilingual teacher education programs resembles in many ways the search for minority teachers that has taken place nationwide. A successful model for minority teacher recruitment has been developed in Jefferson County, Kentucky (Greer & Husk, 1989) which exemplifies cooperation among the local school district, the university, and community agencies. In the Minority Teacher Recruitment Project, the school district has spearheaded the recruitment effort by committing a staff position primarily to minority recruitment, by reserving noncertified staff positions for prospective teachers so they can work for the district while preparing to become teachers, and by making summer employment available to provide extra financial support for those staff members working on obtaining teaching credentials. In cooperation with a local university, the school district has provided student teacher placements and identified outstanding minority teachers in the district to serve as cooperating teachers. An overall climate of professional growth and enrichment within the district has encouraged a prestigious profile for the teaching profession as a whole.

Within this model, the role of the university is to assist minority students in planning their course of study, to offer courses at times which are compatible with family and job responsibilities, to design special summer programs for minority youth, to give students credit for work experience to fulfill practicum and field observation requirements, and to designate certain courses as transition classes for those students who are transferring from junior colleges or who have been away from the college environment for several years. In addition, the university plays a role in offering financial aid inducements in the form of loans, scholarships, and grants.

In addition to advising and modifying the course of study to encourage minority enrollment, the university has made a commitment to affirmative action hiring to increase the numbers of minority staff and faculty who are available to mentor future teachers. University faculty and staff members also encourage minority enrollment by participating in career fairs and by spending time in the schools collaborating on mutual projects and classroom research.

Teachers also play a crucial role in recruiting minority students into the profession. The quality of the daily interaction with students is a vital link to students' perception of a teaching career. In the Jefferson County model, teachers formed a support group called "Friends of Education." Such local organizations have adopted individuals with scholarships and have also acted as catalysts to urge state and national teachers' organizations to endorse and promote recruitment activities.

The University of Connecticut-Hartford Public Schools Program

The University of Connecticut has cooperated with the Hartford Public Schools as a local educational agency to implement a staff development plan (Minaya Rowe, 1990). Activities including a mutual design of educational activities and collaborative training and research efforts form the major components of the cooperative effort. The content of the collaboration was built on concepts of first and second language development, techniques of sheltered English, and curriculum design, with academic content held to the same standards of rigor as in comparable university graduate courses. Teachers who have participated in the staff development program engage in follow-up dissemination activities such as presentations to other school personnel and peer coaching. As a part of the collaboration, practicing teachers demonstrated and modeled appropriate classroom practices under supervision and with feedback from other participants, then presented position papers or served on panel discussions during conferences sponsored by the university. These presentations and other curricular ideas were published in guidebooks, curriculum guides, and teachers' manuals for the benefit of participants and other interested teachers.

The emphasis on the professional advancement and academic development of the participants has led the participating teachers to make presentations at monthly workshops for the school district and annual inservice meetings for the Connecticut Association for Bilingual Bicultural Education and at the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE). They have also become involved with district curriculum committees and mentor teaching as well as becoming involved in university programs at the master's, sixth-year credential, or doctoral level. Teachers taking advantage of these professional growth opportunities may be an indicator of an exemplary staff development model.

An Exemplary Recruitment and Retention Model

Fontana Unified School District (FUSD), San Bernardino County, has originated a dynamic set of recruitment strategies which has resulted in a promising prognosis for short-term and long-term bilingual staffing needs.

Fontana is one of the fastest growing communities in California; the population has doubled since 1980, making it one of the 10 fastest growing cities in California (Garson, 1990). With 29,173 students K-12, Fontana Unified is the second largest school district in San Bernardino County. Of these students, 1,735 were classified as limited English proficient in the 1989-90 school year; this number grew to 4,160 in 1992, a 130% increase in three years. Fontana, like many other districts in California, has been faced with a severe shortage of bilingual teachers. However, in 1992 the classrooms are fully staffed with bilingual certified teachers. With the aid of Fontana's Bilingual Education Master Plan, the number of bilingual teachers has grown from 13 in 1989 to 52 in 1993.

The Fontana master plan has six interlocking program components that have dovetailed smoothly to produce successful recruitment and retention of bilingual teachers (see Figure 1): (a) a well-defined set of staffing policies and procedures designed to meet the needs of students with limited English proficiency in grades K-12; (b) a career ladder for bilingual teacher aides in partnership with a school of education at a major university and with advising and counseling personnel at feeder community colleges; (c) knowledgeable district support for prospective teachers on the credentialing process; (d) a comprehensive package of recruitment activities designed to advertise and promote Fontana as a progressive living and working environment; (e) a full range of staff development activities to improve the skills of the current teachers and teaching assistants; and (f) a close professional relationship among the bilingual education coordinating staff and professional and community organizations that support bilingual education. Uniting these program subcomponents are philosophical elements that give a coherent focus to the recruitment and retention effort.

These subcomponents can be analyzed to identify those strategies that are responsible for their success and a model drawn from these which can aid other districts to improve their capacity to identify, hire, and retain new bilingual teachers.

Figure 1. Philosophical Elements and Program Components.

<p>Philosophical Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Personalizing the student-university interface *Shared knowledge base among experts in bilingual education *Making teachers feel valued; direct response to concerns *Orchestration of community support for bilingual education <p>Program components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Staffing policies and procedures *Career ladder for bilingual teachers *District support for credentialing *Recruitment activities *Teacher education *Community awareness

Philosophical Elements

Several key philosophical components unify the effort put forth by the university and the school district to recruit and retain bilingual teachers (see Figure 1). First, the school-university connection must be a personal one. Having the name of a contact person at the university, preferably a faculty member in the School of Education, means that individuals who need academic advisement have someone to approach. This lowers anxiety for potential bilingual teacher education candidates. In lieu of a specific contact person, an advisement center for education candidates with a knowledgeable staff and flexible hours helps prospective teachers to receive academic advisement. The second element of importance is a shared knowledge base among experts in bilingual education. With a unified agreement about what constitutes key research findings and exemplary practice in bilingual education, the school district's teacher education programs and the university preservice preparation are in alignment, bringing together theory and practice. Third, the university and school district both play a role in making teachers feel valued, particularly if teacher education in general is seen as a university-wide responsibility. Faculty and staff in the School of Education and personnel at the school district support bilingual teachers when they respond directly to concerns, such as placement preferences or classroom problems. This can be evident on an individual basis, when personnel return telephone calls immediately when approached by bilingual teachers or prospective teachers. On a general level, sponsoring banquets, awards, and favorable press releases helps to orchestrate community advocacy for bilingual education, the fourth element of philosophical importance in the support for bilingual teachers.

Bilingual Education Staffing Policies and Procedures

Meeting the language development needs of 4,160 English as a second language learners in grades K-12

while making efficient use of bilingual personnel is a triple challenge. Students must receive instruction that satisfies their English language development needs; students must be given the maximum opportunity to achieve subject-matter in all academic areas of study, with a commitment to native-language instruction when it is appropriate within a student's second language acquisition progress; and students must increase in self-esteem and pride in their language and culture. To fulfill these ends, Fontana has developed four distinct types of bilingual programs, each with its individual staffing policy: (a) a full bilingual program (the school has a bilingual teacher in every grade level); (b) a modified bilingual program (3-4 bilingual teachers in a team to meet the needs of bilingual students in the school); (c) a magnet bilingual program (a bilingual teacher draws in students from several classes on a pull-out basis); and (d) a district bilingual resource program (a bilingual teacher serves students in several schools). Staffing priorities make maximum use of bilingual personnel who come to the district with a range of previous preparation and experiences. With this hierarchy of services, the district makes maximum use of bilingual teachers, and the teachers feel more valued because they are used efficiently which promotes retention.

The Bilingual Teacher Career Ladder Program

The Bilingual Teacher Career Ladder Program is a staff development component which offers the means for both existing and future personnel to qualify for bilingual teacher certification.

The Career Ladder program pays tuition and other expenses (registration fees, books, and parking) for bilingual teacher assistants or other school district personnel at a local community college for the first two years of post secondary education and then pays tuition at California State University, San Bernardino, for the junior and senior year. Participants must sign a contract agreeing to teach in the district for a minimum of one year for every year the district supports them while they earn the degree and credential. Bus drivers and clerks who participate must agree to become instructional aides to gain the classroom experience that will qualify them to become intern teachers during the year in which they obtain teaching credits. In turn, the district agrees to provide them with full pay as intern teachers during the required fifth (post-baccalaureate) year of teacher education.

The Career Ladder program was the result of an intensive collaboration among the Assistant Superintendents for Administration and Instruction, FUSD; the Bilingual and ESL Coordinator, FUSD; and the Chair of the Department of Elementary and Bilingual Education, CSUSB. An agreement between CSUSB and FUSD allowed the initial 50 Career Ladder participants to enroll and to obtain books with the University billing FUSD directly. In this way, participants were relieved of the financial burden of paying and being reimbursed. The local community colleges are linked with the school district in a similar arrangement. Careful advising by community college counselors and an articulated series of courses make transfer to CSUSB relatively easy when students are ready for their junior year.

The Career Ladder also extends into the high school. As a feeder to the community colleges and universities, Fontana High School has established a Future Bilingual Teachers of America club with criteria for membership that include being bilingual in Spanish/English or another language and a willingness to commit to a career goal to become a bilingual teacher. To encourage high school students in this career path, Fontana USD pays minimum wage to high school students who tutor in bilingual classrooms after a semester of weekly training. The bilingual coordinator also works with community service clubs to develop college scholarships for future bilingual teachers.

District Credentialing Support

The third component of Fontana's plan has been to provide prospective teachers with counseling and emotional support during the process of obtaining a California credential. This is important for minority teaching candidates who may need support to negotiate the stringent demands placed upon teachers by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing such as obtaining the required security clearance and helping out-of-state teachers who may need additional courses to meet requirements for California's bilingual credential. Specific individual needs, such as funding to take the bilingual qualifying tests, are met by a district staff development fund. This support is a major factor in retaining teachers after they are fully credentialed.

Recruitment, Advertising, and Networking

Fontana USD has invested in recruitment booths at state and national bilingual education conferences, out-of-state conferences, and local college recruiting fairs. The district has brought to these activities not only district office personnel but other bilingual teachers to meet with prospective candidates. This establishes an important peer connection network for potential credentialed employees and uses bilingual teachers as program ambassadors. Fontana USD also sends position flyers to local university placement offices and maintains close contact with placement personnel. When CSUSB sends a list of students who have applied to participate in the bilingual intern program, the Fontana USD bilingual coordinator calls these individuals to arrange interviews for teaching positions. These recruitment efforts may draw bilingual teachers who are not currently certified in California but who can become certified with district assistance. Part of the networking involves professors who teach bilingual teachers at the local universities and who are familiar with the FUSD program or who supervise intern teachers in the district. The participation of the bilingual coordinator on the adjunct faculty at CSUSB develops professional collegiality and ensures that the school district and the university faculty are in philosophical agreement with the tenets of bilingual theory and practice.

Meeting the Training Needs of Existing Staff

Staff inservice activities for the bilingual staff continue throughout the school year. The bilingual teachers are invited to meet with visiting professors from Mexico and experts in bilingual education; frequent workshops prepare candidates for the Bilingual Certificate of Competency examination, and teachers may enroll in Spanish for Teachers classes to upgrade their language skills. Teachers are frequently paid stipends to attend these activities. These activities often include university personnel and provide opportunities for collaboration. As an incentive for teachers' participation, classroom materials are often given to teachers at these inservice sessions.

Involving the Community in Support of Bilingual Education

The Fontana community has supported bilingual education through school board approval as well as through professional support from the teachers' union and community business leaders. The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has cooperated in raising scholarship funds for future bilingual teachers. An active California Association for Bilingual Education chapter has begun in Fontana, which will also be involved in fund raising and support for classroom activities. Parents of bilingual children are close to the classroom and have been asked to serve on advisory boards and parent councils. This support from the community for classroom teachers' efforts makes teachers feel appreciated by the community, a major factor in creating job satisfaction leading to retention in the district.

Conclusion

School districts needing bilingual teachers in the 1990s must work hard to fill the positions which are mandated by the dramatic increases in populations with limited English proficiency. Careful attention to the business of recruiting, supporting, training, and retaining qualified teachers pays dividends in the services rendered to students who need English language development. A commitment to certain philosophical elements throughout the subcomponents of the program unify the effort. The relationship between the students and the university must be personalized; students appreciate knowing the individuals at the university who will advise them. When a common knowledge base of theory and practice in bilingual education is shared between a university and a school district, teachers feel a sense of security in knowing their classroom practice is state of the art. Making teachers feel valued by responding to their concerns, supplying them with adequate materials, and including them in recruitment for peers help to promote retention. Efforts by the bilingual coordinator to orchestrate community support also help teachers feel valued. The four philosophical elements and the six program components (staffing policies and procedures, career ladder for bilingual teachers, district support for credentialing, recruitment activities, teacher education, and community awareness) presented in Figure 1 must function together to achieve maximum success in bilingual teacher recruiting and retention. A unified staffing, recruitment, and retention plan for bilingual teachers is essential for school districts whose goal is academic excellence.

References

- Anderson, J. F. (1990, June/July). The challenge in California's classrooms. *CTA Action*, p. 14.
- Banks, S. (1989, November 21). Schools are frustrated by bilingual demands. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. A1, A24.
- California Department of Education (1993). R-30 census.
- Diaz-Rico, L. (1993, February). New roles for educators: Collaborative school-site teacher education. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, San Diego, CA.
- Fields, C. (1988, May/June). The Hispanic pipeline: Narrow, leaking, and needing repair. *Change*, 20(3), 20-27.
- Garson, A. (1990, September 2). Area growth booms, but needs roots. *San Bernardino Sun*, p. D1.
- Greer, R. G., & Husk, W. L. Recruiting minorities into teaching. *Fastback 290*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.
- Harris, R. (1989, September 27). The search for minority teachers. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. A1, A18.
- Haycock, K., & Navarro, M. S. (1988). *Unfinished business*. Oakland, CA: Achievement Council.
- Henshaw, J. (1989, July 25). State points the way to society of minorities. *San Bernardino Sun*, pp. A1, A9.
- Highsmith, J. (1990, March). Educating the new immigrants. *California State University: The CSU Academic Senator*, 19(3), 3.

- Holt, D. (1990, February 24). Demographic changes in California and overview of state policies regarding LEP students. Burlingame, CA: California Teachers Association workshop.
- Kalbus, J., Duffy, J., & Schwabe, R. A. (1990). Demographic and education conditions of public schools in San Bernardino County: A statistical report for 1990. San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools.
- Kellogg, J. B. (1988, November). Forces of change. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 199-204.
- Macias, R. (1989). The national need for bilingual teachers. Claremont, CA: Tomas Rivera Center.
- Minaya-Rowe, L. (1990, Spring). Practicing a new vocabulary: Teacher training in the bilingual classroom. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 6, 1-10.
- Minorities need apply: Schools consider new recruitment programs as the number of minority teachers dwindles. (1987, July-August). National Retired Teachers Association, p. 8.
- Monsivais, G. I. (1990, Fall). Policy issue: The attrition of Latino teachers. Claremont, CA: Tomas Rivera Center.
- Olsen, L. (1988, November). Crossing the schoolhouse border: Immigrant children in California. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 211-213.
- Raney, R. F. (1990, September 2). County school figures reflect area's growth. *San Bernardino Sun*, pp. B1, B6.
- Santos, R. (1986). Hispanic high school graduates: Making choices. In M. A. Olivas (Ed.), *Latino college student* (104-130). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Vobejda, B. (1990, June 8). Census: Hispanics more likely to live in poverty. *The Washington Post*, p. A10.
- Zapata, J. T. (1988, January/February). Early identification and recruitment of Hispanic teacher candidates. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(1), 19-23.

Lynne T. Diaz-Rico, EdD, is an associate professor in the Department of Elementary and Bilingual Education at California State University in San Bernardino, California.

Jerilynn Smith, PhD, is a coordinator of the Bilingual and ESL Program for the Fontana Unified School District in San Bernardino, California.