Preparing Mainstream Teachers for English-Language Learners:
Is Being a Good Teacher Good Enough?

By Ester J. de Jong & Candace A. Harper

Introduction

More and more teachers find themselves teaching students from increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In a recent report (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), 42% of the teachers surveyed indicated that they had English Language Learners (ELLs) in their classroom, but only 12.5% of these teachers had received more than eight hours of professional development specifically related to ELLs (NCES, 2002). The significant achievement gap between language minority and language majority students (Moss & Puma, 1995), along with an educational climate that encourages inclusionary practices rather than separate, specialized programs, make it imperative that teacher preparation programs examine the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that mainstream teachers need to develop in order to work effectively with both ELLs and fluent English speakers (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

The purpose of this article is to present a framework that identifies areas of expertise necessary for mainstream teachers to be prepared to teach in classrooms with native and non-native English speakers. Currently, explicit attention to the linguistic and cultural needs of ELLs is lacking in most teacher

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preparation programs. A recent AACTE survey of 417 institutes of higher education found that fewer than one in six required any preparation for mainstream elementary or secondary teachers regarding the education of ELLs (Menken & Antunez, 2001). This finding suggests a tacit assumption that the preparation of teachers for diverse, native English-speaker classrooms can be easily extended to include ELLs. In this article we show that, while good teaching practices for native English speakers are often relevant for ELLs, they will be insufficient to meet their specific linguistic and cultural needs (e.g., Grant & Wong, 2003).

The article consists of three parts. In the first part we examine the gap between good teaching practices for fluent English speakers and effective practices for ELLs as derived from assumptions about language and literacy development. The second part explores this knowledge and skill gap in the domain of culture. Based on these discussions, we then propose a framework that describes the nature of the knowledge and skills that teachers must have *in addition to* what they acquire through their regular teacher preparation.

JGT and ELLs

The failure to include bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) courses as an integral part of teacher preparation stems, at least in part, from the assumption that teaching ELLs is a matter of pedagogical adaptations that can easily be incorporated into a mainstream teacher's existing repertoire of instructional strategies for a diverse classroom. Teaching ELLs is considered a matter of applying "just good teaching" (JGT) practices developed for a diverse group of native English speakers, such as activating prior knowledge, using cooperative learning, process writing, and graphic organizers or hands-on activities.

Indeed, general education discussions assume English language and U.S.-based cultural experiences for all students. For example, the national content standards (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000; National Council of Teachers of English, 1996; National Academy of Sciences, 1995; National Council for the Social Studies, 1994) describe the disciplinary knowledge base of the content area and good teaching practices but fail to explain the linguistic foundation underlying these effective content classrooms. Yet students are expected to learn new information through reading texts, participate actively in discussions, and use language to represent their learning by presenting oral reports and preparing research papers. These extraordinary language and literacy demands remain invisible. By tacitly assuming that students already possess an oral and literacy base in English for learning academic content, the national standards documents reflect the JGT, native-speaker perspective. While there is an emphasis on creating classrooms where students will "talk to learn," there is no consideration of how students will "learn to talk," which is the additional task facing the second-language learner (Gibbons, 1998a). It is not surprising, therefore, that recommendations for teacher preparation do not specify the

pedagogical tools teachers need to provide ELLs with equal access to these high-quality content classrooms (Dalton, 1998).

While we acknowledge the importance and relevance of many JGT practices, we argue in the sections below that reliance on this approach overlooks the needs of ELLs within the domains of language and culture. As shown in Figure 1, we believe that while JGT teacher preparation is an integral part of preparing mainstream teachers to work with ELLs, teachers must also have the opportunity to systematically develop additional knowledge and skills related to the domains of language and culture in order to be effective in integrated classrooms that include native and non-native speakers of English.
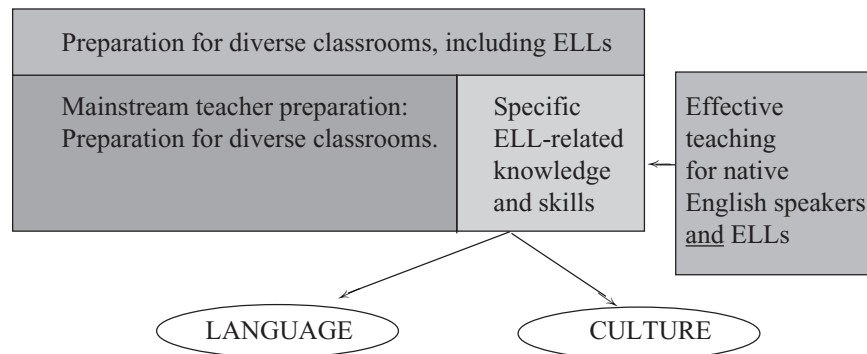
The Language Domain: Making English Visible

Awareness of language development patterns of native English speakers is important for teachers and can result in classroom practices that support the language and literacy development of ELLs. However, teachers also need to understand basic characteristics of second language development and the relationship between first-language (L1) and second-language (L2) learning. Too much reliance on the similarities between L1 and L2 development may overlook the impact of differences between L1 and L2 learning on effective oral language and literacy development and academic achievement for ELLs.

Oral Language Needs

The JGT perspective emphasizes the parallels between the processes of L1 and L2 oral language development. Both L1 and L2 learners (especially very young learners) acquire much oral language naturally and without explicit instruction. Moreover, both groups tend to proceed through stages from simple one-word

Figure 1
Effective Teacher Preparation for Integrated Classrooms

utterances to complex sentence structures. Many recommended classroom practices for L1 learners, when based on constructivist and social interactionist perspectives (Bruner, 1986; Vygotksy, 1978; Wells, 1986, 1981), correspond with those recommended for L2 oral language development, such as a teacher guiding a class discussion of authentic literature and teaching new vocabulary in context (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). Teachers must also understand, however, the implications of the differences between L1 and L2 learning for their classroom practices.

First, while L2 learners do progress through different oral development stages, often including a pre-production (or silent) phase, mainstream teachers cannot equate limited language production with limited academic or cognitive ability, as they might do for first language learners. Many L2 learners have had previous language and academic learning experiences, are cognitively mature, and can therefore understand significantly more than they can demonstrate through oral language. Without understanding the complex relationship between cognition and language proficiency for ELLs, mainstream teachers rely on low-level recall or knowledge questions when questioning second-language learners with limited speaking skills (de Jong & Derrick-Mescua, 2003; Kinsella, 2000), or refrain from asking questions at all in anticipation that ELLs will be unable to respond (Schinke-Llano, 1983; Verplaetse, 2000). In order to avoid watering down the curriculum for ELLs, teachers must be able to systematically assess and provide a variety of question forms appropriate to ELLs' proficiency levels (e.g., requiring non-verbal, one-word, or extended responses), while keeping the cognitive demand challenging. For example, students who can respond only non-verbally in English can be asked to draw the most important causes of the Civil War and do not have to be limited to pointing to maps or labeling major sites or people.

Second, while many good L1 teachers understand the role of oral communication for learning (Cazden, 2001; Edwards & Westgate, 1994) and organize their classroom to enable students to "name, organize, and process information while learning to read and write" (Chaney & Burke, 1998, p. 2), they may overlook the fact that ELLs often need more explicit scaffolding, particularly in performing academic tasks. Working with native speakers may lead teachers to assume that ELLs have a similar level of oral language proficiency in English by the time they enter school or, if not, that their L2 oral language development will proceed quickly and easily. While this might be true for language proficiency related to the immediate social context, academic language proficiency develops at a much more gradual pace, as ELLs attempt to catch up with the developing school-related language skills of their native English-speaking peers (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997). If mainstream teachers do not recognize this distinction between social and academic language proficiency, they may not pay explicit attention to the level and development of (academic) oral proficiency for ELLs. Instead, ELLs will be expected to acquire all aspects of their L2 "by osmosis"; i.e., it is assumed that simply being in an English-language environment and interacting with native

speakers through cooperative learning structures will suffice for language development (Harper & Platt, 1998). While cooperative learning is important, teachers need to understand that exposure to native speakers will not necessarily result in interaction (Valdés, 2001). Moreover, all interaction will not automatically result in language learning (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 1998) and academic language often requires explicit modeling and instructional focus (Echevarria et al., 2004; Tang, 1992). Structured opportunities for ELLs to actively engage in the process of negotiating meaning through academic language must become an integral part of curriculum planning (Gibbons, 2002).

Assuming a student's command over the English language also leads many mainstream teachers to remain unaware of the role of language in the classroom. As native speakers of English, many teachers do not realize that even the most straightforward classroom language can be confusing for ELLs and can limit access to learning. The challenge of idioms and other commonly used, non-literal expressions in spoken English as well as teachers' use of colloquial language to manage the classroom or convey information may be incomprehensible to the ELL student (Harklau, 1999). Teachers direct students to "take things down," "make things up," "knock it off," "hang on," and "hang in there." At a recent teachers' meeting, a fifth grade classroom teacher confided to an ESL colleague that, well into the school year, an ESL student had lingered after class to ask her quietly (and privately), "Teacher, what means 'raise your hand to speak'?" (Pichard, 2002, personal communication). Good teachers of ELLs monitor their own language use and that of their students to provide the necessary verbal and non-verbal support structures for classroom participation and learning.

Finally, mainstream teachers typically have little experience with strategies that are unique to the bilingual student. While working with native English speakers, they will not encounter bilingual phenomena such as native language transfer (Odlin, 1987) or communication strategies such as code switching (Meyers-Scotton & Jake, 2001; Zentella, 1997). They may incorrectly assume that the use of the L1 reflects the students' inability to perform in English and perceive the L1 merely as a crutch in academic learning (or worse, a hindrance to learning in English). They may misinterpret a lag in second-language production skills as a "language delay" or borrowing from the native language as "language confusion." As a result, they may inappropriately refer the student for special education services, enforce an English-only policy in their classroom, or tell students and parents to speak only English. In judging ELLs' oral skills, teachers may also focus on their students' pronunciation as a primary indicator of language proficiency. This may distract them from considering other, more important language dimensions for academic success, such as grammar, vocabulary, and discourse competence. Teachers therefore need to develop an understanding of what is developmentally "normal" for bilingual children. They need to be able to interpret bilingual phenomena appropriately and use students' L1 as a resource for learning.

L2 Literacy Needs

Effective L1 and L2 literacy approaches have much in common. The set of practices that support literacy development for native speakers of English, such as guided reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), process writing (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983), and the use of graphic organizers to facilitate reading comprehension (Moore & Readence, 1984) can also benefit L2 learners (Freeman & Freeman, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). These L1-based literacy approaches assume a strong foundation in oral language and in the vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure of English. Such an assumption is not always warranted, however, when developing reading and writing skills in ELLs.

Reading and L2 Development

Initial reading instruction in English relies heavily on students' oral skills and vocabulary. However, ELLs typically do not have the same depth and breadth of vocabulary and understanding of the structure of the second language. The exposure of ELLs to even the most familiar words and expressions in English is shallow in comparison with that of most native speakers. Even before first grade, many native English-speaking children know approximately 6,000 words (Menyuk, 1999) and have mastered the use of the present, past, and future tense. Their knowledge of English reflects a wide range of common experiences and is based on a deep foundation of thousands of encounters with language used in meaningful contexts over the four to five years before formal schooling begins. In contrast, ELLs often need more time and many more scaffolded opportunities for language and background knowledge development to fully participate in reading-based discussions and to develop their oral and literacy skills in English.

Besides differences in their knowledge of word meaning in English, ELLs' native languages may differ from English in a number of important ways. For example, the type of grammatical information carried in the structure of words varies across languages (e.g., in English, past tense is signaled through "-ed" suffixes on verbs whereas many Asian languages indicate tense by using separate words). At the clause and sentence level, the order of words (e.g., subject/verb/object) is fixed and extremely important in English. The order and consistency of the order may differ for ELLs who, for example, speak German or Russian as their native language. Finally, the organization of larger units of text, such as the canonical English paragraph structure involving a general statement followed by supporting details, can vary across students' native languages. Such cross-linguistic differences can limit the effective use of important cuing systems in reading in English (Birch, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Teachers need to understand language variation and the effect it may have on their ELL readers. Explicit instruction on word formation and patterns of sentence and paragraph structure may be necessary for ELLs who do not have the linguistic competence in English or the instructional experience in U.S. schools to draw upon in developing their literacy skills in English.

In addition to differences in language competence at the word, sentence, and discourse levels, ELLs frequently do not have the same control over the sounds of English. For example, if a teacher uses a picture of a nail on a phonics cue chart to represent the vowel sound in the word "nail," she may fail to see that this example is rendered meaningless if ELLs do not already know the word "nail." Tasks for building phonemic awareness that use minimal pairs to isolate contrasting consonant and vowel sounds (e.g., "big-pig" or "hop-hope") become ineffective if an ELL cannot perceive or produce these distinctive contrasts in English (e.g., /l/ may not sound different from /r/, or the vowel in "pick" is not distinguished from the vowel in "peek"). Teachers must be able to embed literacy activities, such as building phonemic awareness, in contexts where ELLs have access to meaningful vocabulary.

Koda (1995) has also shown that different writing systems (e.g., the alphabetic system used in Romance languages versus the logographic systems used in Chinese) draw on different processing strategies. Even languages that use an alphabetic writing system may differ from English in their sound/symbol associations and in the consistency of these associations. For example, the Spanish alphabet uses the letter "j" to represent a different sound than the English alphabet, and the Spanish alphabet is much more consistent and predictable in its representation of sounds than the English alphabet. Such orthographic differences can affect the degree to which ELLs who are already literate in their native language may efficiently and successfully transfer reading skills from the L1 to English (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Teachers need an understanding of the ways in which reading (and writing) in a second language draw upon a body of knowledge about how language and literacy interact. They must be aware of learners' needs based on their prior literacy experiences and they must be prepared to provide the skills and strategies to bridge the gaps (Schleppegrell & Colombi, 2002).

A third area where assumed mastery of the oral language may be misleading is the assessment of reading fluency and comprehension. Reading assessment techniques, such as running record procedures (Clay, 1979), may lead teachers to inappropriately diagnose pronunciation-based reading "miscues" (Goodman & Burke, 1972). Because ELLs are frequently unsure of the pronunciation of English words, they tend to be overly concerned with their articulation of words while reading aloud. As a result, their reading fluency and comprehension may suffer. Alternately, ELLs who are already literate in their L1 and are able to decode fluently may lead teachers to overlook gaps in their reading comprehension in English.

Teachers need to be able to interpret assessment results in the context of ELLs' oral and literacy instruction. When checking for reading comprehension, a common strategy good teachers of native English speakers use is asking students to retell or summarize a text that has been read. Such production tasks can seriously underestimate the comprehension of ELLs who can typically understand more than they are able to produce in the second language. Teachers must realize that what works for

native English speakers (including remedial readers) will not always work for ELLs and they must be able to change their practices accordingly.

Writing and L2 Development

Good writing instruction is student-centered and process-oriented without losing sight of quality writing products. Activities such as writers' workshop (Graves, 1983) and dialogue journals (Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993) aim to develop students' confidence as writers and their fluency in writing in a wide range of genres. These activities are also recommended to support ELLs in becoming fluent L2 writers (e.g., Samway, 1992; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001), but they will not be sufficient unless teachers understand how they may have to adjust their writing instruction to respond to L2 differences in writing development.

First, mainstream teachers cannot assume the same sequential process from oral language to literacy development for ELLs as for native English speakers. L2 literacy skills develop in a much more integrative manner for school-age ELLs (Hudelson, 1984). While it is important to consider the oral language as a foundation for building L2 literacy skills, classroom practices that delay the introduction of literacy instruction until students have well developed oral skills may underestimate (and therefore limit) what ELLs can do. Teachers must therefore organize their classrooms to provide rich and varied opportunities to develop all four language modes (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in meaningful and integrated ways (Heald-Taylor, 1991).

Teachers must also be aware of cross-lingual influence in second-language learning. Many studies have illustrated differences between L1 and L2 learning in writing processes as well as text features (Grabe & Kaplan, 1989; Hudelson, 1987; Silva, 1993). Students' knowledge of L1 writing conventions affects all areas of students' L2 writing, including punctuation and orthography (Edelsky, 1982), vocabulary selection and choice of cohesive devices (e.g., Odlin, 1987; Silva, 1993), sentence structure (Leki, 1992), and rhetorical patterns such as different interpretations of narrative or argumentative structures, genre, audience, or text organization (Connor, 1996; Hu, Brown, & Brown, 1982; Kaplan, 1966; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Panetta, 2001). As a result of such transfer, bilingual writers often do not meet the "standard" writing norms for different genres used in school. By overlooking the influence of the L1, teachers may interpret these differences as deficits in L2 writing or even thinking ability rather than normal L2 developmental patterns. Teachers need to understand these linguistic and cultural contexts of writing development.

Furthermore, teachers must understand how access to L1 resources can facilitate the L2 writing process as well. For instance, Gort (2001) and Homza (1995) found that first grade ELLs planned and rehearsed their stories in the native language before publishing them in English (see also Dean, 1995; Edelsky, 1986; Hudelson, 1987). Such opportunities for brainstorming and discussing topics and content in the native language have been shown to be important for low-literacy

high school students (Marsh, 1995), though this effect may be mediated by the topic (Bou-Zeineddine, 1994; both cited in Brisk, 1998). Teachers must understand the role of the L1 in assessing students' writing (Escamilla & Coady, 2000) and they must be able to create opportunities for using the native language as a tool to help ELLs organize their thinking and as a scaffold for more advanced writing in their L2.

As in the area of reading, writing teachers often make assumptions about students' understanding of the structure of English. If mainstream teachers base their writing instruction on the language and literacy needs of native English speakers, they may fail to provide appropriate and adequate feedback for ELLs. Although teachers may be skilled in supporting the craft of writing (e.g., Atwell, 1998), they are less confident when the needs of ELLs require them to address aspects of the language that may pose difficulties for ELLs but are generally not problematic for native English speakers. Examples include rules of word order at the phrase or sentence level (e.g., placement of adjectives before nouns, the formation of negatives and questions in English), or the use of articles and prepositions. Moreover, prompts commonly used with native speakers such as "Does this word make sense here?" or "Does this sentence sound right?" during teacher-student conferences, or written comments at the discourse level that state that a paragraph is "awkward" will be insufficient for ELLs because they assume the same level of access to native-speaker intuitions regarding English and to fluent L2 language models outside the classroom. As noted, ELLs usually do not share their peers' vocabulary base or facility with English language structure. Therefore, their writing development needs require teachers to provide different and more specific types of feedback and instruction. In order to respond effectively and appropriately to this need, mainstream teachers need to understand the structure of English and how to assist ELLs in developing this competence.

Language Demands in the Content Areas

Teachers are typically aware that their subject area uses a specialized language and they make their instruction more accessible through the use of graphic organizers, cooperative learning, and hands-on activities, and by paying attention to specialized content-specific vocabulary. Providing such "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1985) is necessary but not sufficient for ELLs. As Gibbons (1998b) points out, unlike curriculum planning for native English speakers, for L2 learners "the construction of new curriculum knowledge must go hand-in-hand with the development of the second language" (p.99).

The reality is that many content-area teachers assume that ELLs will be taught English in another class. In a recent study of content-area teachers, one social studies teacher stated, "I believed that was someone else's job" (Short, 2002, p.21). Most teachers, particularly in the upper grades, focus on content mastery and cognitive development without serious attention to the language through which the learning takes place. As a result, they may be unaware of linguistic demands that

are particularly challenging for second-language learners. For instance, everyday vocabulary terms such as "table," "crust," or "seat" carry special meaning in math, science, and social studies and may confuse L2 learners who know only the more general meaning of these words. The same concept or operation may be expressed through many synonyms that are familiar to the native speaker but are unknown to the L2 learner. In math, for example, addition can be signaled through a range of different words, such as "add," "plus," "and," "increase," "gain," "more," or "sum" (Dale & Cuevas, 1987). Teachers can also improve access to their content by building on L1/L2 cognates, especially for speakers of Romance languages. Since content-specific technical vocabulary is frequently based on Latin roots, such as "hypothesis," "demonstrate," and "equivalent" (Corson, 1997), teachers can provide a bridge between these students' L1 and L2 vocabulary development if they are aware of this relationship and use it to build ELLs' academic vocabulary in English.

In addition to vocabulary demands, content-area texts typically use syntactic structures beyond the L2 learners' level of proficiency (e.g., the use of nominalization, passive voice, or conditionals) (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996; Schleppegrell & Achugar, 2003). ELLs may be unfamiliar with the multiple ways that authors create cohesion and coherence in their texts (such as through the use of transition words and phrases like "nonetheless," "moreover," or "consequently"). Whereas native speakers may not need such extensive scaffolding in the grammar and discourse structure of the language, ELLs need consistent instruction that will facilitate L2 development in these areas, while simultaneously learning the academic content (Gibbons, 2002). Effective teachers of ELLs therefore integrate language and content objectives (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Echevarria et al., 2004). For instance, they explicitly model the use of passive voice in reporting the stages of a science experiment or they teach discourse markers of cause/effect or chronology in a history lesson. They use graphic organizers not only to display relationships among concepts, but also as a scaffolding tool to teach the language needed to express these relationships (Tang, 1992). By understanding the linguistic demands of the content areas, teachers can purposefully attend to the underlying "linguistic register" (Short, 2002, p. 20) of their discipline.

The Culture Domain: Making Cultural Needs Explicit

Cultural diversity has received more explicit attention than linguistic diversity in educational reforms. National content standards include culture in the broad context of race, class, gender, and ethnicity, and culture is listed as one of the major themes for effective English language arts and social studies instruction (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996; National Council for the Social Studies, 1994). Multicultural education encourages teachers to become knowledgeable about the history and contributions of major ethnic groups that have settled in the United States (e.g., Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans)

and to incorporate multicultural literature and multiple perspectives into their curriculum. Teachers also learn to anticipate and adjust for students' different communication and learning styles and abilities, and to accept and value differences in their classrooms. This approach is not necessarily sufficient, however, to meet the cultural needs of ELLs. In order to understand the potential for inequity in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, teachers must understand their own cultural identity and the cultural assumptions that underlie their instruction as well as those of their students and their families (Au, 1998; Ballenger, 1992). In this section, we address three broad areas in which general multicultural education may fail to prepare teachers for effective instruction for ELLs: the cultural context of schools, the cultural foundation of literacy, and the cultural identity of ELLs.

The Cultural Context of Schools

Teachers need to use "the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2002, p. 106). According to Gay, the ability to provide "cultural scaffolding" requires teachers to have specific rather than generic understandings of cultural similarities and differences. Two areas of cultural differences are particularly important for ELLs who have been schooled in their home country: classroom participation structures and the role of students' prior learning experiences.

Classroom Participation Structures

Implicit and explicit rules govern the nature of participation and interactions among students and teachers. In traditional U.S. classrooms, the values of individualism and egalitarianism dominate and are reflected in the importance attached to students' sharing of personal opinions about readings, issues, and current events. Students are asked to question their texts and their teachers, and do not expect teachers to have all the answers. Active questioning and peer discussion are fundamental in the process of learning in effective U.S. classrooms (cf., the content standards' emphasis on "talking to learn"). At other times, students are expected to work independently, and collaboration among students without sanction is prohibited. Understanding that these values and resulting practices are not universal will help teachers appropriately interpret student behavior that, when taken at face value, appears to reflect an unwillingness or reluctance to participate or a lack of comprehension.

Many ELLs come from cultures where teachers are considered to be the final authority and where questioning the teacher is considered disrespectful. Students may also be less inclined than U.S. schooled students to publicly display their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) through questioning, answering, or guessing in front of a large group (Au & Carroll, 1997; Philips, 1983; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987). In a similar vein, students from other cultures may be completely unaccustomed to competing or collaborating with their peers.

Finally, many ELLs attend schools in their home country before entering U.S.

schools. Unlike U.S. born and schooled students, these ELLs may be relatively unfamiliar with basic school and classroom routines, such as snack, lunch, "dressing out," lining up, or appropriate forms of address (e.g., "Teacher" versus "Mr. Jones") (Clayton, 1996). Good teachers of ELLs attempt to learn more about their own students' cultural backgrounds and experiences so that they can anticipate and respond to cross-cultural differences. They explore alternative explanations for observed behavior in the students' own cultural context and refrain from making assumptions based on their own cultural norms for behavior.

Students' Background Knowledge and Experiences

Good teachers understand that students come to school with a wide range of experiences and background learning. Teachers are generally prepared to understand these differences in broad ethnic or racial categories, which are then assigned certain expected learning styles (e.g., mentally grouping their Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese students into a single group of "Asians" or their Puerto Rican, Venezuelan, and Mexican students into "Hispanics"). Good teachers understand and accommodate differences, understanding that they must try to avoid stereotypes and inappropriate expectations or interpretations of student behavior. They acknowledge that, like native English speakers, L2 learners' background knowledge (or schemata) have been developed through their cultural experiences and that these will influence L2 learners' conceptual learning and language skills (e.g., reading comprehension) (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988; Johnson, 1981, 1982; Steffenson, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979).

Good mainstream teachers therefore make sure to build on individual students' background knowledge. To elicit this prior knowledge, they use a variety of strategies, including story maps or semantic webs. However, without understanding the cultural and linguistic assumptions behind these instructional techniques, teachers may not realize that these activities can be ineffective when used without modifications for ELLs. For example, a K-W-L chart (what do you <u>K</u>now, what do you <u>W</u>ant to know, what have you <u>L</u>earned; Ogle, 1986) is frequently recommended for eliciting students' prior knowledge. Teachers start a new topic by asking the general question "Tell me what you know about (_____)?" and record students' responses in each column. This strategy is based on several assumptions that may be unwarranted for ELLs. First of all, it assumes that all students have the English language skills to talk about what they know. It expects students to volunteer publicly to talk about experiences that may be unfamiliar to the rest of the class, therefore marking them as even more "different" (and even strange or exotic) than they may already appear. A teacher using this open-floor elicitation technique may also assume that if one student proposes a relevant concept or acknowledges a particular experience, then all students in the room share that knowledge or experience (i.e., it gets "checked off" on the K-W-L chart for the entire group). Additionally, what a teacher considers "relevant" may fail to recognize other valid

but less common or straightforward student experiences. In short, by using a general technique to elicit prior knowledge like the K-W-L chart without adaptations, teachers may be unable to access the appropriate knowledge base for ELLs and may fail to ascertain whether ELLs in fact have the prerequisite conceptual foundation on which to extend their learning.

Good teachers also accommodate student differences by getting to know their students at a personal level. They attempt to find out about family members, favorite foods, songs, sports or school subjects, or hobbies. The standard "Who am I" definition may fail, however, to tap into the realities that shape bilingual and bicultural individuals, including access to literacy events in multiple languages at home and in the community (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000).

Teachers must be able to recognize ELLs' strengths in areas often excluded from monolingual contexts. For instance, many bilingual students develop sophisticated cognitive (e.g., memory, analysis) and meta-linguistic skills as "language brokers" for their parents at doctor's offices or other public agencies (Buriel, Perez, De Ment, Chavez, & Moran, 1998; Tse, 1995). The languages used by the students and their family members, the students' cross-cultural experiences, and their L1 and L2 literacy history are integral parts of ELLs' knowledge, skills, and identity (Brisk & Harrington, 2000). Exclusion of such experiences from classroom discourse fails to identify and draw on the skills and strengths that ELLs bring to school, and teachers may subsequently miss opportunities to systematically develop these resources in their curriculum planning and instruction.

Cultural Foundation of Literacy

Expectations for literacy, the purposes for literacy, and ways in which literacy is valued and displayed vary across cultures (Alderson, 2000) as well as within cultures. Heath's (1983) portrait of the diverse literacy practices among families of children from different racial and economic backgrounds illustrates the sociocultural foundations of literacy (Gee, 1996; Kalantzis & Cope, 2001; Perez, 1998). Many good teachers who are aware of Heath's work may still fail to extend the implications of this work to a broader cultural context necessary for ELLs.

For example, ELLs may have trouble expressing opinions on certain topics, either because of cultural prohibitions or personal unfamiliarity with a subject (Leki, 1992; McKay, 1989). Mainstream teachers may perceive writing assignments such as "Discuss how you think the world will have changed in 50 years" or "Describe your personal goals and how you expect to attain them" as "neutral" topics. An ELL's poor performance may be attributed to that student's writing ability rather than interpreted in the context of a culturally inappropriate prompt. Teachers may not understand that students who have learned that it is inappropriate to express their own opinions in writing or that it is wrong to presume that they can determine their own futures may be paralyzed when confronted with such an assignment.

The diverse oral and written literacy skills and traditions that bilingual students

bring to school go unrecognized if teachers are unaware of their potential for instruction. Students from Islamic cultures are able to quote long passages from memory and may have developed slow, careful reading skills similar to the type of reading required for studying and remembering details (Wagner, 1993). The latter is in sharp contrast to the rapid survey style of reading and the skimming/scanning often required and valued in U.S. classrooms. Teachers praise readers who read quickly and analytically as they synthesize and paraphrase main ideas. Similarly, mainstream teachers may be less familiar with ELLs who use a language for which there is no literacy tradition. There may be no expectation in the home that children will learn to read and write, nor an understanding that teachers and schools in North America, Britain, and Australia assume a direct association between literacy, education, and success and believe that everyone should be literate (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Therefore, sending home messages that encourage parents to read to or with their children may be meaningless in these contexts.

Manifestations of parent involvement in their child's schooling may not follow teachers' expectations. When home and/or prior school literacy practices and expectations are distinctly different from those promoted in U.S. schools, main-stream teachers may be less likely to anticipate and respond to students' literacy needs. Parent outreach may be ineffective or inappropriate if schools fail to incorporate cross-cultural differences and attitudes toward school and literacy (Scarcella, 1990). Teachers must become aware of the cultural assumptions regarding the nature of literacy, of literacy learning, and of parent involvement, and incorporate these understandings into their curriculum and instructional approaches.

Cultural Identity

There is a strong and complex link between cultural identity, language use, and proficiency in two languages (Brisk, 1998). Understanding the socio-psychological foundations of second-language learning is important for teachers so that they can respond to a range of student attitudes, motivations, and behaviors. Without taking into consideration the sociocultural and sociopolitical pressures that may lead to different acculturation patterns, mainstream teachers may assume that the process of acculturation is linear and simply a matter of choice.

For instance, mainstream teachers often perceive a students' apparent inability to learn English quickly as a sign of a learning disability or a lack of aptitude for learning a second language. They may interpret students' acting out or tuning out in class in terms of disrespectful behavior. Teachers must be able to draw on a broader explanatory framework and understand that societal and school contexts influence students' attitudes toward learning the L2 and the process of acculturation (Baker, 1996). Some ELLs reject the host culture and language as they see their own identity and language threatened (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). Learning English may be seen as a tacit acceptance of the immigration process, which may have been involuntary and traumatic for students who are in the

U.S. because of decisions made by their parents. Other ELLs feel ambivalent about their own culture and may reject it in favor of their new language and culture. Unfortunately, members of the majority culture do not always accept these students as part of the dominant group (Commins, 1989; Olsen, 1997). Feeling excluded from membership in both the home culture and the new culture, these ELLs grow up without a strong sense of belonging and may become marginalized (Brisk, 1998; Cummins, 1986). Effective teachers of ELLs understand that antisocial behavior may reflect a student's state of cultural and linguistic ambivalence or frustration because the student believes that his or her struggle to find a personal, comfortable accommodation to U.S. culture is futile. These teachers acknowledge that students' exhaustion may come from having to concentrate for extended periods in a language that they do not understand well and are able to place ELLs' attitudes and behaviors in the context of L2 learning and stages of the acculturation process (Igoa, 1995).

Teachers also need to understand that their own attitudes toward languages other than English and toward multilingualism play an important role in how students respond to the challenge of L2 learning (Delpit, 2002). Teachers may be unaware that the messages they send through classroom policies can subtly exclude ELLs. The implicit or explicit rules "Speak English. Be quiet. Do your own work." are all too common in mainstream classrooms. Not only do these simple rules restrict primary vehicles for L2 learning (exposure, interaction, and use); they also communicate negative attitudes towards the students' native language (Putney & Wink, 1998). Insisting on English-only rules inside and outside the classroom may affect students' attitudes and motivation to learn English (Gardner, 1985). Even though mainstream teachers are rarely in the position to provide bilingual instruction, they can choose to communicate multilingual values (e.g., by using bilingual books and other L1 resources) and support students' development of a bicultural identity (Brisk, 1998; Kanno, 2003; Schechter & Cummins, 2003).

Finally, teachers cannot assume that their concepts of race and social class, or attitudes towards social class and mobility are the same as those of ELLs and their parents, and that U.S. categories for racial or ethnic self-identification are universal. In the U.S. the role of race and the process of "racialization" are extremely important (Outlaw, 1996) and may be totally unfamiliar to ELLs. For example, a dark-skinned student from the Dominican Republic may have darker skinned siblings but have parents with much lighter skin. In their country, none of her family is considered to belong to a racially designated group. Not being accustomed to identifying herself in racial terms, this student may have trouble understanding which racial group she has been assigned to in the U.S. and will almost certainly not feel any in-group loyalty toward other members. U.S. teachers who assume the universality of American racial categories may confuse and frustrate students like this one in their attempts to make them feel part of a group or by ascribing group membership. They may also be unprepared for potential classroom conflicts when students react negatively towards other students' use of particular varieties of their native

language or are unwilling to collaborate with other students from the same language background based on their social class or country of origin. Understanding how race, class, and language diversity interact will help teachers anticipate such conflict and develop the confidence to discuss these issues with their students as part of their curriculum (Boynton, 1994; Brisk, 1998).
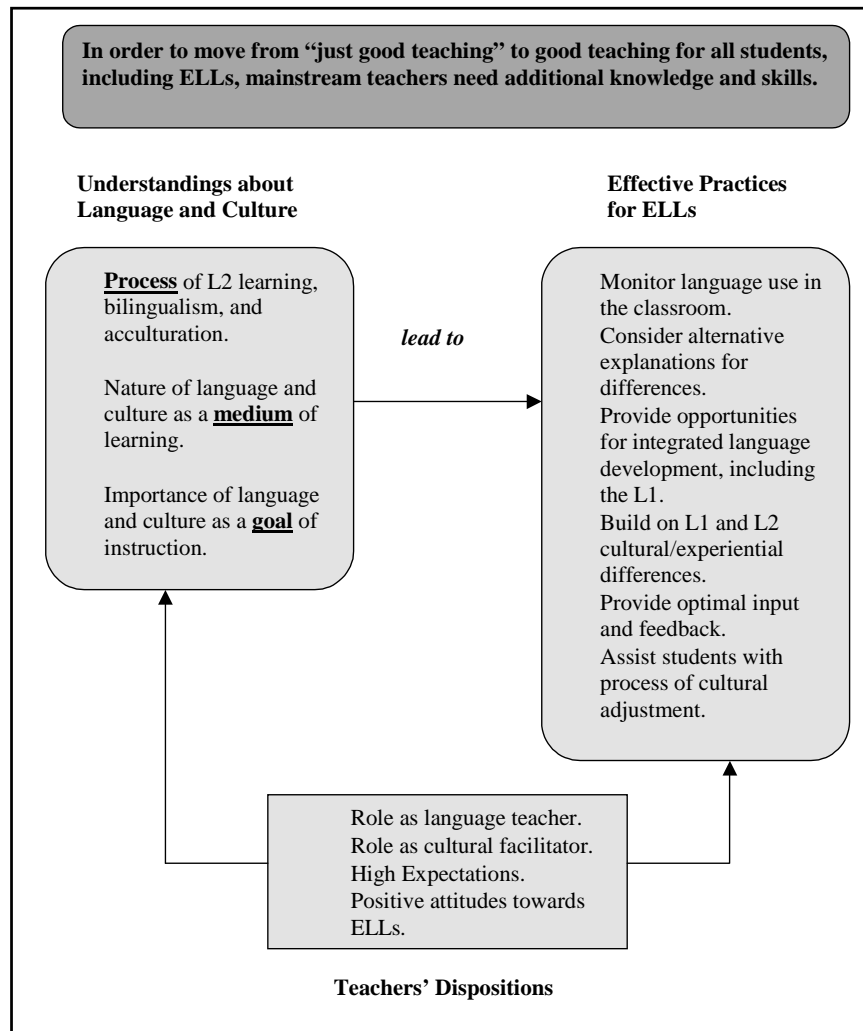
Defining the Gap

Even the most inclusive constructivist approaches to teaching will be inadequate when they are oriented toward a mainstream student population because they assume that "similarities among students override differences related to ethnicity, primary language, and social class" (Au, 1998, p. 306). The preceding sections illustrate that a shift from JGT practices to effective teaching practices for ELLs requires teachers to acquire additional linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills and learn to apply these to curriculum planning, pedagogy, and assessment for ELLs. While good teacher preparation programs will support mainstream teachers' ability to deal with a diverse classroom, they may not adequately prepare them for teaching ELLs.

In order to effectively meet the needs of ELLs, we have argued, teachers need to acquire specific knowledge and skills related to language and culture (Figure 1). From the preceding discussion, three dimensions emerge that help describe the nature of these ELL-specific knowledge and skills. These three dimensions (process, medium, and goals) are displayed in Figure 2. First, teachers must understand the *process* of second language acquisition and acculturation. This includes how L1 and L2 oral and literacy development are similar but also how these processes are different. Additionally, teachers must develop an understanding of how bilingual processes are manifested in ELLs' oral and literacy development, and how they can build on students' L1 resources. The second dimension relates to teachers' awareness of the role that language and culture play as *media* in teaching and learning. For the language domain, this entails a basic understanding of the structure of English and of the oral/written and colloquial/academic dimensions of English, as well as an awareness of the challenges that ELLs face in learning academic content through a language they do not yet control (Fillmore & Snow, 1998). From a cultural perspective, teachers need to understand how expectations and opportunities for learning are mediated through culturally based assumptions regarding classroom expectations and literacy that may not be shared by all students. The third dimension considers the importance of including linguistic and cultural diversity as explicit *goals* of curriculum and instruction. Mainstream teachers need to be able to identify language demands in their content areas and organize their classrooms to support the development of academic language proficiency by integrating their language and content objectives. Cross-cultural practices and experiences must inform curriculum planning and implementation.

Though teacher education programs must be informed by these three dimensions, changes in pedagogy will not be sufficient unless teachers' dispositions toward ELLs do not also change. Nieto (2000) notes: "Teaching language minority students successfully means above all challenging one's attitudes toward the students, their languages and cultures, and their communities. Anything short of this will result in repeating the pattern of failure that currently exists" (p. 196). Good teachers of ELLs embrace their roles as language teachers and cultural facilitators (Brisk, 1998).

Figure 2
The nature of the knowledge and skill gap for mainstream teachers of ELLs.

In order to move from "just good teaching" to good teaching for all students, including ELLs, mainstream teachers need additional knowledge and skills.

Understandings about Language and Culture

Process of L2 learning, bilingualism, and acculturation.

Nature of language and culture as a **medium** of learning.

Importance of language and culture as a **goal** of instruction.

lead to

Effective Practices for ELLs

Monitor language use in the classroom.
Consider alternative explanations for differences.
Provide opportunities for integrated language development, including the L1.
Build on L1 and L2 cultural/experiential differences.
Provide optimal input and feedback.
Assist students with process of cultural adjustment.

Role as language teacher.
Role as cultural facilitator.
High Expectations.
Positive attitudes towards ELLs.

Teachers' Dispositions

Conclusion

In this article we propose a framework for making the linguistic and cultural foundations of teaching and learning visible and explicit within the context of mainstream teacher preparation in order to influence mainstream classroom practices. In order to be simultaneously effective with native English speakers and with ELLs, this framework for teacher preparation illustrates that mainstream teachers must develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that reflect an awareness of three dimensions: the process of learning a second language, the role of language and culture as a medium in teaching and learning, and the need to set explicit linguistic and cultural goals. What distinguishes a classroom that explicitly addresses the needs of ELLs from the "just good teaching" classroom is that "English is very much present and accounted for . . . teachers extend practices of good teaching to incorporate techniques that teach language as well as content" (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002, p. 117).

Our framework draws attention to the overlap and differences between the preparation teachers for a diverse, mainstream classroom and for ESOL/bilingual programs. In its current presentation, the model is a conceptual rather than an empirical framework. Research that compares mainstream and ESOL/bilingual teachers' areas of expertise, instructional decision-making, and classroom practices will be important to conduct in the future to support, expand, or change the model. Moreover, while we assume the existence of the gap between JGT and effective ELL instruction, we believe that this gap neither follows a predictable, finite set of pedagogical practices nor will it remain constant regardless of instructional contexts. Rather, we would hypothesize that the extent to which teachers must deviate from JGT practices in order to meet the linguistic, cultural, and academic needs of their students will be mediated by learner characteristics, such as L1 schooling/literacy levels, age, and level of L2 literacy and oral proficiency (de Jong & Harper, 2003). For instance, it is likely that a kindergarten teacher will better meet the needs of ELLs within a JGT classroom than a JGT high school teacher teaching ELLs with interrupted schooling experiences. The ways in which learner variables interact with JGT practices will be important to explore in future research.

In short, as schools are confronted with increasing numbers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners, a "just good teaching" approach will simply not be good enough. It encourages a generic approach to teaching that fails to account for two of the most important learner variables affecting ELLs' school success—their linguistic and cultural diversity. Until ELLs are explicitly included at all levels of educational policy and practice, we can expect them to remain outside the mainstream in educational achievement. If, on the other hand, we recognize and include these students and their needs, we have a greater chance of meeting the needs of *all* learners.

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