

# Preparing Bilingual Teachers for the Future: Developing Culture and Linguistic Global Competence

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## Abstract

Increasing diversity and linguistic complexity in classrooms is occurring in schools throughout the world. Bilingual teachers need to develop knowledge and skills to succeed in teaching diverse students. Demographic shifts are bringing increasing numbers of international students from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, class, and linguistic backgrounds into the United States' public schools. The goal of this article is not to debate whether it is important to address diversity in the public schools. Instead, the goal is to help teacher educators think about diversity in a global and integrative manner by providing important and valuable perspectives about the internationalization of teacher education.

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Las migraciones demográficas están trayendo cantidades de estudiantes internacionales de diversos trasfondos raciales, étnicos, religiosos, lingüísticos y de diferentes clases sociales a las escuelas públicas de Estados Unidos. La meta de este artículo no es discutir si es importante señalar la diversidad en las escuelas públicas. En cambio, la meta es ayudar a los

que son educadores de profesores a reflexionar acerca de la diversidad de una manera global e integrada, proveyendo perspectivas importantes y valiosas en cuanto a la internacionalización de la educación pedagógica.

**Key Words:** Student Teaching Abroad, International Bilingual Student Teaching, International Teacher Education, Bilingual International Teacher Education Program, English Language Learners (ELLs)

Servicio de Aprendizaje de Maestro en el Exterior, Servicio Internacional de Aprendizaje de Maestro Bilingüe, Capacitación Internacional de Profesores, Programa Bilingüe Internacional de Educación de Profesores, Estudiantes de Inglés como Segundo Idioma

## Introduction

This article is organized to provide an overview of key areas: demographics, approaches to internationalizing teacher education, bilingual teacher education abroad as a model for a transformative teacher education program, an international teacher education program profile, and voices from program graduates. Although many colleges of education have taken steps to provide pre-service teachers with international experiences, there is still much work to be done; consider Heyl and McCarthy's (2003) study of 690 licensed teachers in 2001 from three universities which found that (1) 76% of graduating teachers did not study foreign languages, (2) the institution with the highest percentage of students with study abroad experiences was below 7%, and (3) international curriculum, defined broadly, accounted for 15% of the total credits (Rios, 2007, p.61). Quezada and Osajima, (2005) argue that it is important to take a comprehensive approach to diversity, one that sees relations between classroom learning, school environments, and home/community influences. Because home/community influences begin in the country of origin of the pupils, it is prudent and beneficial to prepare our future biliteracy teachers in the home country of our immigrant children where they may learn and experience the native culture, the home language, the nation's cultural and educational norms, and its education system through an extended living experience in the host country.

There are many global student teaching abroad programs for English speaking teacher candidates but none exist that grant bilingual certification with a Spanish emphasis. In California, only one program leading to bilingual certification exists [offered through the California

State University System-International Teacher Education Program (CSU-ITEP)], a program which includes a specific curriculum approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to help ease the gap produced by the lack of highly qualified teachers and to assist with the great needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Kuhlman, Alfaro, Attinasi, Driesbach and Merino, 2003).

### The Demography of U.S. Schools

According to the United States (U.S.) Census, roughly 20% of the population speaks a language other than English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). There are 4.4 million English learners in public school in the United States. California serves more than 40% of these students. In California, English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing student group, with nearly 1.6 million EL students in 2006-2007 (California Department of Education, 2007) increasing 27 percent since 1995. Eighty-five percent of ELLs in California speak Spanish as a native language. These statistics demonstrate a population shift within our classrooms. Nonetheless, the United States teaching force remains mono-cultural and monolingual, with the majority of teachers being white and speaking only English (California Department of Education, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1999). In addition, many Euro-American teachers come from or live in economic conditions very different from their students (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

Thus, while research demonstrates that teacher knowledge must include a deep understanding of students' backgrounds in reality, there is an ethnic, linguistic, and class disconnect between teachers and the students they teach (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gándara & Rumberger, 2006). This disconnect occurs at a fundamental pedagogical level, in which teachers often lack the distinct pedagogical knowledge necessary in teaching ELs (August & Hakuta, 1997; Bryk & Schneider, 2004; Gándara & Rumberger, 2006). The disconnect also occurs on socio-political and ideological levels in which the majority of teachers are not prepared with the necessary firsthand experience to effectively teach their diverse student population (August & Hakuta, 1997; Bryk & Schneider, 2004; Gándara & Rumberger, 2006). The education of linguistically and culturally diverse students both internationally and in the United States occurs within a larger political and social context; one that includes issues of immigration, distribution of wealth and power, and the empowerment of students (Varghese & Stritikus, 2005, p. 73). With this in mind, we need to continue to expand professional development of teachers to work effectively with the large Spanish-speaking and other diverse language-speaking populations.



### Models for the Internationalization of Teacher Education

In moving teacher education programs towards preparing teachers with a quality global teaching experience, institutions must set the mechanisms of support both in financial resources and program models. Teacher educators need to look at teacher education models that have proven to be effective in preparing biliteracy teachers to work effectively with children who are culturally, racially, and linguistically different from native English-Speaking Americans. Educational institutions typically follow a traditional curriculum and, thus, the teacher certification process is based on the completion of a certain number of courses that usually stress the attitudes and values held by the dominant society and have as common principles the reproduction of a set of canons that are monolithic and non-inclusive (Bell & Munn, 1999-2000). By perpetuating the values and social stratification existent in American society, teacher education becomes a tool that promotes the reproduction and legitimization of the worldview of the dominant majority, thus ignoring the perspectives held by people of color (Delpit, 1995; Smith & Zantiotis, 1989). Freire (1997) promotes the notion that biliteracy/multiliteracy teacher preparation programs should provide situational learning experiences and dialogical interactions. These experiences should also expose and allow teacher candidates to view their world through multiple realities and cross-cultural lenses. Only through these multiple lenses will they begin to struggle to construct their own ideological and political clarity.

In a review of the literature, Quezada & Alfaro (2007) identified two program models for student teaching abroad. The first model may be defined as “faculty-initiated, university-sponsored,” whereby school of education faculty have created or developed bilingual student teaching programs by themselves and then partnered with global education opportunities or programs that already exist. The second model, defined as an “affiliated program,” is one that includes schools of education that are part of a consortium made up of various universities in the United States and partnered with host country universities. In the latter type of program, students complete their student teaching in four possible types of school settings: (1) Department of Defense K-12 Schools, (2) United States Department of State American Sponsored Overseas Schools, (3) Independent International/American Schools and (4) host country public and private schools.

The Department of Defense K-12 Schools serve children of military families stationed abroad. The language of instruction is English, and the curriculum is inherently American. Such schools can be found in Europe, Asia, Guam, Puerto Rico, Panama and Cuba.

United States Department of State American Sponsored Overseas Schools are private schools open to all children on a tuition basis. The schools are supported by the Department of State and serve as models for American education overseas. Some are housed in U.S. embassies with most being located in areas with large numbers of American expatriots. Often children from diplomatic families attend these schools. The language of instruction is usually in English but sometimes instruction is in two languages: English and the host language.

The third type of school is private schools having a U.S., British, Canadian, or an international curriculum not sponsored by the U.S. State Department. The language of instruction is English; however these schools usually offer two languages, English and the host language. A growing number of schools that are American-sponsored as well as those called Independent International/American offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs.

The fourth type is host country schools which are public schools attended by the local children whose language of instruction is the country's primary language. In order to offer international student teaching opportunities, some universities participate in international consortiums with U.S. universities and universities abroad. Other universities base their international student teaching programs in schools of education when they have developed international partnerships with specific elementary or secondary schools or universities abroad. Keeping in mind the necessity of providing strongly situated learning experiences abroad for teacher education candidates I will now present the development of an existing bilingual teacher education model, replicable in any country, that prepares teachers who will be culturally and linguistically proficient to work with one of the many diverse student populations of the U.S.

### **International Teacher Education Program (ITEP): A Model for a Global Teacher Education Program**

In the state of California, teacher education programs professionally prepare teacher candidates with a repertoire of the best teaching strategies. These strategies are aligned with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), or in the case of wanting to ascertain the highest level of an accomplished teacher, another set of standards, those outlined by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), are followed. Interestingly, neither the CSTP nor NBPTS address the importance or necessity for teachers to develop cultural and linguistic global competence. It is within this greatly diverse linguistic, cultural,



and socio-economic population that a teacher's knowledge and experience of biliteracy and bicultural development has the most profound impact. With this in mind, we need to prepare qualified teachers to work effectively with the large Spanish speaking and other diverse language speaking populations in our communities.

The International Teacher Education Project (ITEP) is a California State University (CSU) system-wide bilingual (Spanish/English) credential program for elementary multiple-subject teacher candidates. The program administered through the CSU International Programs Office was approved in 1994 by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and authorized to credential teacher candidates seeking to become elementary teachers with a Spanish/English authorization. First originated in Mexico City, the program was moved in 1998 to the state and city of Querétaro, Mexico. Besides San Diego State University where the program was initiated, nine other CSU campuses currently participate.

The goals of ITEP are aligned with the work done by Hollins, King, and Hayman (1994). Their work on preparing teachers to be effective with diverse populations focuses on developing teachers where culture and socio-political issues are central, and includes the following: culturally and linguistically-sensitive teaching, instructional strategies for exceptionalities, the centrality of culture in human experience and ways that culture and cultural difference influence learning and teaching, and community-based and culturally diverse field experiences for teacher candidates. The program's immediate mission not only encourages teacher education students to embrace the philosophies behind bilingualism and biculturalism, but also to learn how to engage in a process "wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct sociocultural environments: their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live" (Darder, 1992, p. 48). Several scholars have called the process *biculturalism* because of the interaction between two cultural systems, the individual's ensuing state of mind, and response to this process (Ramírez & Castaneda, 1974).

The International Teacher Education Program (ITEP) asks individuals undertaking the profession of teaching to go beyond reading the additional cultural chapter or bringing in a guest speaker that merely offers a basic understanding of the changing ethnolinguistic context in which they will be working. Rather, prospective teachers in this program engage in situated learning experiences that position them in contexts

that allow them to negotiate their *own* sociocultural and political position in a global context. It asks each individual who takes the opportunity to understand not only the students they will soon educate, but also themselves in the role of both teacher and social being with an identity represented by history, culture and personal realities.

The program, in its current form, brings CSU students from throughout the state to San Diego State University (SDSU) for one partial spring and two partial summer “bookend” sessions of coursework and student teaching. The other part of the summer, fall, and spring academic year is spent in Mexico. Participants attend coursework and student teach for a total of nine months in Mexico and three months in the San Diego area. During their stay in Mexico, candidates have access to private, indigenous and public schools.

Candidates who complete the credential program receive a multiple subject elementary Bilingual Cross-Cultural and Language Academic Development (BCLAD) credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC). This represents the only international credential program in California approved by CCTC. The program was initially designed for teacher candidates who have minimal oral fluency in Spanish, although, in some cases, Spanish was their mother tongue. In the last five years a large number of fluent Spanish speakers have participated to further professionalize their vocabulary and develop deeper cultural and linguistic knowledge. The appendix depicts the series of courses BCLAD teacher candidates have taken both in the United States and Mexico.

The current program has developed a partnership with the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (Mexico’s Department of Education) that allows United States biliteracy teacher candidates to student teach in Querétaro, Mexico, a colonial city of approximately 1,000,000 residents located about 125 miles north of Mexico City. After a program orientation at SDSU, biliteracy teacher candidates spend nine months studying at the *Escuela Normal del Estado de Querétaro* (State Teacher’s College of Querétaro) and conduct their student teaching in three settings: private, public, and indigenous schools. Their indigenous experiences have included schools throughout Mexico from Oaxaca to Atlacomulco in the State of Mexico. Biliteracy teacher candidates participate eight weeks in public schools, two weeks in private schools and three weeks in indigenous schools during their student teaching practicum, as well as take education methods courses taught by Mexican professors and university supervisors. Upon their return to the United States, biliteracy

teacher candidates complete their teacher credentialing program methods courses at SDSU and engage in ten additional weeks of student teaching in a dual-language setting with cooperating teachers who already hold a BCLAD credential.

During their nine-month stay in Mexico, biliteracy teacher candidates live with host families, or sometimes with families of program faculty, and interact with other Mexican national teacher education candidates in educational, cultural and language workshops. Thus teacher candidates learn both the California State Standards as well as Mexican Education Standards and enrich their experiences having various situated learning and teaching opportunities. While in Mexico, teacher candidates are taught methods, language, and cultural courses by Mexican faculty. The opportunity to teach in different socio-cultural contexts with culturally heterogeneous student populations forces teacher candidates to experience cultural, pedagogical and ideological dissonance, a form of juxtaposition that promotes increased ideological clarity (Alfaro, 2003).

The pedagogical experiences are structured in such a manner that they propel teacher candidates to compare and contrast their personal belief systems with those of the dominant society in both the visiting country (Mexico) and the U.S. As a result, teachers are compelled to critically examine the political and ideological dimensions of minority education on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border. The experience gained plays a large part in cultural learning (Cushner & Brislin, 1996).

### **Impact of the Program**

From 1994-2006, approximately 200 teacher candidates participated and graduated from the ITEP program with 80% currently teaching in biliteracy settings and 20% in sheltered English classrooms in the U.S. Of course, this is not to imply that every candidate has automatically been transformed through these experiences. Candidates' reflective journal entries, program evaluations, anecdotal notes, and questionnaires indicate that those who initially enter the program with the predisposition to critically analyze issues related to teaching, and who have the willingness to acquire multiple perspectives on both sides of the border (80%), typically develop deeper ideological and pedagogical clarity (Alfaro, 2003).

Quezada and Alfaro (2007) conducted a research study that investigated the heuristic process of four teachers from the CSU-International Teacher Education Program (ITEP) and their experiences with respect to the ideological dissonance they faced as they negotiated



their cultural positioning in becoming biliteracy teachers in a global context. The study analyzed the biliteracy teachers' *self-reflection* accounts of their experience in a global student teaching setting with respect to teaching elementary students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The study examined the underpinnings of their instructional ideological orientation, significant practical experiences, and key dimensions that propelled biliteracy teachers to develop ideological clarity and a teaching ideology with a global perspective.

Four themes emerged from the investigation: (1) perceived inequities, (2) teachers as change agents, (3) student intimacy, and (4) internal versus external relationships. These four phenomena were explored in relation to the proposed learning outcomes of the participation in the ITEP program in Mexico. Accounts of the tensions perceived between the professional responsibilities as biliteracy teachers versus personal beliefs about educating ELLs were a central part of the interviews conducted for this study. Biliteracy teachers recalled experiences that marked their decisions to teach or impart their own personal beliefs through their own *hidden* curriculum.

*Perceived Inequities.* The first theme in the study, relates to biliteracy teachers' abilities to reflect on the unfairness that affects children on both sides of the borders due to language, national origin, skin color or socioeconomic status. Two Latino participants realized that what they "brought to the table" could impact children and that they needed to be conscious of not perpetuating the same perceived biases

The *Change Agents* theme refers both to challenges encountered and to the notion that biliteracy teachers have the power to be agents of change in their own classrooms through their personal commitments. Biliteracy teachers felt that the ITEP program was aligned with the pedagogical needs of their students in their present classrooms. The perception is a result of the philosophical underpinnings and instruction provided by the Mexican professors. Biliteracy teachers spoke to the issue of "transfer" and how what biliteracy teachers learned from their experiences student teaching abroad has easily transferred and how they have applied their skills in new situations, both professional and personal.

The theme of *Student Intimacy and Significance* refers to the impact the children and their community had on the biliteracy teachers and how the strong relationships and connections forged between them

has been significant in their lives as professionals and assisted them in developing ideological clarity.

The fourth theme *External versus Internal Pressures* refers to the pressure felt by biliteracy teachers in their current teaching positions as a result of a standards-based curriculum that is a mismatch for their English language learners. The biliteracy teachers believed that the current system perpetuates a deficit model and that it does not take into account their children's socio-economic, cultural and language conditions. Therefore, in developing a clear teaching ideology, the tensions between what the school district expects and what biliteracy teachers believe is right for children, supports biliteracy teachers' role as activist in defining their teaching ideology.

The following are excerpts which represent the voices of past students which demonstrate their reflections in coming to their own ideological clarity. For them, such clarity became a means for teaching with courage, passion, solidarity, and ethics due to their experiences in this program. Their accounts show that what they learned is not only intimately connected to what they already knew, but also it's connected to their continuing development as biliteracy teachers.

*My participation in this program has allowed me to view life through multiple perspectives; I came into this program with a couple of windows to my house. I now have multiple windows.* (American Biliteracy Student Teacher in Queretaro, Mexico).

*This program has allowed me to come to know teaching as a relational activity by becoming a caring, empathetic teacher, which includes care for self, students, their language, culture, parents, and their communities.* (American Biliteracy Student Teacher in Queretaro, Mexico).

*The entire process taught me to "think like a teacher" in two worlds, Mexico and California. It taught me the interconnectedness of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, and moral dimensions involved in teaching.* (American Biliteracy Student Teacher in Queretaro, Mexico).

*I remember this program in a bitter-sweet manner, when things got tough, in a country that I was unfamiliar with, and trying to improve my language skills, I got to know who I really was first as a human being, then a professional. It's in moments of discomfort that you come to know who you really are as human*

*being and as a second language learner. I was transformed!*  
(American Biliteracy Student Teacher in Queretaro, Mexico).

*I learned so much about teaching and learning. This experience opened my eyes to "critical pedagogy." I now know, first hand, how my Spanish speaking students feel when being immersed in a language and culture different from their reality. I continue to question what is happening in the area of bilingual education. Because of this I continue to develop political clarity and have proceeded to a leadership position in bilingual education.*  
(American Biliteracy Student Teacher in Queretaro, Mexico).

*The personal meaning that I attached to my cultural experience in the indigenous community allowed me to turn the corner...umm...you knows a transformation. I was beginning to internalize my own culture- the different culture I was living and working with. This was a powerful feeling to know that I could comfortably move in and out of this community with total ease and joy! I learned how to be humble, I was timid before and that is very different from being humble.* (American Biliteracy Student Teacher in Queretaro, Mexico).

Teacher's voices depict how this program has allowed new teachers to develop beyond what traditional teacher education programs can provide in California. Through this program teachers have gone through the process of learning about Mexico and California standards for teaching. Most significantly, teacher candidates have become reflective practitioners by developing not only in the areas of teaching strategies for English Language Learners, content area standards, and classroom management, but they have also developed in the area of *self-knowledge*. To attain self-knowledge required their participation in a shared cultural metaphor and the continuity of knowledge, perception, wisdom, and experience afforded to them through this program. Teachers become empowered through the realization that they are part of a greater human story- of being and becoming. They learn to expand their vision of themselves and their teaching, and their contributions to education reach beyond the California Standards for the Teaching Profession. They come to the place that educators talk about.



During the eleven years of the program, approximately 200 teacher candidates have completed their credentials, and many teach in California schools. If each teacher had only 25 pupils per year, then these teachers are impacting thousands of children each year. Given its eleven years, it is estimated that the program has impacted over 5,500 pupils. While

the enrollment numbers each year were low, the quality of the teachers was exceptionally high, and the cultural experiences of these colleagues were far-reaching. The stories they tell are incredible. These teachers have completed a transformative experience unlike any other. They have become culturally and linguistically-proficient global teachers and leaders who can teach better locally because they were prepared to think globally. We could even modify the modern adage to state:

*“Teach globally, act locally.”*

### Summary

In the world now there is an increase in efforts to internationalize the institutions of higher education which need to infuse, integrate, and implement international student teaching programs. If we are to develop global citizens that support the efforts of language, cultural and global diversity, what role will colleges and schools of education play in the preparation of culturally and language-competent globally proficient teachers? Will our graduates be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of 21st century citizens? Will they have the required skills, be sensitive, have respect for human dignity and be able to improve current and future conditions? These are the fundamental questions that we as educators face as we prepare future teachers (Kirkwood, 2001).

This article was organized to help educators in teacher preparation programs think about language and cultural diversity in a global and integrative perspective. To prepare teachers, leaders, and other school personnel to meet the challenge of language and cultural diversity, a first and critically important step is to think reflectively about where one’s institution, college of education, or teacher preparation program, is situated in relation to preparing culturally and linguistically-competent bilingual teachers.

Supported with an interest and commitment to cultural and linguistic global competence, the hope is that this discussion may serve as an introduction to key issues in the areas of international/global bilingual teacher preparation program development across continents, and that it may provide a base from which further understanding and actions can be developed in order to prepare culturally and linguistic globally proficient teachers. Providing global student teaching experiences is the key ingredient if we want our future bilingual teachers to be linguistically, culturally and globally literate in meeting the challenges that will confront them in the classrooms of the future.

**APPENDIX**

**Mexico Bilingual Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development Credential (BCLAD) AY 2005-06**

Start Date: June 20, 2005/End Date June 23, 2006

**Summer 2005: Queretaro, Mexico**

Course Number	Course Title	Units
SP 315	Intermediate/Advance Spanish	3.0
PLC 911	Teaching Social Studies to Bilingual Elementary Students	2.0
PLC 932	Skills in Teaching Reading to Bilingual Elementary Students/ELD SDAIE (Three Weeks)	3.0
PLC 901	Introduction to Teaching Portfolio	2.0
<b>Total Summer Units:</b>		<b>10</b>

**Fall 2005: Queretaro, Mexico**

Course Number	Course Title	Units
PLC 923	Psychological Foundation of Education & Bilingual Students	3.0
PLC 910	Teaching Mathematics to Bilingual Elementary Students	2.0
SP 351	Development of Spanish Communication Skills	3.0
HS 316	Mexican & Latin American Civilization and Culture	3.0
LI 430	Children's Literature in Spanish	2.0
PLC 960	Student Teaching Seminar for Bilingual Students	2.0
PLC 961	Student Teaching Seminar for Bilingual Students	3.0
<b>Total Fall Units:</b>		<b>18.0</b>

**Spring 2006: San Diego State University**

Course Number	Course Title	Units
PLC 686	Student Teaching for Bilingual Elementary Students	3.0
PLC 963	Student Teaching for Bilingual Elementary Students	4.0
<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>7</b>

**Fall 2006:**

PLC 931	Skills in Teaching Language Arts to Elementary Students	3.0
PLC 962	Student Teaching (Field Experience)	8.0
PLC 960	Student Teaching Seminar for Bilingual Elem. Students	3.0
PLC 915	Teaching & Learning in the Content Area: English Language Development/SDAIE	3.0
PLC 912	Teaching Science to Bilingual Elementary Students	3.0
PLC 902	Professional Portfolio /RICA	1.0
<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>21</b>

**Prerequisite Courses (Granting Credentials)**

Course	Units
Class Adaptation for Special Populations	2.0
Health for Educators	1.0
Technologies for Education	3.0
<b>Total Prerequisite Units:</b>	<b>6.0</b>

Summer 2005	10.0
Fall 2005	18.0
Spring 2006	21.0
Prerequisites	
<b>Total IP BCLAD Credential Program Units</b>	<b>62.0</b>



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