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Apprenticing Educators of Emergent Bilingual Learners: Partnerships to Promote Linguistically Responsive Practice in Classrooms, Schools, and Communities

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The population of students labeled as English learners (ELs), referred to here as emergent bilingual learners (EBLs), continues to grow in schools across the United States. In this article, we share one urban university's collaborative approach to building professional capacity for cultural and linguistic diversity, considering both vertical and horizontal partnerships. We conceptualize vertical collaboration as mutually beneficial partnerships between the university and schools with stakeholders prioritizing capacity building efforts for high-quality teaching and learning. Another integral and less-explored facet of partnerships, we describe the pertinent role of horizontal collaboration across universities, where teacher educators came together to define the knowledge base that practitioners of EBLs must possess to support student learning across the diverse communities of our city. Our collaborative efforts to develop a framework for teacher expertise shaped our professional development efforts in schools, as we worked with teachers and administrators to build capacity centered on the unique and diverse needs of EBLs.

The population of the United States continues to become more culturally and linguistically diverse. In urban, suburban, and rural classrooms from California to Maine, the number of emergent bilingual learners (EBLs) grows each year (García, 2011; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2015). Despite the large and growing population, the educational institution has failed to maintain pace, and a disproportionate number of EBLs are still taught by underprepared educators (Villegas, 2018). As the nation grows more culturally and linguistically diverse in every region of the United States, schools and districts look for ways to improve teacher performance and student achievement for EBLs (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Walqui, 2010). To respond to this pertinent issue in the new landscape of preschool-through-grade-12 (P-12) schools, stakeholders must consider the needed knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as approaches to building teacher expertise to effectively support the learning, development, and achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Walqui & Heritage, 2012; Walqui & vanLier, 2010).

In this *report from the field*, we share one urban university's collaborative approach to building professional capacity in P-12 schools by embracing and responding to the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of Chicago. Tapping into both *horizontal partnerships* with other universities and *vertical partnerships* with P-12 schools, we describe our efforts to first define the knowledge base that practitioners must possess to positively influence EBLs' learning and then enact professional development efforts to build the expertise and pedagogical practices of teachers and administrators across the P-12 continuum. We begin by providing background on the Language Matters project, followed by exploring the vertical and horizontal partnerships central to the work. We then detail the multiple facets of professional development work focused on EBLs across P-12 schools. We close with reflections, conclusions, and recommendations for readers seeking to engage in similar partnerships and

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processes to build teachers' capacity and professional expertise.

Framing the Collaborative Work: The Language Matters Project

Situated on the north side of Chicago in the linguistically diverse Rogers Park neighborhood, Loyola University Chicago is a Jesuit institution focused on preparing professionals in service of social justice. Aiming to prepare effective urban pre-service and in-service teachers, leaders, and educators, Loyola's School of Education regularly partners with local schools to improve practice for culturally and linguistically diverse students. A project funded by the Chicago Community Trust, *Language Matters* specifically partners with teachers and leaders working in linguistically diverse classrooms, schools, and communities. Loyola faculty on the Language Matters team, with advanced degrees and teaching experience in various facets of language and literacy education, work with elementary and high schools in targeted Chicago neighborhoods to build professional capacity in classrooms, schools, networks, and at the university. The overarching goal of our various school-community-university partnerships is to build professional capacity to support students' language development through the provision of high-quality academic curriculum and instruction.

Language Matters focuses on the unique context of Chicago, which boasts ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic diversity that varies by geographic region of the city. The third largest school district in the nation, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) face the simultaneous opportunity and challenge of educating children and adolescents from a vast array of backgrounds. Neighborhoods on the north and northwest sides of Chicago, such as Albany Park, Edgewater, Portage Park, Rogers Park, and Uptown, have both historically and contemporarily welcomed immigrant and refugee populations from across the globe. As a result, public schools serve diverse students, including many EBLs with a variety of linguistic and academic backgrounds. These neighborhoods are found within geographic regions within CPS known as Networks 1, 2, and 4. Within these networks, educators serve over 25,000 EBLs speaking over 110 languages. The percentage of CPS students who are EBLs is 16.7%, while the percentage of EBLs at Language Matters schools is nearly twice that proportion at 31.5% (CPS, 2017).

Through our work on the Language Matters project, in concert with other grantees across Chicago-area universities, we have worked to define the knowledge base that practitioners of EBLs must possess to support student learning in the culturally and linguistically diverse communities of the city. Centering on both our P-12 capacity building and cross-university collaborative learning efforts, this paper shares the evolution of our Language Matters work and the resulting impacts on EBL education in classrooms, schools, and communities. In this way, we use our EBL-focused work in Chicago as an example of a promising practice in educational partnerships; specifically, we consider how universities can collaborate *vertically* with educators spanning classrooms, schools, and districts, as well as *horizontally* with other teacher educators, to build professional capacity for high-quality teaching and learning. Our approach runs contrary to the status quo in educational reform, as we aim to develop teachers as expert professionals rather than rely on top-down policies to mandate particular practices (Mehta, 2013). As will be described in the sections that follow, our collaborative efforts to define a knowledge base for educators of EBLs shaped our work in schools, fostering teacher professionalism through EBL expertise and leadership roles.

Getting Started in Schools: Preliminary Work with Language Matters Partners

In the spring of 2013, the Chicago Community Trust called for universities, organizations, and districts to propose efforts to build teacher expertise and capacity for supporting students' language and literacy development. Situated at the time of the shift to the New Standards, philanthropic leaders recognized the need for local efforts to implement curriculum and instruction in ways that attended to the cultural and linguistic diversity in Chicago-area schools. We concurred with the many premises of the proposed efforts, particularly recognizing the central role of the classroom teacher in influencing EBLs' achievement (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006). As university teacher educators committed to mutually beneficial university-school partnerships, we had regularly worked with CPS teachers and leaders at culturally and linguistically diverse schools as a part of our field-based teacher preparation program (Heineke & Ryan, 2018; Kruger et al., 2008). Aligned with the request for proposals, we strongly believed and consistently observed that all teachers required specific expertise to be able to effectively serve and support the changing student body in U.S. schools with increasing cultural and linguistic diversity (e.g., Lucas et al., 2008; Valdés et al, 2005).

We designed our original project proposal to build capacity at schools and networks to design and implement linguistically responsive instruction, specifically focused on strengthening language development and literacy instruction. We drew from *linguistically responsive practice* (Lucas et al., 2008), which described teaching and learning in mainstream classrooms grounded in the principles and practices of language development and second language acquisition. Building on foundational knowledge of language and linguistics, linguistically responsive practice recognizes the language backgrounds and needs of individual students, analyzes language demands inherent in academic tasks, and scaffolds learning for language development (Lucas et al., 2008). Our first-year efforts focused on accomplishing the following with our six partner schools spanning two networks and three linguistically diverse communities: (a) a protocol for backward planning and effectively delivering curriculum and instruction to support language development, (b) professional development for classroom teachers, specialized teachers, and school leaders around language development and instructional planning, (c) professional learning communities (PLCs) to provide vertical and horizontal support across P-12 actors, and (d) school structures to emphasize language development and value linguistic diversity.

Seeking to implement high-quality curriculum that supports language development in the era of the New Standards, we designed an instructional protocol to prepare teachers to provide rigorous and effective classroom instruction for all students. Building from the scholarly work of Stanford's *Understanding Language* project, we operationalized principles to support language development, foster academic achievement, and utilize students' cultural and linguistic prior knowledge (Bunch et al., 2012). To ensure alignment with district initiatives, our approach drew from key instructional principles such as backwards design (i.e., Understanding by Design) and multiple means of representation, action, expression, and engagement (i.e., Universal Design). Rather than focus solely on strategies, the model emphasizes various levels of backwards planning, including *macro-scaffolding* across school years and units and *micro-scaffolding* of lessons and strategies (Bunch et al., 2012). Teachers first learned about language progressions, demands, scaffolds, and supports (Santos et al., 2012) to then conduct multiple levels of instructional planning by (a) setting long-term visions, unit-level goals, and lesson-level objectives for language and literacy development, (b) designing authentic assessments of language, literacy, and content to demonstrate learning, and (c) planning meaningful, rigorous, and differentiated instruction to support the learning, development, and achievement of all students (see Figure 1).

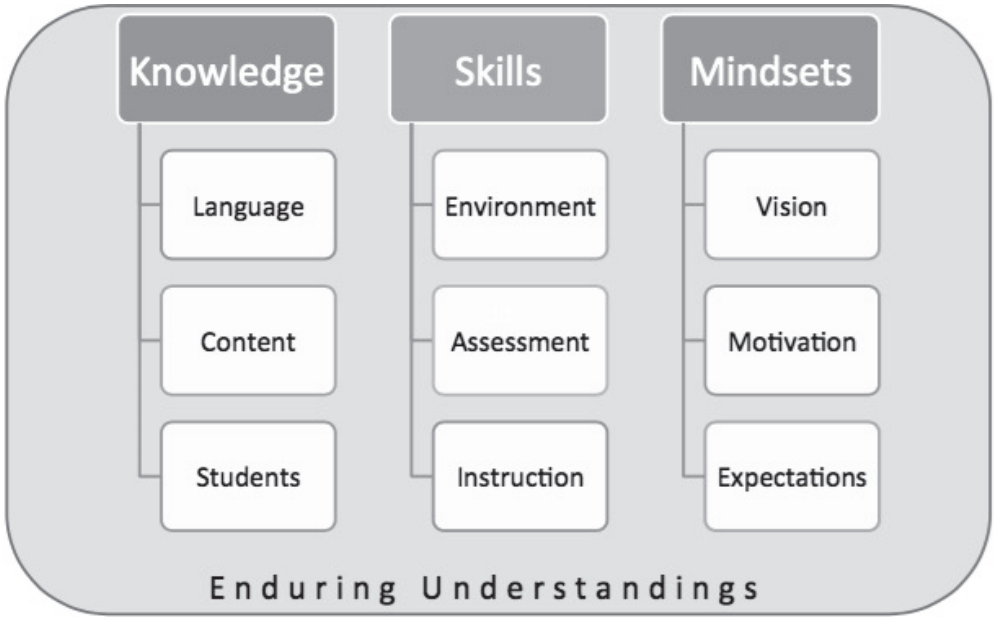

Figure 1. Teacher Expertise for Emergent Bilingual Learners

To prepare educators to engage in linguistically responsive practice (Lucas et al., 2008), we facilitated professional development with teachers and leaders across partner schools, as well as supported follow-up PLCs. In our first year, we spent ample time building rapport and buy-in with our school and network partners, as well as fleshing out the content of professional learning (i.e., linguistically responsive framework and protocol for instructional design; Kruger et al., 2008; Lucas et al., 2008). From our initial conversations with partners, we quickly recognized the need for general awareness of EBLs' backgrounds, abilities, and needs and overarching understandings of language development before diving into more advanced applications in instructional design. We also discerned the complexity across contexts, as schools had similar needs around awareness that differed by elementary and high schools, home languages, program models, and the priorities of respective networks. Overall, our key realization in the first year was: We had strong content related to language development but lacked an effective process to build professional capacity.

Another facet of our early Language Matters work was the EBL-focused graduate teacher education program. Held at the university on two evenings a week, nominated teachers from each partner school engaged in deeper learning around teaching in diverse urban schools, first and second language acquisition, linguistically responsive instruction and assessment, and culturally relevant materials to support literacy and biliteracy development (Bunch et al., 2010; Lucas et al., 2008). These teachers formed a community of practice that spanned our preliminary partner schools, inciting collaboration across P-12 settings in the same (e.g., Albany Park) or similar communities (i.e., culturally and linguistically diverse northside neighborhoods; Rogoff, 1995; Wenger et al., 2002). As will be demonstrated in the upcoming sections where we explore the evolution of our work overtime, this facet of our project took became central to our apprenticeship framework in subsequent years (Walqui, 2010).

Defining the Knowledge Base: Cross-University Collaboration to Improve Chicago Schools

Following the first year of Language Matters, where Loyola faculty vertically partnered with teacher, school, and network leaders to build capacity for linguistically responsive practice in P-12 schools on the north and northwest side of Chicago, the foundation convened all language and literacy grantees for a series of sessions facilitated by Dr. Aida Walqui. While we had been working with our specific CPS partners on building foundations and structures for linguistically responsive instruction, four other university-based teams had been engaged in the planning and implementation of efforts across the Chicagoland area, including elementary/secondary, public/parochial, and urban/suburban schools. Through these quarterly sessions, we collaborated around our ongoing work to build capacity for supporting students' language development in literacy instruction, mediated by scholarly literature in attempt to develop a shared theoretical and pedagogical framework for EBL teaching and learning (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; Mehta, 2013; Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). When Loyola faculty began participation in the sessions, we hoped to (a) share our successes, including our protocol for linguistically responsive practice differentiated and implemented in the unique sociocultural context of each our partner schools, and (b) address our challenges, such as the need for an effective and sustainable approach to school-site capacity building.

One overarching theme of discussion across the four sessions was building a professional knowledge base for language, learning, and EBLs (see Figure 2; Heritage et al., 2015). With all grantees operating within classroom, school, and district contexts where educators were in the midst of shifting to the New Standards, we collaboratively probed the challenges and opportunities to supporting students' language learning and development in academic instruction (Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; vanLier & Walqui, 2010). We asserted (a) that language develops and progresses simultaneous to cognition, (b) the needed attention to academic language demands inherent in classrooms texts and tasks, (c) the importance of scaffolding and supporting individual students' language development in instruction, and (d) the centrality of meaningful interaction among learners in supportive classroom environments. Having extensively read and incorporated the work these authors in our original proposal and work scope (Bunch et al., 2010; Walqui & Heritage, 2012), we were ideally situated to share how we had implemented these ideas in practice to push forward the conversation of our colleagues just getting started with their projects.

Within our larger discussions and negotiations with cross-university colleagues about the opportunities and challenges posed by the New Standards, particularly focused on building a core knowledge base for teaching EBLs, our team applied the learning to our Language

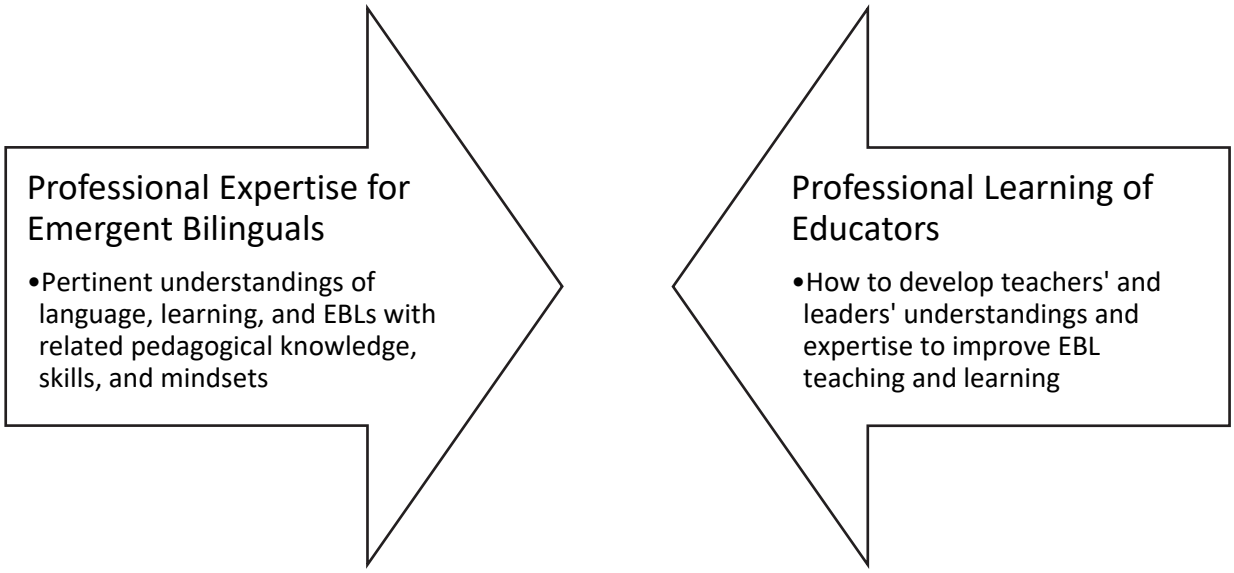

Figure 2: Key Themes of Cross-Partner Collaborative Discussions

Matters work. With the majority of readings and projects focused on adolescents in middle or high schools, we grappled with the learning specific to our project's unique and broad focus on P-12 schools. With our purposive, vertical collaboration across schools and communities, we used the ideas focused on adolescents to consider how early childhood and elementary education could contribute to academic language development and prepare students for secondary settings (Walqui & vanLier, 2010). We utilized the content-based examples in the readings to negotiate our project's original focus on literacy instruction, as we recognized the value and fleshed out the possibility of building teacher expertise across disciplines (Heritage et al., 2015; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). Overall, based on our collaborative conversations about EBLs, language, and learning, we applied learning to our unique context by continually returning to the question: *How can we approach our work to build teacher expertise in various disciplines ranging across P-12 settings?*

The other overarching theme of discussion and learning across the four sessions was the focus on the professional learning of educators, or how to develop teachers' and leaders' understanding and expertise for EBL teaching and learning (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Mehta, 2013; Walqui, 2010). Extending from the previously described theme centering on EBLs' learning and development, the focus on teacher professional development fostered collaborative discussion on how to effectively build these pertinent understandings, knowledge, skills, and dispositions with our partners. We began by asserting the pertinence of building teacher professionalism and practice from the bottom-up (Mehta, 2013), negotiating the complexity of implementing our shared theoretical and pedagogical framework for EBL teaching and learning in the unique sociocultural contexts of our Chicago-area partner schools and districts (Heritage et al., 2015; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). As former teachers and current scholars of teacher learning for EBLs, we found the larger group's discussion to be aligned to our extant vision and mission as a Language Matters team (Heineke et al., 2012). With much of our own research and practice focused on pre-service teachers, we benefited from the meaningful dialogue on theories of teacher learning, as connected to our shared capacity building efforts with in-service educators.

Within the larger conversations about building a core knowledge base for EBL teaching and learning (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Mehta, 2013), specifically focused on mainstream classroom teachers rather than limiting the scope to specialized teachers in ESL and bilingual settings (Heritage et al., 2015; vanLier & Walqui, 2010), our Loyola team looked to apply learning to the emergent challenges from the first year. Now having expanded to additional schools and networks, we grappled with how to (a) support teacher professionalism and build capacity for EBLs and language development with over 1400 teachers across our partner schools, and (b) align our work with the multiple initiatives asked of teachers across schools, districts, and networks. We pulled the most from our learning on teacher professional development through a sociocultural lens, specifically using an apprenticeship framework with teachers of EBLs in a large, urban district

(Walqui, 2010). Emerging from our collaborative con-versations about what we know about teacher learning and professional development, we applied learning to our project by continually returning to the question: *How can we implement our work in a way that includes and invests multiple stakeholders to build capacity across multiple classrooms, schools, and communities?* In this next section, we describe how we utilized these horizontal, cross-university partnerships centered around an integrated theory of EBL teaching and learn-ing to articulate, refine, and implement our work in Language Matters classrooms, schools, and districts.

Refining our Work: Teacher Expertise for Emergent Bilinguals in Theory and Practice

Grounded in sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978), we tapped into Walqui's (2010) professional development model to design our dynamic approach to build capacity and professionalism for EBLs (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Mehta, 2013). To develop the teacher professionalism and expertise for EBLs as fleshed out by our collaborative, cross-university group in the unique sociocultural contexts of north and north-west side Chicago schools, we recognized the need to *apprentice* teachers as they develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively support students' language development in daily classroom instruction (Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). We concep-tualized this teacher expertise as developing through apprenticeship across multiple planes of practice: (a) individual, teachers' appropriation into classroom practice, (b) interpersonal, teachers' guided participation in shared practices, and (c) institutional, teachers' apprenticeship into the educational context (see Figure 3; Rogoff, 1995).

Figure 3. Planes of Teacher Development

On the *individual plane*, teachers provide high-quality curriculum and instruction that specifically targets students' language development (Heinekeet al., 2018; Rogoff, 1995; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). Instructional planning is a regular practice for teachers, but educators must learn to explicitly consider language in backward design of learning goals, assessments, and instructional practices (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). As described above, the New Standards provide the opportunity to focus teachers' practice on language development and prioritize EBLs' access to rigorous content learning (Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015). When designing linguistically responsive instruction to support students' language development in the era of the New Standards, teachers must build upon students' existing funds of knowledge, identify the essential academic language included in the lesson, make connections between content and language standards, and plan for opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all students through a variety of instructional strategies. With an explicit lens on language, we have prioritized developing the professional expertise and capabilities of classroom teachers to support students' language development simultaneous to academic instruction (Walqui & vanLier, 2010).

High-quality instruction does not stop in the classroom. Teachers need to engage in joint work with peers

and experts to learn and develop expertise over time (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Rogoff, 1995; Walqui, 2010). On the *interpersonal plane*, educators develop knowledge and skills for EBLs through professional collaboration to promote learning and capacity development, specifically embedded in their unique school contexts (Rogoff, 2003, Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). To support professional learning, schools must build linguistically responsive contexts on a larger scale, including foundations and structures that prioritize language development and foster shared focus, commitment, and collaboration to language learning and EBLs (Heineke et al., 2012; Walqui, 2010). With collaborative structures in place to support ongoing professional learning with a specific lens on language development, faculty and staff then have consistent opportunities to explore ways to incorporate language and literacy across the curriculum. In addition to learning from peers, expert partners have apprenticed educators over time by modeling and scaffolding access to enduring understandings and high-quality instructional techniques to support students' language development (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui, 2010).

On the *institutional plane*, macro-level policies influence daily practice and require district infrastructures to support high-quality curriculum and instruction for EBLs (Rogoff, 1995). Sociocultural theory conceptualizes multiple layers impacting daily practice, and we conceptualize policies, initiatives, and stakeholders at the macro-level that support and sustain linguistically responsive practice in classrooms and schools (Levinson & Sutton, 2001; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Focused on strengthening system structures, we have regularly collaborated with district and network leaders over the past three years to develop deep understanding of language development, prioritize EBLs and highlight language within multiple educational initiatives, and create policies that positively impact EBLs' learning, development, and achievement (Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). Through ongoing dialogue among teachers, leaders, administrators, and university faculty, educators have collaboratively fostered linguistically responsive practice within the broader system to promote meaningful change from the bottom-up in classrooms, schools, and communities (Mehta, 2013).

Whereas our early work in Language Matters had included vertical collaboration across classroom, school, and network layers, we had not articulated an approach to purposefully build capacity across these interconnected planes of learning, development, and practice (Rogoff, 1995). Our horizontal collaboration in cross-university sessions allowed us to craft the above theoretical framework (see Figure 3), but also design practical processes to carry out our on-the-ground work with P-12 teachers and leaders in effective and meaningful ways (see Figure 4). Within three years, our project had expanded from six to 15 to eventually 32 partner schools, primarily due to the quickly spreading word among principals about our good work, helpful supports, and positive influences on EBLs' learning and language development. Due to this growth, we needed an approach to building capacity for language development that was reasonable and sustainable, considering our small Loyola faculty team with other university obligations including teaching, research, and service. Drawing from our realizations from the first year of Language Matters, we applied learning from ongoing horizontal collaboration to operationalize our teacher apprenticeship framework from theory into practice (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Mehta, 2013; Walqui, 2010). As depicted in Figure 5, our work centered on the integral role of teacher leaders, first apprenticed by Loyola faculty and then apprenticing their school-site colleagues to build capacity for students' language development; however, purposeful work with school and network leaders provided needed foundations and structures to foster teacher expertise and leadership.

After working with school- and network-level partners in the fall semester to build awareness and understanding, followed by foundations and structures for EBLs and language development, we collaborated with school leaders to purposefully select their *EL/bilingual teacher leader teams* (Heineke et al., 2012; Walqui, 2010). Since much of our framework relied on this core group of teaching professionals, we wanted schools to prioritize educators with whom we spent ample time and apprenticed across a variety of different planes (Rogoff, 1995). As foreshadowed previously as an important change in our Language Matters work, the 45 teachers participating in our graduate cohort across three years shifted into key leadership roles, spearheading their schools' language-related efforts, mentoring the EL/bilingual teacher leader teams, and apprenticing school-site colleagues. These teacher leaders have continued to deepen linguistically responsive practice by maintaining communication with the Language Matters team, engaging in ongoing learning in network-level professional learning, presenting at Language Matters bi-annual conferences to mediate learning across schools, and providing resources for school-site professional learning. At some schools, these teacher

leaders have become formal EL *coaches*, where they are freed up for a portion of the school day to coach other teachers in supporting EBLs and language development. At all schools, teacher leaders support colleagues, tapping into the continued collaboration across classrooms, schools, networks, and university.

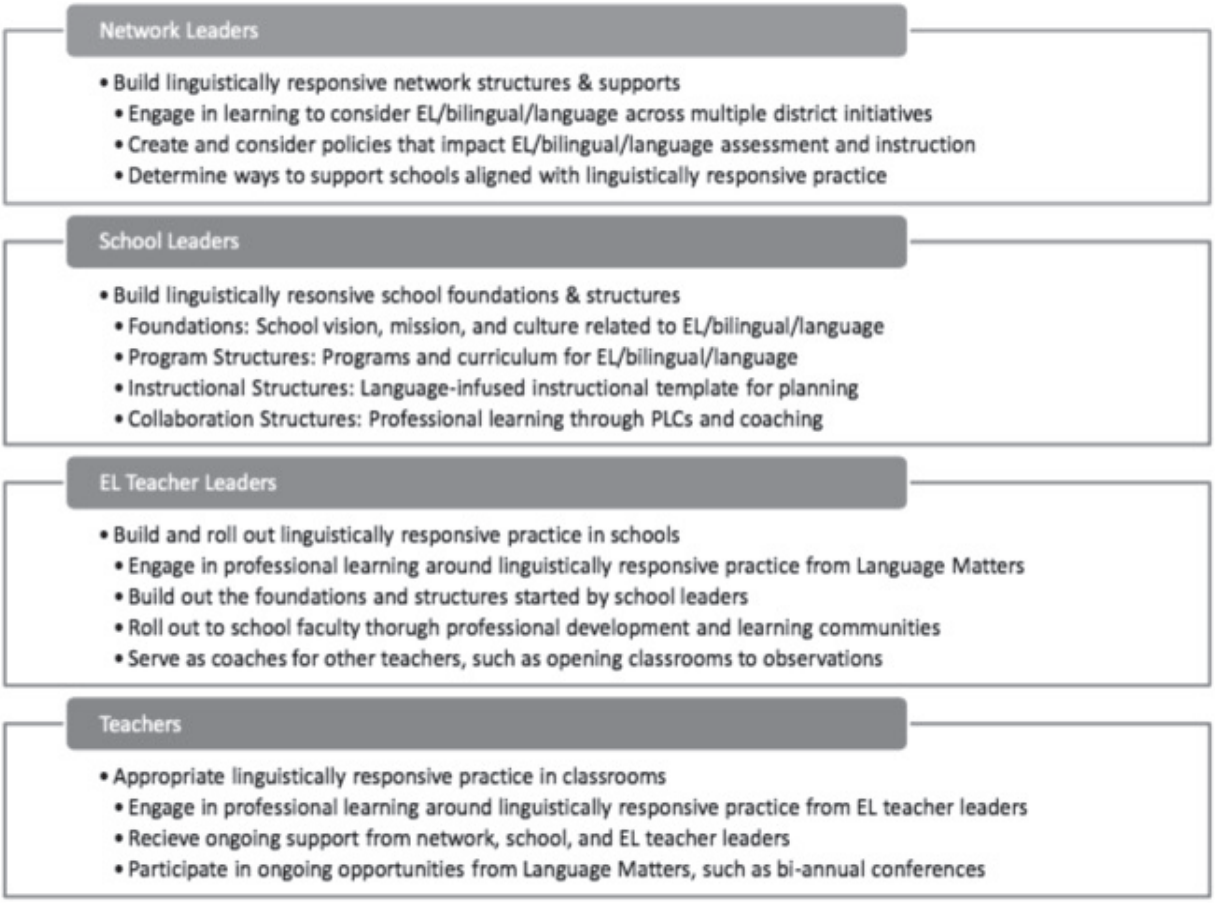

Figure 4: Multiple Layers of Language Matters Work

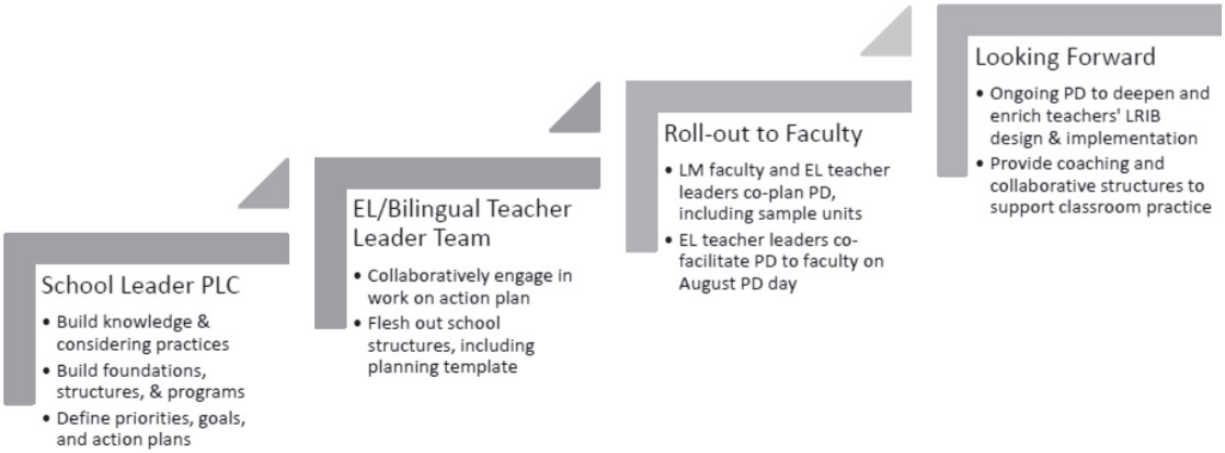

Figure 5. Language Matters Capacity Building Framework

Reflecting and Looking Forward: Educational Change and Teacher Professionalism

Through our Language Matters work, we have aimed to apprentice educators and build capacity in classrooms, schools, and networks with knowledgeable, skilled, and committed experts of EBLs (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Rogoff, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; Walqui, 2010). Based on both internal and external evaluation data collected and analyzed over the past three years, our collaborative professional development efforts have been successful in building practitioners' knowledge and skills for supporting students' language development in classroom instruction, as well as building schools and networks that understand and prioritize EBLs and language development (Lucas et al., 2008; Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). Embracing curricular shifts in policy and practice, we strategically utilized the implementation of the New Standards as an opportunity to build teachers' expertise for EBLs and language development in content instruction (Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; Walqui & Heritage, 2012). Additionally, our ongoing data collection and analyses demonstrated the pertinence of collaborative professional development and institutional structures at the school- and network-level to purposively build teacher leadership and expertise for EBLs at diverse urban schools (Heineke et al., 2018b).

Overall, we found the value and efficacy of using a well-defined framework for teacher expertise and apprenticeship, which was designed in our in our cross-university collaborative and implemented in our unique sociocultural contexts of culturally and linguistically diverse north and northwest side P-12 schools in Chicago (Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). By meeting with colleagues from across the city, what we referred to in this paper as horizontal collaboration across university-based teacher educators and researchers, our Language Matters team was able to flesh out our definition of teacher expertise for EBLs and our model for capacity building in schools and networks (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; Mehta, 2013; Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). By formalizing our approach, linguistically responsive practice as operationalized through backward instructional design, we were able to support teachers in (a) developing knowledge and skills related to EBLs and language and (b) taking on leadership roles in schools (Heineke et al., 2018a; Lucas et al., 2008; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Walqui, 2010).

Significance of our collaborative work and our own professional learning as teacher educators center on the demonstrated value of professional development and partnerships vertically across the multiple layers of *local* stakeholders, including classroom teachers, school leaders, district administrators, and university faculty. In other words, efforts to improve the learning and teaching of EBLs must begin with those directly connected to the students themselves (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). After defining the pertinent knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for expert teachers of EBLs, as situated within the specific backgrounds and needs of the community and its members, professional development can then prioritize building teachers' instructional and leadership capacities (Herrera, 2016; Kibler et al., 2015). In sum, drawing from our ongoing Language Matters work with culturally and linguistically diverse schools on the north side of Chicago, we argue for a *bottom-up approach* to professionalize teachers for EBLs (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Mehta, 2013). Using this integrated framework EBL teaching and learning, we have embarked upon a multi-stakeholder and multi-layered effort to professionalize the teaching of EBLs.

Despite our successes within and across schools, changes in priorities at the local foundation have recently resulted in the stoppage of funding for this work after only three years. Without hard numbers to directly tie our professional development efforts to student achievement, administrators have stated that they have no evidence of the efficacy of these types of bottom-up efforts in schools. Demonstrating what Mehta (2013) described as the external imposition of scientific rationality on schooling, some stakeholders continue to give precedence to the measurable instead of the meaningful. Despite these challenges, we persist in our work to define the knowledge base for EBL teaching and learning, provide high-quality professional development for practitioners, and build linguistically responsive schools and networks (Ball & Forzani, 2011; Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). The strong, mutually beneficial partnerships forged over three years, as well as the capacity and commitment built from the ground up across our 32 partner schools and three networks on the north and northwest sides of Chicago, will persist without formal monies and structures that come with grant funding (Kruger et al., 2008). Due to our strong partnerships and successful collaborative efforts, we will continue to work within and across universities, districts, networks, schools, and classrooms to improve EBL education in Chicago (Heineke et al., 2018a, 2018b).

Conclusions and Recommendations: Building Multi-layered Educational Partnerships

Based on our Language Matters work in the diverse and complex context of Chicago, recommendations center on what we described throughout the paper as multi-layered partnerships. Put simply, this is hard work. EBLs are a large, growing, and heterogeneous population posing unique challenges and opportunities to P-12 school stakeholders simultaneously seeking to implement other policies in practice, such as the New Standards. Teachers have consistently entered classrooms without extensive or comprehensive preparation for EBLs (Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006), resulting in high demand for EBL-focused professional development and therefore ample opportunities for partnerships. Nonetheless, the same dearth in preparation influences leaders' limited knowledge and corresponding awareness to prioritize EBLs and language development in schools and districts. In this way, multi-layered partnerships spanning classrooms, schools, and districts must begin by building awareness and getting buy-in from all stakeholders, not as a separate initiative but as embedded in and across daily practice in classrooms and schools. To accomplish this goal, we recommend using a framework such as linguistically responsive practice (Lucas et al., 2008), as the overarching tenets emerge as applicable across student populations, grade levels, content areas, curricular resources, and program models.

Building on the *all-hands-on-deck* approach engaging classroom teachers, school leaders, and district administrators, partnerships must also be extended to stakeholders beyond P-12 educational settings (Heineke et al., 2012; Kruger et al., 2008). Again, this is hard work characterized by dynamic shifts and complex nuances of policy in practice (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). To build capacity to support the learning, development, and achievement of unique and diverse groups of students, we must first define the knowledge base for teacher expertise for EBLs (Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Walqui, 2010; Walqui & Heritage, 2012). Teachers and leaders can no doubt contribute to this conversation, with intimate local knowledge of culturally and linguistically diverse students' backgrounds, abilities, and needs. To merge theory and practice to define an integrated approach to developing teacher expertise, university-based faculty and educational researchers play pertinent roles in pushing forward the dialogue. Our Loyola team was strategically formed to include expertise spanning EBLs, bilingual education, language development, literacy, and content area literacy. Cross-university partnerships further facilitate horizontal collaboration, where various perspectives come together to discuss, negotiate, and define teacher expertise as embedded in the unique sociocultural contexts of P-12 schools.

In addition to recommendations about establishing meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships, both vertically across layers of P-12 schools and horizontally among universities and external institutions, we would be remiss to discuss the issue of funding as readers consider ways to draw from our work. Our Language Matters work in culturally and linguistically diverse Chicago schools was made possible by grant funding, providing integral monies and support structures to initiate and evolve our partnerships and capacity building efforts. Nonetheless, we contend that the work can be done without external funds, when university faculty and P-12 educators recognize and collaboratively prioritize efforts related to EBLs and language development. With the shift to the New Standards, new pedagogical challenges to provide all students access to rigorous content curriculum result in increased awareness, motivation, and opportunities to forge partnerships that benefit both P-12 schools and universities (Bunch et al., 2014; Heritage et al., 2015; Walqui, 2010; Walqui & vanLier, 2010). Since we teach EBLs and support students' language development across grade levels, content areas, and educational contexts, universities and P-12 schools alike can tap into varied personnel, funding sources, school initiatives, training efforts, and other projects to find space for this EBL-focused, capacity building work. As we can confidently assert from our successes in the Language Matters project, your creativity and efforts will reap great rewards for the learning, development, and achievement of those who matter the most: students.

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