



Preparing Teachers to Work Effectively in Dual Language Programs

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The need for well-trained dual language teachers in Connecticut

- ▶ There are no teacher preparation programs that focus on dual language. As a result, DL programs must carry out in-service professional development.
- ▶ Bilingual education and TESOL are consistently identified as teacher shortage areas by the state Department of Education.
 - Part of this challenge stems from the fact that bilingual education and TESOL are cross-endorsements that teachers must pursue following primary certification.



The research base on Dual Language Teachers' PD needs

- ▶ Dual language teachers with certification, training and experience reported higher levels of self-efficacy than those without (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).
- ▶ Teachers in dual language programs consistently cite the need for greater training and support of new and practicing teachers (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003).



Current study

- ▶ Survey of existing dual language teachers in Connecticut (n=93) – 6 out of 7 existing programs participated in the study.
- ▶ Funded by Teachers for a New Era at the University of Connecticut
- ▶ Elizabeth Howard and Angela Lopez–Velasquez, Principal Investigators; Marisa del Campo, Research Assistant



What do CT dual language teachers identify as their most pressing professional development needs?

- ▶ *Dual language educators need to be trained on the model program that they follow to make it effective. Many in our program have not had formal training.*
- ▶ *Both teachers need some level of proficiency in both languages.*
- ▶ *The English counterparts of a dual language program need as much course work as the Spanish teachers in multicultural awareness, sheltered instruction, etc.*
- ▶ *The most pressing would be the support for the Spanish component of the program. While there is PD for ESL and English language instruction, the Spanish PD is minimal at best.*
- ▶ *Building on understanding of normal literacy development of a dual language learner, especially in performance & growth expectations.*
- ▶ *Funding to attend conferences, summer institutes, collaborations with teachers in other programs.*



What do CT dual language teachers suggest for recruiting more DL teachers?

- ▶ *Create dual language certification & make it available at most/all of state colleges, promote this certification within the colleges.*
 - ▶ *Invite dual language teachers into the university.*
 - ▶ *First, you need to train current teachers to become more familiar with possibly having bilingual students and how they need to teach them. Then recruit from qualified/experienced teachers from the outside – other districts, etc.*
 - ▶ *Having an incentive pay to obtain an additional endorsement.*
 - ▶ *Provide higher pay for qualified dual language teachers.*
 - ▶ *“Home grow” our current youth that speak the minority language to be successful college graduates with academic proficiency in the minority language – do so by improving current dual language programs.*
 - ▶ *Offer free language courses.*
 - ▶ *The Department of Education should be more flexible with the requirements/credentials with the teachers that come from Hispanic countries and who need some support with the English language.*
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What suggestions do CT dual language teachers have for supporting DL teachers?

- ▶ *Create state CMTs that are bilingual to highlight importance and progress in the minority language for students.*
- ▶ *Educate the public about dual language education & its benefits.*
- ▶ *Increase the status of the minority language in the school and community.*
- ▶ *Provide frequent professional development targeted to our needs.*
- ▶ *Support staff (i.e., reading teachers/math support) need to be supportive of the dual language programs they provide services for.*
- ▶ *Administrators who have had training, so as to skillfully support building staff and parents & their children.*
- ▶ *More Spanish materials with better translations.*
- ▶ *Opportunities to form professional relationships with other dual language teachers throughout the state. (also conferences).*
- ▶ *Smaller class sizes*
- ▶ *Incentives*

