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Classroom Teachers as Language Policy Implementors

Teachers as Language Policy Planners: Incorporating Language Policy Planning into Teacher Education and Classroom Practice

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Teachers are not passive recipients of language policy; rather, they play an instrumental role in classroom language policy (re)creation. All teachers, whether teaching mainstream or English Language Learner/ Bilingual Education (ELL/ BLE) classrooms, are inevitably engaged in acts of language planning and policy each day. In this paper, I argue that teachers can and should proactively (re)create language policy to make classrooms more equitable spaces for students acquiring English as an additional language. I also advocate more explicit acknowledgement of the limitations of schools and schooling. Focusing specifically on the importance of adding language planning and policy (LPP) to the teacher preparation period, I claim that the practice of LPP can simultaneously help new teachers better support the success of students learning English, while also furthering the broader goals of teacher education programs.

Introduction

WHAT ARE MY GOALS for the ESOL class that I am teaching? English or Science? I have decided that my goals for Ss learning are multifaceted. When I write lesson plans I make English and Science objectives for every lesson....sometimes I throw in a third category called "cultural" so that I am certain to make deliberate attempts to show students that their knowledge and experiences before coming to the US are just as important to me as the experiences that they are having now. But the biggest struggle that I have in teaching this class is in feeling like I have to prepare these students for standardized tests...

Stacey,¹ a student in a teacher education / English as a second or other language (ESOL) certification program, posted the above comments to an on-line forum for one of her methods courses. Stacey was com-

¹ All names are pseudonyms. Comments used in this paper are not part of a sustained research project. Rather than positioning these comments as "data", I use them to frame various sections and raise questions.

pleting her student teaching in an ESOL science classroom; during her methods course that week she repeatedly pointed out the contradictions and seeming impossibilities that existed for her in her work. Through tears, she described the way that her school had simply asked who wouldn't mind teaching the English language learners (ELL) group, and talked about the difficulty of building relationships with her students when she feels like her classroom is a constant revolving door, as students are regularly shuffled around. She explicated further on how she was constantly juggling goals for her students, struggling as she tried to determine what to prioritize.

After class that week, another student in the course, Amber, posted the following:

I think Thursday really brought a lot of issues to a head for me. It all began with a visit from Pam [her mentor] where I broke down and cried my eyes out about my frustration with teaching. I don't have any true ELL students, because if they were designated as such, they would be in the ESOL chemistry class. Instead, my problems revolve around regular old ordinary English-speaking students, which perhaps makes me feel even worse about my lack of success. I can't help feeling like I should be doing more. Success with one student, while it is appreciated, also makes me feel worse about seeing no success with the others. Seeing Stacey speak through her frustration and her tears made me truly, for the first time, feel as though I am not alone. I have no idea what I would do if I were in her situation; the language barrier must be so stressful. Not only is it difficult being a new teacher, but having the added stress of trying to figure out how to teach ESOL students is unimaginable .

What are the responsibilities of teacher education programs in preparing new teachers to work with students who are learning English as an additional language? Stacey and Amber's comments speak to the complications of learning to teach, and also raise myriad questions and concerns for teacher educators. How can we help new teachers develop ways to cope with the contradictory demands that are placed on them, while supporting and nurturing their commitment to reaching all students? What are the implications when new teachers view teaching ESOL students as an "added stress" that threatens their ability to act as competent professionals? What about mainstream teachers who view teaching "true ELL students" as something that is not their job? What can (and can't, for surely the solution is not in teacher education alone) teacher education programs do to address these issues?

In this paper, I propose adding the practice of language planning and policy (LPP) to the teacher preparation period as a starting point for addressing these questions. Both mainstream and English Language Learner (ELL)/Bilingual education (BLE) teachers are inevitably engaged in acts of language planning and policy each day. Varghese and Stritikus

(2005) use a cross-case study of two bilingual teachers to highlight the language policy response and enactment teachers engage in on a regular basis. They show how teachers “are never conduits of a particular policy” and thus recommend that “teacher education and teacher training, especially in relation to bilingual teachers, must specifically address the role of teachers as *policy makers*” (84, emphasis mine). I build on Varghese and Stritikus’ argument that the preparation of teachers should be expanded to include the dimension of language planning and policy. I begin by briefly describing the field of LPP and its connection to education. I then address more explicitly why teachers need an understanding of LPP, arguing that given the increasing linguistic diversity in classrooms and the lack of policy that addresses the needs of ELL students, all teachers, not just those in ESOL or BLE certification tracks, need this knowledge. Next, I turn to the dual benefits of adding the practice of LPP to the teacher preparation period. LPP can simultaneously help new teachers better support the success of students learning English, while also supporting the broader goals of teacher education programs. Here I focus on the way incorporating language planning (LP)² into the curriculum supports the development of an inquiry stance, helps pre-service teachers to recognize the complexity of the task of teaching, and supports new teachers in constructing broader professional identities. Finally, I provide a brief review of what teachers should learn in their preparation programs to be prepared to work with and language plan for ELL students, and provide examples of innovative ways some teacher education programs are working to better prepare teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms.

Before proceeding, I want to state that my intent in this paper is not to romanticize what education can do for marginalized students. Schools are (and long have been) failing marginalized students, particularly students for whom English is an additional language. In fact, ample evidence exists to show that schools are places where their failure is systematically constructed (e.g., Varenne & McDermott 1998; Valenzuela 1999). Nor do I intend to minimize the very real constraints under which teachers operate in our current era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), English Only policies, high stakes testing, etc. As I think back to my own time as a bilingual educator, I’m reminded that there are many reasons not to be hopeful about what can happen in schools for children who are learning English. I’m reminded why I left the classroom, and I’m reminded of my belief that creating a schooling environment where students who are now marginalized can thrive cannot happen through classroom practice alone. While I do acknowledge the uncertainty around whether changes in pedagogy lead to changes in society, or visa versa, I see the

² The terms language planning (LP) and language planning and policy (LPP) are often used interchangeably. Some scholars prefer the latter term, as it highlights the inevitable construction of policy when engaging in acts of language planning.

processes that happen in schools as significantly impacting students' life trajectories, for better or for worse. Without denying that the possibilities of pedagogy may in fact be limited, I concur with Erickson's (1996) assessment that as educators we "cannot wait for a revolution in the general society" (45) to work toward improving the educational circumstances of marginalized students. It is in this context that I wonder what might happen if teachers were conceptualized as language planners, if researchers and policy makers reconsidered their own roles and engaged *with* teachers to both critique the way educational outcomes are currently defined and to push for the redefinition of what happens in classroom spaces. What possibilities might exist in improving the educational experiences of students for whom English is an additional language? I ask these questions while acknowledging the problematic nature of using categories of difference like ELL (Ladson-Billings 1999), and questioning (indeed, doubting) whether multicultural education can really help us to create equal educational opportunities for all students (Varenne & McDermott 1998). Perplexed by these issues, I advocate the idea of conceptualizing teachers as language planners in an attempt to follow Varenne & McDermott's (1998) proposition that those of us in positions of authority – teachers and researchers – must continually work toward an awareness of the practical consequences of our actions; doing this requires a shift away from "solving the individual problems" of students acquired by categories of difference to holding a fundamental trust in the power of these individual students to make the best of their human conditions (215). With respect to the language planning actions of teachers, I see our teacher preparation programs as a starting point for addressing these questions and working through what it means to hold these commitments.

Language Planning and Policy: An Overview and its Connections to Education

What is language planning (LP)? As a basic definition, Cooper's (1989) explanation is a good place to start. Cooper (1989) describes language planning as "deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (45). He points out that while there are many definitions, these definitions can generally be discussed in terms of who plans what for whom and how. Like teaching, language planning is informed by theory, but inherently a "practical" act. As Ricento (2006) reminds us, language planning "is not just an exercise in philosophical inquiry; it is interested in addressing social problems which often involve language, to one degree or another, and in proposing realistic remedies" (11). As in the field of education, the interplay between theory and practice in LP is complicated and at times conflictual.

The field of LPP is highly multidisciplinary; it has no overarching theory, primarily because of the complex relationship between language and society (Ricento 2006). Thus, typologies and frameworks abound in the LPP field. Attempting to synthesize this body of work, Hornberger (1994/2006) has devised an integrative LPP framework. Bringing together the work of various LP scholars, Hornberger's (2006) framework is intended as "a tool for beginning to answer the question of how to develop which language/literacies for which purposes" (3). Particularly salient for the preparation of teachers is her point that whatever our language goals might be in any given context, language/literacy planning is most effective if goals are pursued along several concomitant dimensions of the framework; LPP efforts are most successful when attention is paid to all six dimensions of the framework. As I'll argue in more detail later, such planning is often dependent on an intimate knowledge of context, knowledge that teachers themselves are best positioned to access when language planning for classrooms.

Education has long been recognized as playing an important role in language planning. As Fishman (2006) states, since education is generally obligatory, focused on the young, and seen as a tool for social mobility, it operates as "a very useful and highly irreversible language-shift mechanism" (320). Ironically, however, while the role of education in language planning is widely acknowledged, the role of the classroom teacher in the language planning process is often overlooked or oversimplified. Historically, there has been little recognition that teachers are not passive recipients of language policy, but rather, play an instrumental role in classroom language policy (re)creation. Various scholars have noted this oversight, and argued for the importance of recognizing teachers as active agents in the language policy and planning process (e.g. Hornberger & Ricento 1996; Skilton-Sylvester 2003). Recent case studies that demonstrate the way teachers have interpreted and reacted to English Only policies like Proposition 227 in California and Proposition 203 in Arizona (e.g. Stritikus 2003; Stritikus & Garcia 2000) further highlight the agency teachers possess around language policy enactment. For example, Stritikus (2003) details a California teacher's reaction to English Only Proposition 227. This teacher, Celia, initially embraces the policy with "cautious optimism". In her willingness to accommodate the policy, she modifies her bilingual practice to reflect the English Only mandate and closely follows provided scripted curricula. Over time, however, she shifts her interaction with and interpretation of the policy as she reexamines her beliefs about BLE and her own educational history. This results in classroom literacy practice that is markedly different from her initial implementation of the language policy. Stritikus uses Celia's case to argue that teacher beliefs, teacher identity, and teacher learning heavily influence the implementation of language policy. We might extend this to posit that teachers may (and often do) (re)create classroom language policy

based on these factors, working within the constraints of existing policy to create more equitable circumstances for their ELL students.

Knowledge of LPP: Why it Matters for Teachers

Though the LPP actions of teachers who do not have to negotiate E.O. policies may be less pronounced than Celia's, by engaging in teaching, teachers are inevitably engaged in acts of LPP. The implicit and explicit language policy that operates in schools and classrooms often produces categories of failure for students who are learning English as an additional language to occupy (e.g. Valenzuela 1999). Teachers need an awareness of this production process and their role within it. Part of attaining this awareness necessarily involves attaining knowledge of language planning and policy, and an understanding of how one's own practice inevitably creates language policy.

Thus to the question of why introduce new teachers to LPP, I begin by pointing out that it is impossible for teachers *not* to engage in LPP. Further, the undeniable link between questions of equity and questions of language use supports the notion that we must recognize teachers as language planners who need explicit instruction around language planning in the pre-service period. Citing Hymes, Hornberger (2006: 27) reminds us that "while all languages are potentially equal, they are, for social reasons, not actually so". Teachers who work in linguistically diverse spaces must tend to this inevitable inequity in structuring their classroom environment. Referring to Bourdieu's work, Collins (1993) argues that developing a pedagogy that goes beyond status quo maintenance "would require methodical attempts to reach (that is, really teach) those whose backgrounds do not prepare them for the language of schooling" (121). Federal language policy has a long history of oscillating between support for and eradication of multilingualism in schools (Wiley 2002); while a federal policy that supports multilingualism in schools does not by default guarantee better educational circumstances for ELL students, language policy that restricts classroom instruction to English heightens the difficulty teachers face in engaging in the real teaching Collins advocates.

This point is especially salient given the current language policy climate in the U.S. NCLB and the high stakes testing climate it creates, English Only legislation (e.g. Prop. 227 in California, Prop. 203 in Arizona), and literacy policy all act as significant top down policies that shape, and inevitably place limitations on, the (re)creation of classroom language policy by K-12 teachers. Indeed, many teachers have been demoralized and discouraged by E.O. legislation and the way it constrains their practice (Ma 2002). That said, despite restrictive federal policy, teachers can and do find ways to engage in multilingual language planning to better meet the needs of their students (Johnson 2004). In

order to create the best possible learning environments for ELL students, and to find ways to reshape and/or call into question current policy when necessary, teachers need explicit understanding of the ways in which legislation shapes the language policy they create in classrooms. This understanding can help teachers find the spaces to (re)create policy that better serves their students when necessary.

I do not mean to present a simplistic solution to the barriers that impede ELL students' success in school, or to minimize the difficulties teachers face in our current policy climate – as Edelsky (2005) has shown, the ability of teachers to effectively resist scripted curricula and E.O. policies often depends on their status with parents, their longstanding professional reputations, their relationships with administrators, or the fact that school and district administrators are simply too busy to pay attention to classroom happenings. My intent, instead, is to advocate that pre-service teachers be prepared to adopt identities as competent, confident professionals who develop and maintain an explicit understanding of how policy shapes their classrooms, and how they can (re)construct this policy to better meet the needs of students in their local contexts. Basic understanding of the linguistic ramifications of top-down federal language policies is a starting point. While English Only policies clearly carry linguistic aims, teachers also need to understand the linguistic effects of NCLB and literacy policy. Thus, in what follows, I provide a brief overview of the way these two official policies shape classroom language use and teacher language policy (re)creation.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

NCLB effectively repealed and replaced the Bilingual Education Act, and renamed the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education as the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. Beyond this explicit functioning as language policy, NCLB also functions as implicit LP, primarily through the creation of a high-stakes testing environment. Writing before the passage of NCLB, Trujillo (2005) documents the way that state tests exacerbate the pressure teachers feel to have students gain a certain type of knowledge and be able to demonstrate that knowledge in a certain way. Detailing the case of Crystal City schools over a 20-year time span, Trujillo describes the effect of testing pressure on bilingual education practice as follows:

Factors and forces within and outside the community contributed to teachers' changed perspective regarding the school district's educational philosophy... Teaching practices changed as teachers became more concerned with how students were going to obtain the linguistic and cultural capital valued and assessed by the state. In this respect, the school district's system of assessment was instrumental in changing the form and content of the curriculum... [We see] the obvious limitations a

school district faces with language policy supporting biliteracy when the required state assessment is in English. The status of the two languages is obvious (648).

As reflected in Stacey's opening comment, teacher education students are acutely aware of this pressure.

Literacy Policy

The move away from whole language toward phonics-based literacy instruction (and the scripted curricula often coupled with this approach) also acts as a form of classroom language policy. Schools that have been successful in maintaining their bilingual programs despite English Only mandates have seen scripted curricula (generally attained through Reading First funds) dismantle their bilingual education programs (Edelsky 2006). Stritikus (2003) situates California's English Only proposition 227 alongside the concomitant move away from whole language toward a more phonics-based approach to literacy; he argues that language and literacy policy in this context act in a system of mutual reinforcement. He documents how the lean toward phonics-based literacy instruction influences textbook/program adoption and thus teacher practice, including classroom language use. In the interest of utilizing a "research based" reading curriculum, programs like Open Court are often adopted. These programs tend to constrain teachers, structuring their time and goals in ways that limit (and even eliminate) the possibilities for native language instruction, thus constraining teacher policy (re)creation.

What Works in Terms of Policy?

Federal policies such as English Only, NCLB, and literacy policy are often cited as limiting teachers, and being particularly harmful to ELL students (e.g. Crawford 2001). But what works in terms of policy that supports ELL success? Lack of a consistent voice in answering this question has made defeating E.O. initiatives particularly difficult (Crawford 1997). More empirical research that addresses the "what works" for ELL students question is needed. For example, inadequate standardized tests are often used to measure the achievement of ELL students; there is a lack of alternative models of assessment that might aid educators' understanding and interpretation of the information gained from such tests (Menken 2000).

That said, I would also argue that it is necessary to push beyond the generalized "what works" question; while current policy pushes toward standardization, increasingly there is evidence that the most successful approaches to improving schooling for ELL students are variable and context specific. For example, the American Institute for Research and WestEd conducted a five-year evaluation of the effects of California's

English Only Proposition 227 on ELL students (Parrish et al. 2006). The study suggests that there is no clear evidence to support an argument of the superiority of one approach to working with ELL students over another. The authors thus argue that perhaps Proposition 227 focuses on the wrong issue, and that a paradigm shift away from the immersion/ BLE debate would allow for a focus on the *multiplicity of factors* that matter in ELL achievement.

Freeman (2004) also highlights the importance of constructing school language policy based on local context, instead of seeking a panacea. She argues that educators must go beyond simply developing dual or world language programs and work to understand the sociolinguistic context in which the school is situated, considering students' long- and short-term language needs along with parents, community members, and students themselves. Highlighting the importance of how educators structure classroom language use, and the connections between equity and classroom language policy, Freeman states that "the choices educators make in the ways that they organize their programs and practices have implications for the opportunities that students see available to them at school and in society" (84). I would add that as teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, we must grapple with the fact that while we may adopt pluralistic orientations toward language, we live in a society where the dominant language ideology is that of assimilation. Given this, while bilingual education programs are rich with possibility, I see it as necessary to empirically ground any claims made about the "good" of bilingual education. In other words, simply because bilingual education is a theoretically sound practice does not make it strategically sound, or visa versa (Spivak 1993); as Parish et al. (2006) and Freeman (2004) demonstrate, decisions about the appropriateness of any given language policy must be made in specific circumstances.

While there is no generic model to support the success of ELL students, it is evident that well constructed classroom language policy matters in terms of student achievement. Freeman (1998) provides a striking example of this in her ethnography of a dual language program at the Oyster School in Washington D.C. She demonstrates the increased opportunities for school success that all students have when language policy is well constructed. She further provides evidence for the idea that when a language as resource (Ruiz 1984)³ mentality is adopted in schools and bilingual education is well employed, it can serve to prepare students to function in an English dominant society better than traditional models. While further empirical evidence is needed to understand the impact of bi/ multilingual educational practices in different contexts, much work has shown how these practices can dramatically raise students' achievement, even when achievement is narrowly defined as standardized test

³ See Ricento (2005) for an interesting challenge to the way the construct of language as resource is often employed.

achievement. Menken (2006) describes a case where a school went against the norm and increased native language instruction as a strategy for helping students to improve their performance on the English Regents exam. The school determined that the skills tested on the Spanish Advanced Placement exam were similar to the skills tested on the English Regents. They thus constructed a program where ELL students take native Spanish language arts courses to prepare them for AP Spanish and the AP exam. They found that students who could pass the AP Spanish courses could generally pass the English Regents exam as well. This approach increased pass rates for students who are learning English on the English Regents exam by 50%; in fact, this strategy of increasing Spanish instruction to improve performance on English tests has been so successful that it is now being implemented in schools across the region.

Well constructed, context specific classroom language policy matters for students acquiring English as an additional language. My argument here is that, with or without the constraints of English Only legislation, teachers are among the best attuned to the multiplicity of factors that Parish et al. (2006) argue matter in ELL student achievement. Acknowledging that there is no generic “one best” environment for ELL students involves acknowledging the critical role of teachers in reading local context and (re)constructing policy. Teachers need to use their attunement to the multiplicity of factors that matter in ELL achievement and construct (and continuously re-construct) language policy that best services students in their own classroom context.

Supporting Student Success and Teacher Learning: The Dual Benefits of LPP

Certainly, the goal of incorporating LPP into the teacher education curriculum is not to “teach” teachers a particular mode of language planning. As Varghese and Stritikus argue, pre-service teachers do not need to simply be taught how to language plan or what language planning is, but rather need to carry out language planning “in relation to [their] own local variables and their personal beliefs” (2005: 84). They argue that teachers (and teacher educators) need to reconceptualize their professional identities, adding the dimension of policy makers.

Thus, I advocate an integration of LPP into teacher education programs not only because it matters for students, as the examples from Freeman (1998; 2004) and Menken (2006) suggest, but also because it matters for new teachers as they begin to shape their professional identities. One might argue that adding the dimension of language planning to teacher education programs would be overwhelming to new teachers, and that while an understanding of LPP may be important, it is not a priority in this limited time period. I disagree. Beyond the fact that our classrooms are increasing in linguistic diversity, such that more and more

mainstream teachers are working with students for whom English is as an additional language, I see the integration of LPP as complimentary to the overall goals of teacher preparation. In our current policy climate of reduction and standardization, adding the dimension of LPP could help new teachers to develop a richer, more nuanced understanding of their professional roles. It could allow teachers to better grasp the complexity of the task they are undertaking, and help them recognize that teaching is inevitably conflictual work. It would support the efforts of teacher educators to push pre-service teachers beyond easy answers, helping them to recognize that “[a] teacher has the potential to act with integrity while maintaining contradictory concerns” (Lampert 1985: 184). This becomes particularly crucial to constructing opportunities for success for ELL students given the policy climate detailed above. New teachers need to learn to see “conflict as endemic and even useful to [their] work rather than seeing it as a burden that needs to be eliminated” (Lampert 1985: 192). Following, I’ll detail two of the ways in which the aims of teacher education programs are furthered by integrating the practice of LPP.

Pushing Past “Easy Answers”/Acknowledgment of Complexity

I began this paper by quoting Stacey, a student in a teacher preparation program. The following comments come from Lisa, another teacher in her cohort.

What is a teacher supposed to do? For example, Mr. M teaches the ESL class and has enough trouble getting past everyone’s language barriers, and then his class is still forced to take the same benchmark test as everyone else. How can we possibly get students who speak so many different languages on the same page enough to prepare them to attempt the same assessments as the native English speakers in the district?

It’s interesting to consider these comments alongside each other. While both teachers were frustrated, Stacey described the way she has come to see the goals for her students as multifaceted; Lisa, on the other hand, voiced the impossibility of working successfully with ELL students given the demands of standardized testing (both in the above comments from the online forum, and in class). Unlike the other students in her cohort, Stacey was completing an ESOL certification; despite the frustration visible in Stacey’s initial comments, one might argue that the skills she gained in these courses gave her the confidence to challenge the way success was being defined in her school context, and work toward redefining success in a way that made sense for the students she worked with. Like Lisa, Stacey felt frustrated by the pressure of standardized testing. Stacey pushed beyond this frustration, however, and found a way to cope with the competing (and often conflicting) requirements placed on her and her students.

The dilemmas posed by these two pre-service teachers harken toward the inevitable conflicts faced by practitioners in both the LPP and teaching fields. As these two practices come together in the space of the classroom, complexity is heightened. Hornberger (2006) describes LPP as a field “poised perpetually between theory and practice” (35). The same could certainly be said for the field of education; indeed, both are fields where scholars/practitioners grapple with the complex ways in which theory interacts with practice. Both fields must stay mindful of equity and justice, and teaching, like LPP, inevitably involves action according to someone’s vision of “the good” (Ricento 2006). Whether we situate LPP as part of the task of teaching, or teaching as part of a larger LPP mechanism, the task of the practitioner is inevitably conflictual. How can teacher educators support new teachers in their efforts to manage? Instead of expecting neat solutions to the dilemmas that arise in their teaching and language planning practice, pre-service teachers need to develop a tolerance for this inherent conflict.

Lampert (1985) argues that since teachers are confronted with multiple dilemmas daily, many of which are irresolvable, they must develop a tolerance for ambiguity. She states that in the classroom, “...a clear distinction between tasks related to social organization and tasks related to instruction is unachievable” and suggests that the “dilemma-managing teacher” (185) must work at solving society’s problems and scholars’ problems, while also coping with her own internal conflict. Instead of seeking a solution, Lampert (1985) claims that this type of teacher “debates with herself about what to do and instead of screening out responsibilities that contradict one another, she acknowledges them, embraces the conflict, and finds a way to manage” (190). My argument here is that the practice of language planning provides a space for teachers to explore the conflicts of their practice, and find a way to manage competing obligations.

Further, one of the responsibilities commonly screened out by teachers is their role as classroom language planners. As mentioned previously, by engaging in teaching, teachers are inevitably engaging in language planning as well. Certainly teachers will not eliminate conflict by making their intentions explicit in structuring classroom language use; indeed, as Lampert points out, acknowledging this responsibility may pose new dilemmas. What LP could do is help pre-service teachers to better grasp the complexity of the task they are undertaking, and start them on the path toward working out what it means to manage in this profession. Introducing the dimension of LP would support the efforts of teacher educators to push pre-service teachers beyond easy answers.

While the work of teaching is inevitably conflictual, teachers do need tools to help them make sense of the complexity of the task and cope with and manage conflict. When considering the task of working effectively with students learning English as a second language, the need for such

tools becomes especially pronounced. Schultz (2003) proposes a conceptual framework for helping new and experienced teachers reflect on how to teach. The framework is centered on the notion of *listening*, grounded in practice, and acknowledges four components of what Schultz (2003) labels as:

listening to teach...listening to know particular students; listening for the rhythm and balance of a classroom; listening for the social, cultural, and community contexts of students' lives; and listening for silence and acts of silencing in classrooms and social institutions (16).

Her framework is particularly useful in the context of learning to carry out classroom language planning, given its central focus on *listening*. For example, a common struggle faced by ELL/BLE teachers is balancing the needs of individual learners at various levels of language acquisition (some of which may speak no English at all), with attention given to the progress of the group as a whole. As teachers listen to the rhythm and balance of the group, it helps them to reflect on the ways they can listen to students and respond to what they hear in individual yet collective ways (Schultz 2003).

Teacher Professionalism/Respect for Teachers

Ideology is ruling our political debates; indeed, there are ways in which science can't even speak back to what is happening in the political sphere. Particularly, the debate around teacher education is becoming more and more ideological, and is increasingly tied to political interests (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2002). How can teacher educators respond to this? What *can* be heard? These questions become especially salient with respect to ELL issues, where unquestioned language ideologies, often constructed around the strong tie between language and nationalism (Anderson 1983), have rendered the voices of teachers, students, and parents mute in this discussion.

Some researchers concerned with ELL/BLE issues push for more empirical work that provides the type of scientific proof valued by the current administration, whereas others such as Cochran-Smith & Fries (2002) claim the importance of context specificity, and advocate more local, bottom-up efforts to address the needs of ELL/BLE students. Regardless of strategy (indeed, multiple strategies are likely in order), especially salient in these conversations for teacher educators is the importance of teachers being recognized as competent professionals. As part of this effort, teacher educators can continue to contemplate the ways in which teachers form professional identities and gain the confidence to act as experts with respect to their own classroom contexts. Again, I argue that this development can be further facilitated by adding the dimension of language planning to teacher preparation.

Many teacher education programs advocate for teachers taking an inquiry stance toward their classrooms; the practice of language planning supports (and even necessitates) such inquiry. By inquiring into the dilemmas and successes they experience in their daily practice, making observations, collecting evidence, and acting to better provide support for student success, teachers act as “experts” with respect to their classrooms. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) suggest a conceptualization of teacher knowledge they title “*knowledge of practice*” (250). Instead of dividing formal knowledge from practical knowledge, they suggest that:

...the knowledge teachers need to teach well is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation. In this sense, teachers learn (and, I would add, can *teach* those of us who are positioned outside of classroom contexts) when they generate local *knowledge of practice* by working within the constructs of inquiry communities to theorize and to construct their work and to connect it to larger social, cultural, and political issues (250).

This type of inquiry, theorization, and connection to larger issues is particularly salient in the context of classroom language use. While there is much empirical work that generally supports native language instruction, teachers need language plans that fit with their particular local contexts and the desires of students, parents, and administrators. By shifting focus to teachers as the active agents of language planning, it becomes evident how this empirical work can serve as a resource to help teachers create classroom spaces where students are positioned to succeed. In other words, teachers can draw on empirical work to construct their own “*knowledge of practice*” - knowledge that makes sense in terms of supporting student achievement in their own local contexts.

If there is no “one best” model for making classrooms more equitable spaces for ELL students, as has been argued here, this type of theorizing from teachers becomes essential. As stated previously, Hornberger (2006) has presented a conceptual framework for language planning and policy; similarly, she has developed a framework for the cultivation of biliteracy (2003). In each case, she suggests that progress is best realized when goals are simultaneously pursued along as many dimensions of these frameworks as possible. I would argue that planning for such convergent activity in classrooms is near impossible without intimate knowledge of the affordances and constraints of working in particular public school spaces. No one could be better attuned to this complexity than the reflective, inquiring practitioner. Language planning affords pre-service teachers the opportunity to develop their inquiry stance. Teachers who develop identities as inquirers can work to (re)theorize their own class-

room spaces to support student success. This can further facilitate their claiming identities as confident, competent professionals (and indeed, policy makers). Again, language planning augments the goals of teacher education in supporting inquiry; it also helps teachers develop the skills to better support student success and speak back to the (often misplaced) ideologies in the debate around educating students learning English as an additional language.

Starting Points and Future Directions

Regardless of preparation route, a majority of new teachers feel unprepared to teach ELL students (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow 2002). Teacher preparation programs vary widely in the way they prepare teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms. What can teacher education programs do to prepare teachers to take up the task of classroom language planning? In this section, I'll start by addressing basic competencies teachers need to gain in their preparation programs. I'll then highlight innovative examples of what is being done in some teacher preparation programs to better educate teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms. I'll conclude by pointing toward the necessity of collaboration as we work to determine how we might best prepare teachers to language plan.

Where Do We Start?

In preparing teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms, teacher education programs often focus on the linguistic and pedagogical knowledge new teachers need to acquire. The emphasis this material receives may vary greatly from program to program, and programs often have a BLE/ELL certification track where these topics are covered more in depth. While teacher preparation programs should not function prescriptively, certainly teachers should obtain a basic understanding of ELL pedagogy and linguistics/language acquisition if they are to be prepared to work effectively with students who do not speak English as a first language.

Various scholars have proposed models that encapsulate the knowledge teachers ought to attain during the pre-service period. Dong (2004) cites Genesee, Meyer and others as identifying four major areas of preparation for teachers working with ELL students: building empathy toward difficulties and cultural differences; increasing understanding of process of second language acquisition; adapting curriculum to cultural and language needs; and integrating discipline-specific language and literacy skills into the area of instruction. Similarly, Menken and Atunéz (2001) propose a matrix that suggests three critical areas of knowledge for teachers working with ELL students: knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of linguistics, and knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity.

This preparation is critical; it is also important to expand the way teachers are prepared to work in linguistically diverse classrooms, both in terms of *what* is done and in terms of *who* does it. All teachers, not just ELL/BLE teachers, need this preparation. As Varghese and Stritikus (2005) state, “Reducing the preparation of teachers to mechanistic and methodological issues narrowly defines the context that future teachers face” (85). As mentioned previously, classrooms are not structured to support the success of linguistically diverse students. If teachers are to push the limits of what is possible in classrooms for students who are attaining English as a second language, they must attain the knowledge proposed by the frameworks above, but must also go beyond this.⁴ Following, I’ll highlight some of the innovative approaches being taken by teacher education programs, many of which could be incorporated into a broader framework of preparing teachers to language plan.

Innovative Examples

Evans, Arnot-Hopffer, and Jurich (2005) describe their effort to bring together mainstream and BLE teachers in a pre-service teacher education program. They argue that most schools of education that offer BLE certification programs do little to prepare corresponding mainstream teachers to work effectively with ELL students, reflecting an assumption that since BLE/ELL teachers are prepared to work with ELL students, mainstream teachers need not be. They argue that this assumption should be challenged and that schools of education must cultivate an expectation in all teachers that they *will* work with ELL and immigrant students. The authors acknowledge that this integration is not without its problems; perhaps most poignant are their concerns that in combining the two programs, the minority language is inevitably less prominent. However, their integration shows promise as well, helping prospective teachers from both groups develop the skills, confidence, and motivation to build collegial relationships across ideological divides, and providing both BLE and mainstream teachers a sense of agency with regard to their own personal growth.

Meskill (2005) describes the Training All Teachers Project, another effort at modifying teacher education programs to better prepare teachers for work with ELL students. The project challenges the way that learning to teach ELL students is generally contained under the category of “learning to teach diverse learners” in teacher preparation programs, seeking instead to infuse ELL issues across the teacher preparation curriculum. Meskill argues that this infusion helps teachers to better understand the

⁴ As highlighted in the introduction, my interest in making this argument is to try to envision ways that schools might become better environments for students learning English as an additional language. Certainly there are limits to this, and I want to encourage looking not only within but also beyond schools for solutions, and avoid placing blame or total responsibility for a larger societal problem with teachers.

needs and strengths of ELL students. It also highlights the role of teachers in acting as advocates for their ELL students. Especially noteworthy is the dual aim of the program to increase knowledge and awareness in both prospective teachers and in teacher educators.

Balderrama (2001) points out the way that anti-immigrant legislation in California forces teachers to assume passive roles, and relays her own attempts to humanize these roles as a teacher educator. She argues that teacher preparation programs must challenge teachers to recognize the ideological underpinnings of schooling and push them to explore the complexity of their roles as teachers. Balderrama (2001) reminds us that the “technical” (mis)preparation of teachers leads teachers to misprepare their students, “thus perpetuating the cycle of academic failure of historically subordinated students, such as immigrant English language learners” (265-266).

Hones (2002) argues for the importance of looking beyond the space of teacher education classrooms in seeking possibilities for improving the educational circumstances of ELL students. He inquires about the role teacher education programs might play in facilitating dialogue around curriculum, pedagogy, and students’ lives, documenting a case where ELL students participate in a dialogue journal project with partners at an area university. This activity changes the way the university journal partners view bilingual students and bilingual education. Especially noteworthy in connection with teacher education programs is the way this project leads the university to create coursework for pre-service and in-service teachers around working effectively and critically with bilingual students in mainstream classrooms.

Like Hones, Mora (2000) also points toward the way in which efforts at creating the conditions where students acquiring English as a second language are set up for success in classrooms may need to extend outside the bounds of schools and colleges of education. She describes a California teacher preparation program that focuses on working with diverse students after the passage of 227. The program is grounded in an “additive acculturation pedagogy” as opposed to the “assimilationist pedagogy” that 227 attempts to promote. Mora argues that when public opinion runs counter to sound pedagogy, teacher educators carry the obligation to educate the public while continuing to educate teachers in a way that aspires toward educational equity.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Innovative examples such as those described above point toward the need for collaborative conversation across teacher education programs about how teachers are being prepared to work in linguistically diverse classroom contexts. Resources like the Carnegie Foundation’s “Inside Teaching: A Living Archive of Practice” could be a starting point for enabling this information sharing and collaboration. The site includes

websites designed by teacher educators documenting and archiving their work; many of the educators' sites center on their dilemmas in practice. Teachers document on the site as well, creating archives of practice that teacher educators can use in their courses with preservice teachers. Taking on a similar endeavor focused particularly on language planning could spark cross-program collaboration, as well as reflection on how to adapt curriculum and ideas to the contexts of particular programs. It could also help us to understand the dilemmas and constraints teachers face in classroom language planning, helping us to better suit preparation to their needs.

Conclusion

I conclude with an example that highlights the possibilities that exist when teachers take on the task of language planning in the interest of making classrooms more equitable spaces for students who are learning English. Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra, and Jimenez (2005) describe the implementation of a dual language program at Nopal, a school located in an English Only state. The case highlights the ways in which teachers can act as agents in (re)constructing language policy; it points toward the possibilities that exist, and also spurs further contemplation about the role teacher education can play in equipping teachers to engage in this type of policy construction. Teachers at Nopal school were convinced that dual language instruction held the most promise for their student population. They thus informed parents of the goals and benefits of dual language instruction and their rights to obtain waivers to take students out of Structured English Immersion (SEI) classrooms. They made explanation of the waiver process part of school registration; almost all parents chose to participate in the BLE program. When students could not qualify for waivers, teachers viewed their placement in SEI as temporary, and worked to help children qualify for the dual language program. The staff at Nopal took liberty to question the way education was being constructed and to redefine it in a way that coincided with their beliefs and was suited to their local context. They (re)constructed language policy to meet the needs of their student population, and students benefited as a result.

Reconstruction of language policy by teachers matters; it should also be viewed in a broader context of social inequity. Anyon (2005) and others have asked why we continue to turn to education to solve problems that are rooted in broader social issues. She argues that education did not cause our social problems, and education alone can do little to solve them. As I stated in my introduction, I do not mean to romanticize the possibilities that education offers to ELL students. In fact, I believe that if we wish to move toward a society where students who are learning English as an additional language will have equitable opportunities, this will not happen in the space of school alone; further, I see the documen-

tation and critique of the way schools are complicit in the creation of spaces of failure for ELL students to occupy as crucial to improving the educational circumstances for ELL students. All of that said, I also see a place for concomitantly exploring what happens in classrooms when teachers focus on their own actions in classroom language policy creation, and work to (re)create policy that makes classrooms more equitable for students learning English. As argued here, well constructed language policy matters in terms of student school success. What are the possibilities that *do* exist within classroom spaces? How can teacher educators support pre-service teachers to push the limits of what can be accomplished with ELL students in classrooms? As teachers (re)make policy, how can all of us simultaneously work at (re)making culture to work beyond the success/failure complex that permeates our daily lives as Americans, and most certainly our schools (Varenne & McDermott 1998)? By necessity, I began and I conclude with difficult questions. Teacher educators and researchers cannot deny the difficulty of creating classrooms that are more equitable for students learning English. Like teachers, they must grapple with the conflict, look toward the consequences of their own actions, and collaborate with teachers and each other if they aim to move a little closer to that goal.

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TEACHERS AS LANGUAGE POLICY PLANNERS

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