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Exploring Professional Development: Examining Availability and Access to Professional Development for Educators of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

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KAREN GRACE CLARK

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Through research and collaborations with educators who serve culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, there seems to be a current of discontent about the lack of tools available nationwide to address the complex needs of this heterogeneous group of children. This is a complicated topic that has far-reaching implications for the students, and the many educators who are frustrated about the lack of research, training, and funding necessary for them to meet the needs of CLD learners. While seeking potential solutions for improving the experiences of these students and educators, I reviewed research that addresses assessment practices, placement trends, and professional development opportunities for educators with current considerations for appropriate placement of these students.

The population of CLD students continues to increase in the U.S. public school system, especially in regions where immigrants have not historically been represented. Between 1997 and 2009, the number of CLD students enrolled in U.S. public schools increased by 51% (National Clearinghouse for Language Acquisition, 2011). Many school districts are typically ill-equipped to address the various needs of these children. Estimates predict that by the year 2030, approximately 40 percent of students in the U.S. will be from homes where English is not the first language (Office of Special Education Programs, 2007). An examination of publications is presented below to explore the unique challenges concerning this evolution in...
education with potential solutions.

**Literature Review**

There are several factors that contribute to mainstream classroom teachers’ increased need for meaningful professional development (PD) that leads to successful outcomes with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. These educators encounter challenges that are compounded by their inadequate training in addressing the needs of this diverse student population. The following review of the literature will explore teacher preparation, assessment challenges, delivery of PD, and teacher engagement.

**Educator Preparation**

Preparing educators to work with CLD students remains an overlooked element in curriculum as research indicates that only 1 in 5 traditional teacher preparation programs require at least one course that is entirely focused on this population (Kim, Erekson, Bunten, & Hinchey, 2014). As the trend in mainstreaming CLD students into general education classrooms continues, many of these students have below grade level literacy skills. Although students may be receiving supplemental language support, it remains the classroom teacher’s responsibility to accommodate the diverse needs of these students, often without prior training in how to adapt the curriculum while maintaining relevant content-based instruction for the entire class (Burstein et al., 2014).

When schools or districts receive federal funds, such as Title I funds because of the number of economically disadvantaged students, they must meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in order to maintain these federal funds. Meeting AYP means schools must have proficient scores by state standards in reading and math and in all subgroup populations, which includes White, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and special education students (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 2015). O’Donnell and Miller (2011) propose that the U.S. Department of Education should provide training opportunities at the local level so that districts could meet their responsibilities by providing inservices or make funds available so that teachers may attend trainings to learn how to assess CLD students. Before teachers can become effective advocates for CLD students, schools and districts need to provide adequate PD for educators before they can be held accountable for the students’ academic success. Often the focus is on what teachers do in the classroom instead of what they think about what they do in the classroom. Beliefs and dispositions matter (Kim et al., 2014).

Some of the most common recommendations for effective pedagogical strategies when
working with these students includes strengthening relationships with other CLD students, their non-CLD peers, and faculty. This is born out of valuing multiculturism, the need for first language support, and elements of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for all educators who work with this population (Friend, Most, & McCrary, 2009). Another assessment tool that is used internationally to devise appropriate instructional strategies and to reduce teacher variability is the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment English Language Development Standards (WIDA). One of the main sources of teacher variability in student assessments occurs when levels of English proficiency are misunderstood. WIDA provides educators with “can-do descriptors” that clearly indicate levels of students’ language acquisition and signal when they are ready to accept more cognitively challenging tasks (Kim et al., 2014).

**Assessment**

Through PD, equitable programming can be instituted, and considerations of the broad sociocultural contexts of CLD students may be embraced. Providing training in prereferral teams, intervention programs, and bilingual and non-verbal testing materials can improve assessment outcomes and provide educators with the tools to best serve these students (Guzman & Fernandez, 2014). Although there have been accommodations for CLD students, there still seems to be a lack of clear policies, procedures, and practices for early intervention, referral, assessment, and eligibility determinations for CLD students at the district level. Supports like bilingual programs and personnel are necessary but not sufficient when distinguishing disability from linguistic and cultural difference (Liu, Ortiz, Wilkenson, Robertson, & Kushner, 2008).

Early childhood teachers and those who support them need training on CLD learners and their reading development in the context of the screening process, focusing on effective instruction outcomes. Research has found that CLD students are underrepresented in special education (SPED) programs in kindergarten-grade 2, which is when they could be receiving valuable language supports and developing vital phonemic and vocabulary awareness. Once CLD students reach grade 3, they are overrepresented in SPED programs, yet this is too late to access the language acquisition abilities that are developing in the earlier years. Therefore, early interventions and assessments can be instrumental in early language development. It is suggested that underdeveloped language skills are reliable predictors of later difficulties and are compounded by the misconception that skills will develop in concert with increased English proficiency in the absence of targeted interventions (Samson & Lesaux, 2009).
Delivery of Professional Development

There are complex factors that contribute to the creation and delivery of effective PD content for educators of CLD students. While there are moves to incorporate training for these educators, several challenges remain. Often PD tends to be “strategy-focused” and enables conceptualization or implementation methods that address the challenges of promoting equitable and rigorous classroom practices. Considerations of high-stakes testing and accountability with constraints on how teachers are required to spend their instructional time can be barriers to comprehensive and self-sustaining PD (Buxton, Lee, & Santau, 2008).

Throughout this research, there has been a continual thread that consistently weaves its way through the literature. This is the observation that there is inadequate PD and training to perform appropriate assessments of CLD students. It is important to make considerations for developing school-based PD and recognize that time is a teacher’s most valuable asset, and they will likely be motivated to participate in PD when it occurs during the school day. This PD can include demonstration lessons, observations, coaching, and collaboration. It is essential to provide teachers with information that is practical, relevant, and based on CLD topics from which teachers may choose, as well as a supportive working environment that promotes positive collegiality, encouragement from school and district leadership, and personal commitment, which are all essential ingredients for effective school-based PD (Kim et al., 2014).

The majority of mainstream classroom teachers are English, monolingual speakers. Research supports that CLD students tend to make significant gains in their language and literacy development when educators understand the stages and process of second language acquisition. It is important that teachers make informed decisions regarding instructional practices and support the student’s growth by providing environments where the student’s social, cultural, and intellectual assets are utilized (Iddings, Rose, & Christopher, 2012). In addition to PD in language development, it is important for educators to know how culture influences the classroom environment, and how societal issues can impact policy and institutional programs, which can then help them to request appropriate training and provide them with the tools to integrate the families of CLD students into their children’s education (Newman, Samimy, & Romstedt, 2010).

Educator Engagement

While educators find the population of CLD students continuing to increase nationwide, there are ingrained challenges that reside within some teachers’ attitudes towards making accommodations for this diverse population. A few of these
include the time-intensive challenge of addressing both content and language acquisition skills, beliefs surrounding diversity, the promotion of culturally relevant instructional materials that recognize diverse perspectives within the framework of standards-based instruction, and the belief that CLD students must simply assimilate to the dominant language and culture. Finally, some educators may disregard the integral role that the continued development of each student’s first language plays in continued academic achievement (Buxton et al., 2008).

There are several factors that contribute to an educator’s engagement in CLD development programs according to research from Ohio State University. First and foremost is recognizing the time constraints teachers encounter in their daily practice and respecting this component when making plans for development programs. Teachers must feel that the training has practical applications and need to be provided with choices regarding the specific topics in which they participate, as they know what will be immediately applicable to their individual classrooms. Meaningful collaboration and positive perceptions of fellow faculty play a vital role in nurturing long-term commitments to accommodating practices for CLD learners. Fostering teacher commitment lies in administrative support, both financially and in promoting school-based programs that facilitate active practice and collaboration. (Kim et al., 2014).

District and school leaders can assist in their schools’ adoption of authentic assessments through supporting the technical changes by aiding staff as they create solutions to problems using prior knowledge and facilitate adaptive changes as the faculty learns how to do their work in new ways and evolve their beliefs, values, and expectations to fit into the new paradigm. Most importantly, principals can help faculty to manage the time and resources needed to sustainably implement plans, especially when they direct PD in the form of coaching and modeling the programs implementation (Mellard, Prewett, & Deshler, 2012). Research indicates a positive correlation between an educator’s sense of self-efficacy and participation through PD that focuses on CLD instruction. This finding illustrates that improving CLD student outcomes and reducing overall academic challenges are directly related to developing effective teaching practices through continued PD (Ross, 2014).

**Method**

**Procedure**

Based on the literature review, a cross-sectional, web-based questionnaire-style survey was developed and distributed on Survey Monkey to K-12 teachers. This platform was chosen due to ease of use, and the limited time available to conduct the survey. The survey was piloted with
several individuals who perform health and educational research with no issues to report. An email (Appendix A) was composed that addressed the purpose of the survey and requested that the educators please share the survey with their colleagues. Embedded within the survey was the web link to assure anonymity for the respondents.

The 20-question survey (Appendix B) was initially emailed to 15 teachers who the researcher knew. It was also shared with the researcher’s fellow education graduate students at Bridgewater State University. The sample for this study represented a sample of convenience. The survey was comprised of multiple choice, short answer, and Likert scale questions, with an option for participants to share their email for a link to a resulting resource guide. This was an exploratory survey. The results were collected over a four-week period. There were 95 total respondents with an average of 88% completion rate within 5 minutes.

Considering the survey responses and the conceptual framework of this research, three questions were formatted for professionals who work with CLD students to seek specific recommendations for areas of PD that the survey indicated needed the most attention. Exhaustive web-based research was conducted to identify potential collaborators within the CLD education community. Fifteen requests for collaboration (Appendix C) were sent via email. Eleven sites did not respond, two denied the request, and two agreed to host the questions through their platforms.

The questions were presented in two formats. A Google Form (Appendix D) was created, and the link was shared through a Twitter post from Tan Huynh, who hosts a blog that is internationally popular with CLD professionals. This request for information yielded 40 short answer responses over the span of one week.

The second format was a blog (Appendix E) created by the researcher, where the questions were listed in a longer format within the post (https://pdforcld.blogspot.com/). The link to this blog was shared through an email and Twitter post by Sarah Ottow, of Confianza, who offers PD and curriculum development strategies for educators working with CLD students. There were no responses collected through this format.

Participants

The participants in the survey were anonymous and were presumed to be K-12 teachers. Their attributes will be discussed in the results portion of the paper. Initially, 15 teachers and fellow education graduate students at Bridgewater State University were sent email requests to participate in the survey by the researcher over a two-day period. The educators who received the emails were asked to share the email and link with their colleagues, with the goal of collecting the maximum
number of responses and data. Although some participants chose to share their email address at the end of the survey in order to receive the link to the resulting resource materials that were developed through this research, the survey was anonymous in its design.

The respondents to the resulting questionnaire were also anonymous and assumed to be professionals in the CLD field of education. There are 4,095 followers on the platform page of which 40 responded to the three-question inquiry that was linked through a Twitter post. There were no distinguishing identifiers for the respondents within the questionnaire.

Results

Instruments

The data collection instruments included Survey Monkey, Google Form, and Blogger with all content created by the researcher.

Results of the Survey

The following results were gathered from 95 respondents through the administration of a web-based questionnaire through Survey Monkey over the span of 4 weeks.

Participant Demographic Data

Table 1 represents the survey participant data regarding number of years teaching; the grade level the participants teach; the subjects taught by the participants; and the languages, including just English, spoken by the participants. These data suggest that many educators are unable to provide a multilingual environment for their students. Research indicates that all educators need ample exposure to PD as the population of CLD students increases in schools. Monolingual educators and their students will be better served with enhanced PD in the stages of second language acquisition (Iddings et al., 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years Teaching</th>
<th>Grade Level Participants Taught</th>
<th>Subject(s) Taught by Participants</th>
<th>Languages Spoken by Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 Years: 16%</td>
<td>Grades 1-3: 28%</td>
<td>General Education: 25%</td>
<td>English Only: 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 Years: 22%</td>
<td>Grades 4-8: 32%</td>
<td>ELA/Social Studies: 27%</td>
<td>Spanish: 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 Years: 13%</td>
<td>Grades 9-12: 28%</td>
<td>Math/Science: 11%</td>
<td>French: 07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Years: 18%</td>
<td>Post-Secondary: 7%</td>
<td>Creative Arts: 15%</td>
<td>Portuguese: 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ Years: 31%</td>
<td>No Response: 5%</td>
<td>Other: 22%</td>
<td>German: 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hebrew: 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese: 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Khmer: 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Punjabi: 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thai: 01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ Student Data

The survey participants’ student data represent a satisfactory number of respondents who serve CLD students in their classrooms. These educators indicated an expected average distribution of this population based on the research of the amount of CLD students enrolled in schools. However, these data indicate a significant over representation of Portuguese-speaking students compared to the national average. Portuguese is not included in the top ten home languages of CLD students in public schools nationwide. This suggests that many of the respondents may be from southeastern Massachusetts, where there is a large Brazilian immigrant population who speak Portuguese (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). These language level descriptors are used by WIDA and are considered a standard designation for distinguishing English skill levels internationally (Kim, et al., 2014).

Participants School Information

The survey participant school region data is not representative of the distribution of CLD students across population centers. Research indicates that current trends in CLD student concentrations are primarily in urban centers, although the populations of CLD students have been increasing in rural and suburban areas (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). These language level descriptors are used by WIDA and are considered a standard designation for distinguishing English skill levels internationally (Kim, et al., 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Region</th>
<th>Language Programming</th>
<th>Hours Per Week Spent with CLD Students</th>
<th>Adequate Access to Interpreters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban: 31%</td>
<td>Push-In: 6%</td>
<td>0-4.5 Hours: 47 Hours</td>
<td>Not At All: 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban: 37%</td>
<td>Pull-Out: 22%</td>
<td>5-15 Hours: 9 Hours</td>
<td>Somewhat: 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural: 37%</td>
<td>Both: 56%</td>
<td>20-40 Hours: 15 Hours</td>
<td>Moderately: 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual: 1%</td>
<td>Neither: 16%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very: 32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Participants’ Student Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of CLD Students in Class</th>
<th>Language Acquisition Levels of Students</th>
<th>Top Five Languages Served in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Students: 6%</td>
<td>Emerging (Limited Vocabulary): 49% of Class</td>
<td>Spanish: 52 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Students: 46%</td>
<td>Beginning: 60% of Class</td>
<td>Portuguese: 43 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Students: 14%</td>
<td>Developing (Intermediate): 71% of Class</td>
<td>Chinese: 11 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Students: 12%</td>
<td>Expanding: 69% of Class</td>
<td>Haitian Creole: 8 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ Students: 22%</td>
<td>Bridging (Advanced): 69% of Class</td>
<td>Arabic: 6 Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Participants’ School Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Region</th>
<th>Language Programming</th>
<th>Hours Per Week Spent with CLD Students</th>
<th>Adequate Access to Interpreters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban: 37%</td>
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<td>Somewhat: 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural: 37%</td>
<td>Both: 56%</td>
<td>20-40 Hours: 15 Hours</td>
<td>Moderately: 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual: 1%</td>
<td>Neither: 16%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very: 32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statistics, Common Core of Data [CCD] (2017). The data representing language programming indicate that the majority of the CLD students within the respondents’ classes have access to specialized language services, while 13 participants indicated that there were no targeted language services for their students. Research suggests that even with these services, educators require specific PD to provide content instruction for their CLD students. Upon correlating the data of the number of CLD students in each participant’s class, only 6 participants indicated they did not serve any CLD students, while 25 respondents reported spending zero hours per week with CLD students. The data indicate that 19 teachers have CLD students in their class but do not spend exclusive instruction time with these students. For the educators who indicated that they are working full time with CLD students, they may be CLD specific language teachers, or they may have only CLD students within their general education or content classes. Research shows that when there is not a dependable line of communication between the school and the families of CLD students, it is often detrimental for the ultimate student outcome (Newman et al., 2010). These data reveal a lack of dedicated interpreters within the participants’ school districts.

**Participants CLD Awareness**

This survey section examined the participants’ CLD awareness. The data from Table 5 indicate the lack of assessment training many of the respondents reported regarding ability to distinguish between language acquisition, cognitive, and/or behavioral challenges (Liu et al., 2008). The data in Table 4 indicate that only 6% of the respondents are very familiar with Adequate Yearly Progress, (AYP). This suggests that many of the teachers may not be working within Title I schools or may be working in Title I schools yet are not familiar with the standards for compliance with AYP, or may not be familiar with the phrasing of this measurement for student achievement (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Distinguish Challenges</th>
<th>Familiarity with Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Standards</th>
<th>CLD Endorsements Held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All: 4%</td>
<td>Not at All: 31%</td>
<td>None: 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat: 48%</td>
<td>Somewhat: 39%</td>
<td>SEI Endorsement: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately: 22%</td>
<td>Moderately: 24%</td>
<td>ESL Certificate: 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very: 26%</td>
<td>Very: 6%</td>
<td>TSOL Licensure: 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bilingual Licensure: 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other: 16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4
Participants’ CLD Awareness
The data from Table 5 indicate that many of the respondents have some formal level of training when working with CLD students. While these responses are encouraging, it is necessary to maintain a consistent PD program for continued access to best practices (Ross, 2014). The data in Table 5 evaluated educators’ cultural competence and awareness of basic CLD student instructional strategies (Newman et al., 2010).

### Participants and Professional Development

This data section explored how the participants relate to PD regarding CLD students. The data from Table 6 imply that many of the respondents do not feel that their administrations are very supportive of PD for their work with CLD students. Research maintains that when the administration specifically promotes this PD, it has a positive correlation for educators’ long-term commitment to the practices (Mellard et al., 2012). Additional data from Table 6 inform a portion of the secondary research, which explores why educators feel they have difficulties obtaining PD for working with the CLD population. It is vital in discovering paths to improving access to meaningful programs for the CLD educators. All these barriers to PD were presented in the research (Kim et al., 2014). The data collected from Table 7 were instrumental in influencing the secondary research. While all areas of PD are important, it is vital to understand the PD that teachers would like more access to as it informs future program development. In examining the data in Table 7, it is an important distinction to ascertain the PD that educators would like

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Familiarity</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of History and Foundation of CLD Rights</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for CLD Rights in Your School/District</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current CLD Trends</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Acquisition Theory and Practice</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Cultural Diversity in the Classroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Parent and Community Involvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and Differentiated Instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Familiarity with Areas of CLD Education
### Table 6

Participants and Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Support for CLD Professional Development</th>
<th>Barriers for Professional Development for CLD Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All: 21%</td>
<td>Time: 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat: 34%</td>
<td>Availability of Programs: 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately: 27%</td>
<td>Planning and Logistics: 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very: 18%</td>
<td>Funding: 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at All: 21%</td>
<td>Interesting/Relevant Subject Matter: 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat: 34%</td>
<td>Incentives: 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately: 27%</td>
<td>Administrative District Support: 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very: 18%</td>
<td>Sustainability: 11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7

Participants and Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Professional Development (PD) Want More Access When Working with CLD Students</th>
<th>Areas of Professional Development (PD) Considered to be Most Important When Working with CLD Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Differentiated Instruction Strategies: 51%</td>
<td>Developing Differentiated Instruction Strategies: 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Concepts of Language Acquisition Support: 43%</td>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity/Awareness: 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Language and Literacy Development: 41%</td>
<td>Key Concepts of Language Acquisition Support: 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Group and Project-Based Curriculum: 35%</td>
<td>Content Instruction: 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment: 35%</td>
<td>Lesson Development: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Development: 32%</td>
<td>Native Language and Literacy Development: 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity/Awareness: 32%</td>
<td>Technology Support/Programs: 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Support/Programs: 31%</td>
<td>Developing Group and Project-Based Curriculum: 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Instruction: 23%</td>
<td>Assessment: 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning Tasking with Common Core State Standards: 18%</td>
<td>Aligning Tasking with Common Core State Standards: 13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more access to in conjunction with what they feel is most important. In this intersection, the data reveal that differentiated instruction and key concepts in language acquisition and development are in the top three in both result lists (see Table 7). When considering what is most important, educators chose cultural sensitivity and awareness, yet when asked what they would like more access to native language and literacy development are in the top 3 (Kim et al., 2014).

Final Question on Survey

The last question on the survey asked the participants to share anything they felt wasn’t covered in the survey, or that they wanted to expand. Listed below are some of their responses.

• Need for more ELL parental involvement.
• None/not enough PD for work with ELLs in their district.
• Need more trained paraprofessionals.
• ELL students misplaced in higher level content classes.
• Difficult to grade when effort is shown, but content is not mastered.
• Difficult to provide both reading and English language skills in the same day.
• Looking for more programs that help to bridge the gaps in knowledge with older students with interrupted formal education (SIFE).

These are the short answers that respondents elected to leave. These answers informed elements of a resource guide and an annotated bibliography.

Optional Email Contact

Respondents who left their emails received links to a resource guide and an annotated bibliography to use as PD resources.

Skipped Questions on the Survey

The amount and types of questions that the respondents skipped on the survey may be the result of educators’ lack of CLD students in their classrooms combined with the specialized nature of some of the questions that classroom teachers may not have had the knowledge to answer. Thus, further statistical analysis could be performed to confirm my assumptions.

Results of the Secondary Questionnaire

Results of the survey led to follow-up research that culminated in collaboration with Tan Huynh and Sarah Ottow, both leaders in the field of CLD student education. The follow-up questionnaire consisted of 3 questions to explore recommendations for relevant and meaningful PD for classroom teachers from professionals in the field. The researcher created a blog platform (Appendix E) that consisted of detailed information that accompanied the three questions. The link to the blog was shared through Sarah Ottow’s Twitter
page and also through an email message that was sent to her Confianza subscriber list. This link to the blog did not solicit one response. Thus, it is assumed that either the followers did not explore the link to the blog, or they did link to the blog, and the information was not presented in a clear and concise manner and opted not to respond to the questions. The second version of the questions was delivered through Tan Huynh’s Twitter site that linked to a Google Form (Appendix D). There were 40 respondents over a week. Based on the high rate of response through the Google Form and null response rate through the blog (Appendix E), it can be proposed that when performing online research, creating a concise format will yield the most responses. Below are summaries of the answers to the 3 questions collected through the Google Form:

**Question 1. Differentiated Instruction for CLD Students** – Educators who responded to the survey reported that developing differentiated instructional strategies was the area of greatest need and also the most important to improving their work with CLD students. While there are ample resources that offer PD that focuses on differentiated instruction (DI) strategies, there are few that are specifically geared towards DI for CLD students.

*Can you recommend PD resources that you found to provide meaningful DI strategies for your work with CLD students?*

The most frequent recommendations include: Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners by Fairbairn and Jones-Vo, WIDA, SIOP, Center for Applied Linguistics – Scaffolding, Twitter and Confianza.

**Question 2. English Language Acquisition and L1 Literacy** – Considering the results of survey questions 17 and 19 and the conceptual framework of this research, a primary topic for further content development may be language acquisition and supports, particularly content that links L1 literacy with English language acquisition.

*Can you recommend specific sources of PD in these areas that you have found to be useful?*

The most frequent recommendations include Jim Cummins’ Thornwood Project, resources from Seidlitz Education, SIOP, WIDA, Confianza, and Twitter.

**Question 3. Availability of Programs** – Time was reported to be the primary barrier to obtaining PD, and the most common solution to time constraints is for educators to use resources available through web-based programs that allow them to interact with content when it is convenient for their schedules.

*Do you have any recommendations for effective and enjoyable PD targeting ELL students that adequately address key areas of need and importance?*
The most frequent recommendations include Stanford University Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), WIDA, Twitter, and SIOP.

These recommendations contain free materials that may be accessed online, except for Seidlitz Education, which is a publishing house of educational materials. These results are valid as the results of the survey and questionnaire coincided with the previous research presented within the literature review. These results are considered to be reliable, upon considering administration of the same survey format through educators’ collegiate emails. It is assumed that there may be some variance of languages served, depending on the geographic region.

Discussion

Given the importance of authentic and meaningful PD for all educators, especially those who are engaged with teaching CLD students, this research determined specific areas of PD that educators are seeking. The secondary research conducted with professionals within the field of CLD student education culminated in a collection of highly recommended resources to address the gaps in knowledge previously determined in the survey responses. The high rate of initial survey responses can be attributed to the succinct question style, length of survey, ease of linking to the survey, and streamlined Survey Monkey platform. Demographic information such as gender, age, and geographic location were not solicited from the respondents in this research, as this was not determined to be necessary for the purpose of the survey.

The data collected were the result of samples of convenience. Therefore, the respondents in the primary and secondary queries were purely dependent on level of interest in the subject matter. Requests for involvement from educators has been well received and met with enthusiasm. According to the research, it is acknowledged that there are general inadequacies in educators’ access to authentic assessment and curriculum tools for working with CLD students. It is encouraging that the results of the secondary questionnaire provided recommendations that were few but high in frequency. It is assumed that these resources are valuable supports for educators in the field. There is a substantial and passionate community of international language educators who are collaborating online and are willing to share their successful experiences with other educators.

The goal of this project was to determine the content areas of PD, where educators need more access to the availability and importance of these content areas to those who work with CLD students. An additional goal was to create a resource guide for educators to have access to a collection of PD that they consider to be most important in their
classroom practice. Introducing educators to web-based resources may improve their opportunities for personal and group-directed PD that enables them to access the information when it is convenient for their schedules. The annotated bibliography will be an important resource for informing research-based best practices and for use in professional learning communities, study groups, and for those educators who may not have reliable access to the Internet.

Study Limitations

The primary limitations of this study were time and sample population. The time constraints limited the opportunity for extended collaboration in administering the secondary questionnaire and collecting more recommendations for beneficial PD from professionals to share with mainstream classroom teachers. The initial survey may have yielded more significant results if it were administered in targeted areas where more CLD students are represented.

Conclusion

The goal of this project was to provide educators with tools to improve their overall efficacy as educators of CLD students. Much of the subsequent resource guide provides links to online resources that specifically address content areas where individualized PD may be obtained when it is convenient for educators. This guide provides educators with a variety of links to those who provide inservice PD as research indicates educators believe that the most beneficial and sustainable PD takes place within the classroom, where long-term practices can be developed and perfected through collaborations with administration and fellow faculty members.

As the population of CLD students increases nationwide, it is essential that all educators have adequate time and support to access the tools necessary to best serve this heterogeneous population of students and to improve their skill set to promote self-efficacy when encountering the challenges that accompany the increasing demands of teacher accountability and student success.

Future Research

The survey results indicate that there is a need for the development of more materials dedicated to differentiating instruction, understanding the stages of second language acquisition, multicultural connections that link to the home language and culture, and authentic assessment of the whole child. It is essential to consider delivery formats that take teachers’ needs and preferences into account and provide practical program development that the teachers determine will be most useful in their individual classrooms, with their unique student populations.
It would be beneficial to conduct longitudinal research and administer a follow-up survey in one year that explores the following:

• Did the teachers find the resource guide to be a beneficial instrument that linked them to valuable PD?
• Did they share the guide with colleagues and integrate the resources into group PD within their schools?
• Did they find that any of the online forums provided answers to specific questions regarding their practice?
• Did the guide help them to cultivate a community of educators either online or within their schools with whom they are now collaborating and expanding and improving their skills with their CLD students?

References


U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, ED Facts file 141, Data Group 678; Common Core of Data, “State Non-fiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education.” See *Digest of*
Greetings,

I am administering this survey as a part of my thesis for my master’s in education from Bridgewater State University. My interest is in how to best support English Language Learners and in ways to improve professional development for educators.

There is a space at the end of the survey where you may leave your email address if you wish. Otherwise, this survey is anonymous. If you choose to leave your email, I will send you the link to the resource guide that I will be developing upon synthesizing the results of the survey.

If you have a moment, could you please forward this to any of your colleagues who may consider taking a few minutes to participate?

Thank you for your time and attention.

Karen Grace Clark

Please use link to access the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JTTZVVK

Appendix B

Survey Monkey Survey
https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-Z8K-5KN97L/

1. How long have you been teaching?
• 0-3 years
• 3-6 years
• 6-10 years
• 10-15 years
• 15+ years

2. What grade level do you currently teach?
• Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten
• 1 - 3
• 4 - 8
• 9 - 12
• Post-secondary

3. What subject(s) do you teach?
• General Education
• English Language Arts/Social Studies
• Math/Science
• Arts
• Other

4. How many English Language Learners (ELL) do you have in your class(es)
• 0
• 1-5
• 5-10
• 10-15
• 15+

5. Please list the top 5 languages you serve in your classroom(s).
6. What level of ELLs do you serve in your classroom(s)?
Please check all that apply.
• Emerging (limited vocabulary)
• Beginning
• Developing (intermediate)
• Expanding
• Bridging (advanced)

7. Which type of classroom do you work in?
Please check all that apply.
• Urban
• Suburban
• Rural
• Virtual

8. Does your school use with your ELL students?
• Push-in
• Pull-out
• Both
• Neither

9. How confident are you in your ability to distinguish language acquisition challenges from learning and behavioral challenges in ELLs?
• Not at all
• Somewhat
• Moderately
• Very

10. Approximately how many hours a week do you spend exclusively with ELLs?

11. How familiar are you with Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards for ELL students?
• Not at all
• Somewhat
• Moderately
• Very

12. Do you feel that you have adequate access to interpreters so that you may maintain necessary communication with parents/caregivers of ELLs?
• Not at all
• Somewhat
• Moderately
• Very

13. Please list any languages other than English that you speak.

14. Which specific ELL trainings or endorsements do you hold?
• None
• SEI Endorsement
• TSOL Licensure
• ESL Certificate
• Bilingual Licensure
• Other
15. In your school district how important is professional development that specifically supports work with ELLs?
- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Very

16. Please check the key barriers you encounter when accessing professional development specifically for work with ELLs.
- Incentives
- Time
- Funding
- Availability of programs
- Interesting/Relevant subject matter
- Planning and logistics
- Administrative/District Support
- Sustainability

17. In which areas would you like to have more access to professional development for working with ELLs?
- Lesson Development
- Technology support/programs
- Content Instruction
- Cultural sensitivity/awareness
- Developing differentiated instruction strategies
- Key concepts of language acquisition support
- Native language and literacy development
- Developing group and project-based curriculum
- Aligning tasking with Common Core State Standards
- Assessment

18. How familiar are you with the following areas of ELL education?
- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Very
- Knowledge of history and foundation of ELL rights
- Advocacy for ELL rights in your school/district
- Current ELL trends
- Language acquisition theory and practice
- Assessment
- Support of cultural diversity in the classroom
- Encouraging parent/community involvement
- Support and differentiated instruction

19. Which areas of professional development for working with ELLs do you consider most important?
- Lesson development
- Technology support/programs
• Content instruction
• Cultural sensitivity/awareness
• Developing differentiated instruction strategies
• Key concepts of language acquisition support
• Native language and literacy development
• Developing group and project-based curriculum
• Aligning tasking with Common Core State Standards
• Assessment

20. Is there anything that we haven’t covered that you would like to bring our attention to or anything that we covered that you’d like to expand on? Please comment below.

21. Please add your email if you would be interested in receiving a link to the site that will contain resources and links to resources for working with English Language Learners. Thank you for your time.

Appendix C
Collaboration Request Email

Greetings,

My name is K. Grace Clark, and I am completing my M.Ed. in International Education at Bridgewater State University. My research focuses on culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in the context of primary education. For my thesis research, I administered a survey to explore the areas of professional development (PD) educators consider to be most important regarding work with CLD students, and the areas that could benefit from new or improved content. My research will culminate in a resource guide based on the results of the survey. In the guide, educators will find links to specific PD considered to be important in their classrooms; a bibliography of books and articles useful for personal or group PD; and links to organizations, websites, and blogs to facilitate direct connections to current research, practices, and professionals in CLD education.

I would like to share my results and elicit feedback regarding important resources with a broader audience. Would it be possible for me to provide some content for your site presenting the results of my survey and seeking the input of other professionals regarding their ideas and experiences with content and delivery of effective PD for CLD? I would like to include the feedback I receive in my report and resource guide and then make the final product available electronically so that you and others could share it broadly.

Many of my survey respondents provided their emails for updates on the survey. As a first step toward increasing collaboration among educators working with CLD students, I will share the link to my content on your site with the educators who participated in my survey. This will build
Appendix D

Google Form for Professional Questionnaire

1. Differentiated Instruction for ELLs

   Educators who responded to my survey reported that developing differentiated instruction strategies was the area of greatest need and also the most important to improving their work with ELL students.

   I have found ample PD focusing on differentiated instruction strategies (DI), but little specifically geared towards DI for ELL students.

   **Can you recommend PD resources that you found to provide meaningful DI strategies for your work with ELL students?**

2. English Language Acquisition and L1 Literacy

   Below I summarize other key survey results:

   Areas of PD for working with ELL students, educators reported wanting MORE ACCESS to (in order of frequency):

   1. Developing differentiated instruction strategies
   2. Language acquisition and supports
   3. L1 language and literacy support
   4. Content instruction
   5. Lesson development
   6. L1 language and literacy support
   7. Technology support/programming
   8. Group/project-based curriculum
   9. Assessment
   10. Aligning tasking with CCSS

   Considering these survey responses and the conceptual framework for my research, a primary topic for further content development may be **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SUPPORTS PARTICULARLY CONTENT THAT LINKS L1 LITERACY WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.**
Could you recommend specific sources of PD in these areas that you have found to be useful?

3. Availability of programs
Time was reported to be the primary barrier to obtaining PD. Below are the other barriers listed in order of frequency:
1. Time
2. Availability of programs
3. Planning and logistics
4. Funding
5. Interesting/relevant subject matter
6. Incentives
7. Administrative/district support
8. Sustainability

The most common solution to the time constraint is for educators to use resources available through web-based programs that allow them to interact with content when it is convenient for their schedules. I am interested in addressing the

AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAMS.
Do you have any recommendations for effective and enjoyable PD targeting ELL students that adequately address key areas of need and importance?

Appendix E
Blog Content
https://pdforcld.blogspot.com/
Spare a moment to share your ideas on professional development for CLD students?

My name is K. Grace Clark, and I am completing my M.Ed. in International Education at Bridgewater State University. My studies focus on culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students and their educational experiences. While conducting a literature review on the overrepresentation of CLD students in special education programs, I found that the primary source for improper placement was educators’ lack of training in content areas specific to this population (such as assessment). This prompted my thesis research: A survey of educators with three goals:
1. Determine the professional development (PD) content areas, where educators who work with CLD students need more access.
2. Assess the importance of these content areas to educators who work with CLD students.
3. Confirm that the primary barriers to PD targeting educators of CLD students are the same as for other areas of PD.

Educators who responded to my survey reported that developing differentiated instruction strategies was the area of greatest need and also the most important to improving their work with CLD students.

I have found ample PD focusing on differentiated instruction strategies (DI), but little specifically geared towards DI for CLD students.

• Can you recommend PD resources that
you found to provide meaningful DI strategies for your work with CLD students?

Below I summarize other key survey results:

Areas of PD for working with CLD students, educators reported wanting more access to (in order of frequency):

1. Developing differentiated instruction strategies
2. Language acquisition and supports
3. L1 language and literacy support
4. Developing group/project-based curriculum
5. Assessment
6. Lesson development
7. Cultural sensitivity/awareness
8. Technology support/programming
9. Content instruction
10. Aligning tasking with CCSS

Areas of PD for working with CLD students, educators reported as most important (in order of frequency):

1. Developing differentiated instruction strategies
2. Cultural sensitivity/awareness
3. Language acquisition and supports
4. Content instruction
5. Lesson development
6. L1 language and literacy support
7. Technology support/programming
8. Group/project-based curriculum
9. Assessment
10. Aligning tasking with CCSS

Considering these survey responses and the conceptual framework for my research, a primary topic for further content development may be language acquisition and supports particularly content that links L1 literacy with English language acquisition.

Could you recommend specific sources of PD in this area that you have found to be useful?

Time was reported to be the primary barrier to obtaining PD. Below are the other barriers listed in order of frequency:

1. Time
2. Availability of programs
3. Planning and logistics
4. Funding
5. Interesting/relevant subject matter
6. Incentives
7. Administrative/district support
8. Sustainability

The most common solution to the time constraint is for educators to use resources available through web-based programs that allow them to interact with content when it is convenient for their schedules.

I am interested in addressing the availability of programs.

Do you have any recommendations for effective and enjoyable PD targeting CLD students that adequately address key areas of need...
and importance?

- Based on my research and the responses to the questions I posed above, I am developing a resource guide that will include:
  1. Links to PD considered to be important for working with CLD students
  2. An annotated bibliography of books and articles useful for personal or group PD
  3. Links to organizations, websites, and blogs to link educators directly to current research, practices, and professionals working in CLD education.

I am hoping that, as professionals who work with CLD students, you would:

- Voice your opinions on my survey findings
- Provide answers to any (or all) of the three questions I posed about PD content,
And/or
- Share your most positive and worthwhile PD experiences in the comments so that I may integrate your input into my resource guide.

As the population of CLD students increases, we must provide educators with effective tools for meeting the needs of these students. I hope that this guide can become a useful resource for educators who feel that they have gaps in their knowledge that could be filled with research-based content.

Thank you!

About the Author

K. Grace Clark completed her Master of Education in International Education in May 2018. This research project was completed in May of 2018 under the mentorship of J. Michael Bodi, Ph.D. She is teaching overseas and is planning on pursuing her Ph.D. in Education while working abroad.