

**The Professional Preparation of Spanish-Speaking Early Childhood Education Community
College Students and Non-Matriculated Early Educators**

Research and Strategy

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in Collaboration with the Early Education Local Planning Council of San Clara County
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Background

De Anza College play an important role in the social, cultural, and economic life in Silicon Valley. De Anza is a large, regional, multicultural community college serving over 25,000 students per year, of who over 73% racially identify as non-white. (De Anza College: State of the College Annual Report 2008-09). De Anza has garnered a reputation for giving students a solid academic and civic foundation. It regularly ranks among the top three California institutions in terms of the number of transfer students to the UC and CSU systems. In addition to its successful academic and transfer programs, De Anza offers more than 30 vocational certificates.

Although DeAnza has a proven record of academic excellence, in many ways its diverse student population is still underserved and its assets underutilized. For the past decade the college made a concerted effort to achieve educational equity across racial and ethnic groups. One central goal: no more than 5% difference in the average success between racial and ethnic groups. After years of work toward this goal, the college has identified two major factors for lingering inequity: socioeconomic pressures and a feeling of alienation among students. (Rothstein, 2004; Smith, 1991).

This project focuses on early childhood educators - particularly Spanish-speaking educators - in the United States, a group that is well trained but can still benefit from continuing education in meeting the needs of EL Spanish-speaking students. The research data and methodology used throughout the period of September 2009-July 2010, tells a story of the preparation of EL Spanish-speaking students and workers in Early Childhood Education, practices and challenges in meeting their educational needs. This study focuses on Latinos and Spanish speakers - the fastest growing segment of the population in California. Educational researchers have noted a persistent achievement gap between Latinos and other groups. These researchers recognize that improving the “long-term” educational success of Latinos is imperative to the development of both California and the nation as a whole. This study and its results, provide an opportunity to better understand and respond to the unique needs of adult English Language learners. This study builds upon the CDE’s prior research and it is intended to deepen the understanding of the educational needs of both Spanish-speaking Latino students and early educators at De Anza College and in Santa Clara County as a whole.

Prior research has shown that a lack of knowledge of academic English, which is necessary to complete courses taught in the English language, prevents Spanish-speakers from pursuing and obtaining certificates or degrees. According to De Anza student data, Spanish speakers enroll in and complete

more courses if they are offered in their native language. Based on this data, beginning with the 2004 school year, the Child Development and Education Department, in collaboration with Palo Alto Community Child Care, began teaching Spanish language child development courses to teens in Palo Alto. Three courses were offered: two in Spanish and one bilingual course for both Spanish and English speakers. In 2006 the Department increased the number of Spanish language courses to seven. WestEd's E3 Institute and FIRST 5 Santa Clara County funded scholarships. As a result, from September 2006 to the present, more than 300 Spanish-speaking students have enrolled in child development courses at De Anza's community site, Mariana Castro Elementary School in Mountain View. These students are the first group to pursue the Child Development Certificate of Achievement, a certificate aligned with the California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit.

In 2007, a team of ESL and Child Development and Education faculty studied the education and access programs serving Spanish and Chinese-speaking early childhood educators and students statewide (Thot-Johnson, 2008). The study looked at best practices utilized in community colleges across the state, and identified a variety of alternatives for supporting adult English learners at the community college level. In their study "Spanish for Spanish Speakers: Developing Dual Language Proficiency" based on research by Valdés, Peyton, Lewelling & Winkle point out that educators face challenges not only from limited levels of English proficiency among English language learners, but also by the amount of formal education Spanish speakers have in their native language and literacy skills in Spanish vary among Spanish-speaking adults (Peyton, Lewelling & Winkle 2001.) Valdés highlights the need for preserving native language across generations, expanding the capacity of bilingualism (both expressive and receptive language), and understanding that importance of transfer of literacy skills - those academic skills that transfer across languages and facilitate the second language acquisition (Valdés 1997.) The "Education Access Program Report, concluded in 2008, serves as the initial effort to understand the range of programs and best practices in the education of ELL Spanish and Chinese-speaking child development students and early childhood educators in Santa Clara County. In order to help students transition to courses in English, the Department has begun working with ESL Department and Adult Education programs, to address English language acquisition. Research has shown that this transition takes between three and seven years, for adults as well as children (Preschool English Learners, California State Department of Education, 2007).

The CDE Department has recognized the unique needs of adult English Language learners. The department has forged partnerships with organizations interested in advancing the Latino/a population.

A recent collaboration with the English Learners (EL) subcommittee of the Local Early Education Planning Council (LPC), resulted in a countywide leadership forum, designed to assess Santa Clara county's EL early education workforce and discuss ways to support their work. The goals of the group are four-fold: to implement a Dual Language Learning (DLL) educational model, to create a set of principles and strategies to support the optimal care and education of "dual language learners, to identify young English Language learners' needs, and to review and assess best practices in Santa Clara County.

At another countywide event in December 2009, participants developed a position statement designed to bring best language practices to a variety of early learning settings within Santa Clara County. Specifically it states:

"the position statement aims to bring Dual Language concepts to early learning settings and help ensure that children enter Kindergarten ready to learn. The goal of this position statement is to promote the use of the essential principles and best practices of Dual Language Learning for all dual language learners in the county. In the future, the position statement can become the foundation for efforts to support bilingual education for all children, as a way to promote the cognitive benefits of multiple language acquisition and to support intercultural understanding. A foundational concept is the importance of creating a foundational level of cultural competency within each care setting. Without an internalized sense of cultural competency, the tools and techniques of dual language learning will not work at all or to the full potential of the approach. A motivation for the Dual Language Learning approach is that research shows that cognitive and social-emotional development are enhanced through support of the home language and through acquisition of multiple languages. Additionally, research suggests that brain development is enhanced through multiple language acquisition. Conversely, failure to support the home language of children creates delays in cognitive, social-emotional and brain development. The position paper can also support a wider public dialog about Dual Language Learning and cultural and linguistic diversity. Ultimately, the successful adoption of DLL principles will be enhanced by greater community awareness as well as supportive public policies." (Santa Clara County Local Early Education Planning Council Dual Language Learners Position Statement, December 16, 2009)

Language, Political and Policy Realities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) makes it clear that all children

have the right to education, including respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity and the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society (Article 28, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Communities throughout the United States have experienced rapid influxes of immigrant families and so existing policies that only provide Early Childhood Education are simply not sufficient to support the needs of today's diverse student population.

Children of immigrants represent 20% of all children under 18 in the United States (UNESCO Apr/Sept08.) Migration can have a profound impact on the lives of children, regardless of whether the move is made out of desperation, or whether the parents are well educated and financially stable. Even children born in a new home nation are affected by their parents' status as immigrant and research shows that immigrant children are often at increased risk of poor developmental outcomes (UNESCO Apr/Sept08). Preschool age children in immigrant families are less likely than children in native-born families to participate in programs that could compensate for some of the risk factors. Many factors contribute to this lack of participation: limited awareness of early childhood programs options, language and cultural barriers, and lack of space for immigrant children in existing programs. Parents with uncertain immigrant status may be reluctant to interact with those in authority, further complicating the process of locating the children and offering them assistance.

Policy provisions must explicitly address practical issues such as assistance with learning the language of the host nation, appropriate assessment of the needs of children, as well as protection from discrimination. Many migrant families, especially those who are ethnically different from the dominant group, encounter varying degrees of bias, racism, rejection, or indifference. Even children who are not ethnically different from the majority peers often experience segregation, prejudice and marginalization based on their accents and dialects, making it difficult for children to develop or maintain a positive personal identity. Research gathered by UNESCO (43Brief2008) and other organizations, shows that achieving equality and quality of education must include teacher cooperation in changing attitudes toward all children with special needs. Supporting children in the acquisition of dual languages, is a complex, multi-faceted task that requires intentional support at all levels of a program.

Over the past twenty years, the state of California has seen its share of initiatives and public actions addressing the rights immigrants' rights, many of which deliberately act against children and adults who are English learners. Proposition 187, enacted in 1995, although later found unconstitutional, prohibited illegal immigrants from using health care, public education, and other social

services. In 1997, Proposition 209 amended the state constitution to prohibit public institutions from considering race, ethnicity or gender as factors to enter a higher education institution. In 1998, California voters approved Proposition 227, English Language in Public School, requiring that all public school instruction be conducted in English. This law undermines the use of the home language as a vehicle for cognitive development, social emotional development, and English language development. It also reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the societal benefits of developing bilingual and multilingual students prepared for the challenges in a global economy.

These initiatives and other actions reflect a climate in California politics and public sentiment that created distrust toward non-English speakers and fostered fear of a multilingual society.

And the problem is not limited to the State of California. In April 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (Senate Bill 1070.) This act makes it a state misdemeanor crime for an “alien” (the act’s term for an immigrant) to be in the state without carrying registration documents, and “cracks down on those sheltering, hiring and transporting illegal aliens.” (www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/sb1070s.pdf) The act is a powerful example of how the dissatisfaction with our immigration laws among the public and public officials can degrade into an anti-immigrant sentiment toward Mexicanos/Latino and other immigrant groups. These anti-immigrant sentiments have, in turn, led to a series of racially motivated attacks .

The reality is that California, and the U.S. as a whole, are already a multilingual society; the question should now be: what do we do to address the needs of that society? It is worth noting that the state of Illinois recently adopted the first statewide regulations on dual language learners in state-funded early education settings, a revolutionary policy that could be used as an example for other states.

Development of De Anza Policy Regarding Instruction of Adult English Language Learners

In August 2006 the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office released a legal opinion regarding the instruction in languages other than English. This opinion states that community colleges can offer sections of courses in languages other than English to students who are limited English proficient. The legal opinion makes provisions for alternative course offerings. It states that, “A community college may offer certain sections of a course in English and other sections of the course in Spanish, or another language other than English, to students with limited proficiency in English if:

- (1) students in all sections of the course are required to enroll in a basic skills English co requisite course; or
- (2) those taking non-English sections of the course are designated as a cohort of students and are required to concurrently enroll in another course or courses designed to help them achieve proficiency in English.” (Provision of Instruction in Languages other than English: Legal Opinion O 06-10, CA State Chancellor’s Office, 10/23/06)

A review designed to identify California community colleges whose policies align with desired direction regarding instruction of students who are not currently proficient in English, found that Los Angeles Community College District has adopted a college policy on bilingual instruction. The policy states: “A college may offer a section of a course taught simultaneously both in English and a language other than English. Prior to offering a section of a course taught simultaneously in English and a language other than English, the college must determine that the section can be taught in accordance with the course outline of record or make modifications to the course outline of record so that its requirements can be applied consistently to all sections. It applies to non-degree applicable courses, noncredit courses, and degree applicable credit courses with a California Community Colleges Management Information System Student Accountability Model,” (LACCD Board Policy, Chapter 4, Article 4, 6416).

Santa Clara County’s Head Start Program has developed an English Language learning Policy designed “to support and facilitate the acquisition of English for limited English proficient families and children in a natural, effective manner by linking culture and supporting children’s home language development as a link towards school readiness,” (Page 1.) This policy will have an impact on early education educators’ capacity to design, assess and implement effective approaches for dual language learners.

Review of the Literature

“The voice of the land is in our language.”¹ National First Nations Elders, Language Gathering, M’igmaq Nation, Canada

The discussion in the literature reviewed centers on the concept of dual language learning. Though the

“I see how the Community Action Team (CAT) members who have their De Anza Child Development certificates have made positive changes in the Mountain View Whisman School District by actively participating in the district’s English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC) and school site English Language Advisory Committees (ELAC). It is simply a joy to hear the power and influence they have as committee members. This year, 2009-10, they have become involved with the local school site Parent Teacher Association (PTA). They truly are very confident, their acquired knowledge is power. They are very influential in the committees that they are on whether it be in the academic circles or civic participation.”

Marilu Delgado, CAT leader

term dual language learning is related to the term English Language Learner - a term commonly used in education literature - the distinction between the two is critical to this study. Dual Language Learning (DLL) is an educational model, a set of principles and strategies designed to support the optimal care and education of “dual language learners.” Dual Language Learners are children aged newborn to five years old who are:

- learning two or more languages at the same time, or
- learning a second language while continuing to learn their first (or home) language.

DLL encompasses the terms Limited English Proficient, bilingual, English Language Learning and children who speak a language other than English (definition from *eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov*)

For the purpose of this review, adults will be referred to as English language learners.

The state of California is a state of many cultures and many languages. According to Tafoya (2002), close to 25 percent of California children enrolled in public schools have limited English language skills. These students are recognized as a population of children who are “vulnerable to poor academic outcomes.” (Page 3) According to trends in demographics, the most prevalent and vulnerable group are Spanish-speaking students, a group whose numbers have steadily grown in California schools and community colleges over the past three decades. Migration from Mexico and other Latin American countries has contributed greatly to this trend. Studies show that immigrant adults need English language skills to function effectively in three core areas: (1) as leaders or caretakers of their families, (2) as members of their communities, and (3) as workers. Research shows that English proficiency is linked to higher wages and economic opportunities (SVCF Immigration Policy Issue Brief, 2007). McHugh, Gellatt & Fix (July 2007) also point out the importance of strong English skills in order to earn legal status. Legal status is a key component in nearly all version of comprehensive immigration currently under debate in the U.S.

At De Anza in 2007, a team of ESL and Child Development and Education faculty were charged with studying the programs available statewide serving Spanish and Chinese-speaking early childhood educators and students (Thot-Johnson (2008) This study looked at best practices utilized in community colleges across the state, and identified a variety of alternatives for supporting adult English learners at the community college level. Peyton, Lewelling & Winkle’s 2001 study (Spanish for Spanish Speakers: Developing Dual Language Proficiency) points out a condition described in the research of Valdez (2001): educators are challenged not only by the levels of English proficiency among English language learners, but also by the amount of formal education Spanish speakers have in their native language, and

literacy skills in Spanish vary among Spanish-speaking adults. Valdés (1997) highlights the need for maintaining the native language across generations, expanding the capacity of bilingualism (both expressive and receptive language), and understanding the concept of transfer of literacy skills (this concept refers to academic skills that transfer across languages and facilitate the second language acquisition).

For the purpose of this literature review it is valuable to discuss policy developments pertinent to the topic. Organizations such as The National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Santa Clara County Early Education Local Planning Council, have developed positions statements responding to linguistic diversity in the nation's communities. These documents provide recommendations for translating research-based principles into practice in early childhood education. In a review of the California Education Code section 66010.2 it was found that,

“The public elementary and secondary school, the California Community Colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and independent institutions of higher education share goals designed to provide educational opportunity and success to the broadest possible range of our citizens and shall provide the following:

- Access to education and the opportunity for educational success, for all qualified Californians. Particular efforts should be made with regard to those who are historically and currently underrepresented in both graduation rates from secondary institutions and their attendance at California higher education institutions.
- Quality teaching and programs of excellence for students. This commitment to academic excellence shall provide all students the opportunity to address issues, including ethical issues, which are central to their full development as responsible citizens.
- Educational equity not only through a diverse and representative student body and faculty but also through educational environments in which each person, regardless of race, gender, age, disability or economic circumstances, has a reasonable chance to fully develop his or her potential.”

These goals provide the foundation for addressing the educational needs of the Latino community at large, as well as the Spanish-speaking community at the state and local levels in California. Academic institutions play a critical role in both educational attainment and job readiness. Educational researchers have documented the low academic outcomes among the Latino/Chicano population (Yosso & Solorzano, 2006; Garcia, 2006). These outcomes have generated critical questions

that may be useful in a follow-up study, including:

- How can our institutional structures adapt to meet the specific needs of a population they were not originally designed to serve?
- Are poor academic outcomes among Spanish-speaking students the result of access issues, discriminatory practices imbedded in the fabric of institutions or our societal inability to address structural inequities that exist in our education system?

It is relevant to address concepts that are of critical importance to educators working with communities who speak languages other than English. First, attitudes toward students affect the capacity to change outcomes. Deficit thinking is the idea that the performance of students is directly associated with students' inability or unwillingness to learn English (Yosso, March 2005). Further more, it is critical to recognize that students bring "funds of knowledge" rooted in their family and cultures and that can serve educational achievements.

Researchers and educators are looking at ways to train bilingual and multicultural educators to challenge cultural deficit thinking, and to acknowledge the cultural wealth of Latino/Chicano students. (Yosso, March 2005) Understanding, acknowledging, and including the knowledge and skills of Spanish-speaking Latino students at De Anza is critical to the development of the young children those students serve, the educational success of its Spanish-speaking community college students, and De Anza's success as an institution of higher learning in an increasingly language-diverse state.

California's schools are well prepared to serve children who are native English speakers. More than one third of California's young children in preschool and early elementary school are English learners (WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies, 2007, p 10). There are at least 56 languages spoken by California children and their families; the most prevalent languages other than English are Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Hmong, Pilipino (Tagalog), and Korean (WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies, 2007, p 12). If California hopes to effectively serve all of its young children the state must find and cultivate methods for serving English learners effectively.

There are critical considerations for educators in working with young English learners. In their study *Working with English Language Learners: Some Considerations*, Cloud, N., Genesee, F. & Hamayan E (2003) cite learning conditions and the nature and the quality of instruction as necessary components to study when designing strategies to serve the adult population of teachers working with children and families. They highlight the need to understand that, "young children's first language is

not fully developed” as well as the “need to develop their native language(s) along with English.” Cloud, N., Genesee, F. & Hamayan (May 2003) stress the concepts of “learning English as an additive process” and the importance of the family as a child’s primary teacher. Their study highlights the importance of high quality teacher preparation, designing developmentally appropriate instruction, and the incorporation of “funds of knowledge,” the critical knowledge and assets that most families bring to their child’s education.

According to Head Start Program Information Reports, almost three out of ten Head Start children come from families who speak a primary language other than English, and only 16% of Head Start programs serve English-speaking children exclusively. In 1993, a survey of Head Start programs conducted by the ACYF Office for Policy, Research and Evaluation found that over 140 languages were spoken by Head Start children and families nationwide. Spanish is overwhelmingly the dominant “second” language in Head Start, with almost one out of every four children coming from families who speak Spanish as their primary language at home (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2006). A report published by the Office Head Start, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2009), points out the need for a comprehensive approach to supporting young, dual language learners. The report identifies needs and challenges for educators, including:

- Best practices to support home language and English language development.
- Transition and articulation with from Pre-K to K-3.
- Linguistically appropriate, valid and reliable language assessment tools.
- Bilingual staff qualified in early childhood.
- Language skills of Bilingual staff.
- Development of a comprehensive plan.

The report also stresses the pressing need for children to “learn vocabulary and conceptual skills in the home language (p.18)”.

The literature on dual language learners reflects the advantages of bilingualism in a child’s life. In their (Pre-K and Latinos: The Foundation for America’s Future), Gonzales and Garcia (July 2006) argue that the “review of the research indicates that bilingual children often have higher levels of academic achievement in comparison to their monolingual peers.” For Latino children, “bilingualism can be beneficial for children’s early language and literacy development, for family communication and function and for children’s feeling of self-worth.” This view supports the notion that bilingualism is an

asset for young children, not a deficit. In this report, the authors also discuss the risks factors that often lead to academic failure among all children, including poverty, a parent with no high school degree, limited English proficiency, and being raised in a household led by a single mother. It stresses that Latinos are at higher risk than whites educationally, and enter the K-3 educational system less competent in mathematics and reading. Improving the early language experiences for Latino children is imperative to their academic success. The study emphasizes the need for an effective outreach strategy that takes into consideration the following factors:

- Literacy levels of the population in both Spanish and English.
- Support in using the home language to develop a foundation for English learning.
- Investment in recruitment, development and retention of bilingual staff.
- Engagement of parents and families.
- Removal of barriers to participation in pre-K programs.
- The need to include Latino children in longitudinal studies, to learn clearly about the population's realities.
- The need to include dual language learning (i.e. English language learning) as a criteria for enrollment eligibility and priority.

Gonzales and Tinarejo (2005), argue that “bilingualism enhances biocognitive and bicultural development as well as language development.” In *Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood* (in press), Espinoza's research shows the benefits of bilingualism, and considerations in professional development. She cites a number of other studies that also support the belief that “bilingualism confers cognitive, cultural, and economic advantages” - Bialystok (2001), Genesee, (2004), and Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, (1992). Espinoza further states that,

“Bilingualism has been associated with a greater awareness of and sensitivity to linguistic structure, an awareness that is transferred and generalized to certain early literacy and nonverbal skills There are several important implications of this research for early childhood professionals. Children who have the opportunity to speak two languages should be encouraged to maintain both, so they can enjoy the benefits that may accompany bilingual status. Children from homes where English is not the native language should be encouraged to cultivate their home language as well as learn English. Maintaining the home language is essential not just to the child's future academic and cognitive development, but also to the child's ability to establish a strong cultural identity, to develop and sustain strong ties with

their immediate and extended families, and to thrive in a global, multilingual world. As early childhood programs become increasingly diverse, teachers will need to understand the process of second language acquisition and learn how to adapt their expectations and instruction accordingly.”

The authors further discuss that,

”A major implication of the increasing proportion of young children who are ELL is the composition and preparation of the early childhood workforce. All staff, teachers, support staff, and administrators will need to understand the developmental characteristics of dual language learners, effective instructional and assessment practices, and most critically, the role of first and second language proficiency in long-term academic success. Ideally, the work force will include professionals who are proficient in English as well as the children’s home language and well trained in early childhood pedagogy. In order to realize the potential of early bilingualism, we will need highly skilled teachers who have achieved proficiency in bilingualism, multicultural perspectives, and effective teaching strategies.”

In their study (*Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting ready to Succeed in School*) Ballantyne, Sanderman, and MacLaughlin (2008) explore the achievement gap between dual language learners and monolingual English-speaking children in the U.S. The authors point out that many dual language learners come from low socio-economic backgrounds and “from communities where: (1) parents are less likely to graduate from high school, (2) children are less likely to have access to health care services in their critical earliest years of life, and (3) are less likely to attend preschool.” It is also noted that young DLLs benefit from the following:

- “Instructional strategies” that value their home language, and pay particular attention to the child’s social emotional development.
- An understanding that 4-6 years is needed that to become proficient in a second language.
- The knowledge that competency in the home language aids the development of competency in the second language.
- A strong focus on vocabulary development.

Recently Preschool California published a policy brief discussing how to close the achievement gap for dual language learners. The policy brief points out that in 2006, 42% of the children in CA

enrolled in kindergarten were identified as English language learners, but Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting ready to Succeed in School that by the time those children reached the third grade only 13% were reclassified as knowing English. This belies the need for early childhood programs that are conscious of, and attentive to, the achievement disparity. Early childhood programs must do a better job at strengthening the child's competency in his or her home language, while supporting English language development before children start school. In Santa Clara County, the achievement gap cuts across linguistic, ethnic, and economic lines. San Jose 2020 is an initiative that launched (by the Santa Clara County Office of education and San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed) to eliminate the achievement gap for Latino and African American students San Jose 2020. Latino students score lower on standardized tests than students who are white or Asian. They are also more likely to drop out of school and less likely to attend college. According to the initiative, "over 40,000 students are not proficient in their grade level skills; that's nearly half of all public school students tested. The achievement gap has personal, economic, and moral implications for a society committed to the ideal of equal opportunity. "This is the civil rights issue of our generation." The question is how many of these students are English language learners? What innovations are in place now to change the outcomes for students, even as we determine the community's needs community for an educated workforce? In a recent report (2009), the Society for Human Resource Management, stated the need for a high performance and skilled workforce. The report stresses that our workforce lack essential skills to succeed in a job. The report establishes that early experiences can affect life outcomes and the need to invest earlier in life, in "our workforce pipeline" for a functional and literate workforce.

Research also unequivocally shows the importance of intentionally supporting the acquisition of both English and the home language in young children. Studies also show that knowledge of the home language, facilitates learning a second language. Children who know two languages often have higher levels of cognitive achievement than monolingual children and almost certainly will have a broader array of social and economic opportunities available to them as they become adults. Through their home language and culture, families share a sense of identity and belonging, and children learn how to relate to and communicate with others. Loss of home language creates a vicious cycle first by disrupting family communication, and inhibiting the development of close familial relationships, which in turn leads to a loss of intergenerational wisdom, ultimately creating a negative impact on a child's self-concept. which could in turn interrupting thinking and reasoning skills. According to Wong Fillmore (2000), the loss of the home language is associated with a loss of identity, "deterioration of family relationships", and societal consequences related to the lack of identification with the family and its

extended members. And loss of a home language puts the educational success of Latino English learners at risk (ex. ability for children to communicate with their family in the native language, a key element of continuity to succeed in school). The loss of home language not only causes a socio cultural change in the family structure, but in the communities where English learners live (ex. disconnect between children and youth to support and care for their community).

In order to ensure positive outcomes across domains for Spanish-speaking students and children, educators must work with parents in identifying ways to support home language development as a necessary element of the development of English as a second language. Few valid and reliable assessment instruments exist for evaluating progress in language and literacy development and other areas for children who are learning two languages. Without accurate assessment information, staff are unable to properly support the child's development, identify progress, fully individualize the curriculum, or identify cognitive or behavioral deficits requiring further evaluation and possible intervention.

Lindholm-Leary's 2005 review of literature identifies effective features for dual language learning. Though most of her work has focused on primary education, there are parallels to early education. These features relate to factors such as:

- Assessment and accountability,
- Curriculum alignment with standards and competencies,
- Instructional practices responsive to the linguistic needs of children,
- Staff quality and preparation,
- Ongoing professional development,
- Equity minded structures, and
- Family and community engagement.

When carefully considered in the design of services, these features promote “bilingualism, biliteracy, cultural competence and robust academic preparation” and are key factors in promoting effective and positive child-centered learning outcomes.

Local Early Education Planning Council of Santa Clara County, as well as the community colleges that invest in dual language development, have adopted six guiding principles:

1. The home language is a crucial foundation for development and literacy.
2. Learning environments should support the home language and culture to promote full participation and identity development.

3. Learning in both the home language and English promotes effective development and learning.
4. Cultural and linguistic congruity is key and is supported by strong home-school partnerships and support for parents as first teachers.
5. High quality, research-based professional development that supports dual language learning is essential.
6. Culturally, developmentally and linguistically appropriate screening and assessment tools are essential for effective, quality early care and education.

Approach and Methods

This section reviews the research approach and methods. The following questions served as the basis for inquiry:

- (1) What are the challenges and barriers in the professional preparation of EL Spanish-speaking students and workers in Early Education in Santa Clara County?
- (2) How can college campuses serve Spanish-speaking students both individually and as a means to achieving cultural change?
- (3) What strategies are in place to address the needs and opportunities for English learners, Spanish-speaking students and workers?
- (4) What are the strategies are in place in early education to improve language services for Spanish-speaking young children and their families?

The investigative framework and methodology considered avenues for collecting data:

- Personal stories and individual interviews,
- Focus groups and forums,
- Stakeholders sessions (with De Anza programs and college leaders, the Adult English Language Acquisition Initiative: Role of San Mateo and Santa Clara County Community Colleges spearheaded by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and Local Early Education Planning Council of Santa Clara County, Dual Language Learning Committee),
- Research on effective workforce programs or initiatives for adult English language learners who are predominantly Spanish-speaking.
- Programs serving young children whose home language is Spanish.
- Policies related to educating adults and young children whom are Spanish-speaking.

The data collection and development of the educational profile was provided by E3 Institute, Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) program and De Anza Office of

Institutional Research, Child Development and Education 2006-2009 cohort.

Participants in the Focus group conducted in November 2009



Discussion and Strategies

OBJECTIVE 1: Research the educational conditions and barriers for Spanish-speaking Latino students in early care and education in Santa Clara County.

An educational profile has been developed to show the conditions of Spanish speaking early childhood students and workers at De Anza and in Santa Clara County. The data reflects information gathered by evaluating two cohorts of students. The first group, the De Anza Child Development and Education cohort, consisted of 218 students enrolled in at least one child development and education course in the academic years 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09. The CARES data represented 461 Spanish-speaking students and workers who participated in the eighth round of Santa Clara CARES (CARES Round 8 – 2009.) Two focus groups were conducted to gather additional data.

A cohort of Spanish-speaking students enrolled at De Anza College CDE between the years 2006-2009 were evaluated. The data includes 218 students. The demographic characteristics of the cohort are as follows:

- 95.5% females; 4.5% males,
- 10% identified a need for financial aid in 2006-07; 20% in 2007-08; and 27% in 2008-09,
- 38.2% reside in the city of San Jose; 29% in Mountain View; and 10.6 % in Sunnyvale.

Students enrolled in the series of classes in Spanish shows strong signs of academic success, including:

- 80% success rate¹ in all courses
- 65 % enrollment in ESL courses; of which, 69% succeed
- 17% earned a degree or certificate; highest certificate completed is the Certificate of Achievement²

The Voices of Students and Workers

There is a need to create an environment where one feels safe and confident. There is a need to do a better job around placement in ESL, other or just to take the placement tests. Participants discussed the need for the development of a more appropriate English language acquisition for adults. The classes at Adult Education are limited and often do not prepare you for college level courses. Time (having time) plays a big factor as it requires 4-5 times a week instruction. There is not enough space at adult education; the lack of funding hinders many of us to access classes. There is a need to create lower levels of ESL courses at the colleges as part of literacy development and basic language skills acquisition. Students also spoke about a different system of ESL classes based. less times a week but for longer periods of time; evening and Saturdays included in the new models and community.

At focus groups conducted in the Fall of 2009, students reported they were the first generation in their family to attend college. The participants discussed issues related to access, program effectiveness, barriers and needs. The students reported that over the past 10 years, colleges have become more open to responding to access issues for the Spanish-speaking population. Courses are offered

in the primary language at times when students can attend, including nights and Saturdays. Students pointed out that faculty as also include advisors that provide guidance, and monitor the completion of educational goals. However students reported that they do not seek academic counseling services, and if they did, the service quality was considered sub par. It was reported that little time spent with Counselors, that there was not a professional treatment if students are English learner. Focus group participants pointed out that colleagues in their programs - other early childhood staff and faculty - helped determine the courses needed to fulfill job requirements. Participants also stated that the content of course offerings in Spanish is most valuable when received in the primary language; when all content is presented in English only, comprehension is close to zero. Furthermore, courses in Spanish offer a more solid base for understanding and working with Latino children in particular.

Barriers and limitations to learning English include:

- Lack of proper documentation to enroll in colleges,
- Immigration status, and,
- The appropriateness of services offered to EL adults when approaching admission and records and other services.

Lack of personnel adequately trained to serve Spanish speakers can sometimes led to inappropriate or culturally insensitive comments. In addition, educators should be sensitive to other factors that hinder student's success: students' time constraints, access to scholarships and access to affordable and reliable child care are important for student success. Professors should also be to better prepare to address knowledge gaps in areas like computer literacy.

The participants reported receiving ESL and tutoring services at the colleges. Participants reported a lack of adequate support for students who speak Spanish, even when students hold higher levels of education from their native land. According to the focus group participants there is both a need to create an environment where students feels safe and confident, and a need for colleges to improve quality of ESL placement.

Participants discussed the need for the development of a more innovative approach to English language acquisition for adults. Participants also reported that the classes at Adult Education are limited and often do not prepare students for college level courses. Needs and challenges identified include:

- Time constraints - ESL requires 4-5 times a week instruction.
- Lack of adequate space in adult education classes, made worse by recent budget cuts.

- Many adult learners who most need these classes have a lower socio economic status, which can hinder their ability to pay for and attend classes.
- Lower level ESL courses offered at colleges as part of literacy development and basic language skill.
- Offering a more flexible schedule of classes and making these classes available to the community.
- Classes taught in Spanish but connected to courses in English.
- A desire to build and to further develop Spanish literacy before transitioning to English.
- General education classes offered in Spanish.
- Teachers and professors who are willing and able to connect with adult Spanish-speaking students.

Students reinforced the need for a different approach to scheduling ESL classes including offering classes on evenings and Saturdays and offering classes fewer times a week for longer periods at a time.

“The community colleges must evaluate the way in which they serve our Spanish-speaking population. They need to connect and work with the community so that we can reach higher levels of education. There should be an investment in adult and parent education.”

Participants viewed teacher preparation programs that meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking students, as effective. Students pointed out the need to create programs specifically designed to support language maintenance, as well as transition to English as a second language.

It is worth noting that a study conducted by GCIR, Connell (2008) calls for innovative strategies in ESL, including Spanish for Spanish speakers to strengthen their primary Language to better transition to English, infusing ESL in workforce development, and providing civic engagement activities as part of the educational experience.



CARES (Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards) is a financial stipend program designed to encourage early childhood educators in the county to further their education. The data reviewed represents the Spanish-speaking CARES participants who participated in eight rounds of the program in 2009. Most of the participants are employed in a child development center, in both public and private

programs. The sample group represents 461 participants and of those:

- 80% earn an annual income between \$10,000-\$40,000 - below the countywide medium income.
- 68% reside in the City of San Jose.
- 36% are between the ages of 40-99; 23% are aged 50-59; and 18% are between the ages of 30-39.
- 61% have completed some college course work and represent Spanish-speaking participants in CARES who have had an international transcript evaluation.
- Of the participants who have completed some college course work, 19.3% have completed basic skills courses; 8.6% have completed English and Math pre-requisites; and 29.2% have completed ESL course work.
- 17.5% hold an Associates degree in ECE or other field; 23% have completed a bachelor's degree in other disciplines.
- 40% hold an Associate teacher permit; 8.4% hold a Teacher's permit; 20% hold a Site Supervisor Permit; 6% hold a Program Director permit.

Recommendations and Solutions

“Maria L. completed a 5th grade in Mexico. She is a licensed family child care provider and has an associate teacher permit. She needs the four (4) courses to complete her general education requirement for the teacher’s permit. It requires the mastery of English. She took the ESL placement test but needs a lower level of English not offered by the college.”

Based on the data reviewed and the qualitative evidence collected in the focus groups, policymakers should consider developing and implementing solutions as outlined in the following areas of focus:

- Policy

Promote the development of Bilingual Instruction Policy at the college and state level. Consider dual language learning principles when creating policy and regulation. i.e. Illinois Board of Education, Los Angeles Community College

District

- Access

Develop and implement discipline-specific models to meet the needs of adult English learners. The model must include primary language instruction, bilingual instruction and English instruction in a coordinated sequence. The model will aim to support students develop skills as early childhood educators, using the primary language as a vehicle and ESL/VESL to transition to English language development.

- Evidence-Based Strategies

Work with community colleges’ early childhood departments and the CARES Roundtable, to explore innovative strategies to improve English language skills and job skills, as well as the preparation students need to pursue transfer requirements and degrees.

- Student Engagement

Engage students in civic education and advocacy on dual language learning as an approach for addressing cultural and linguistically diversity. Infusing civic education into adult English language acquisition programs prepares students for active participation in a democratic environment.

- Information Sharing

Develop and disseminate a brochure of information to promote the use of promising and effective practices to advance the education of adult English learners.

OBJECTIVE 2: Research and formulate a campus-wide cultural change strategy to acknowledge and improve how the campus serves Spanish-speaking students.

Community colleges play a critical role in the academic growth and development of non-traditional populations in Santa Clara County. The past 15 years have seen an increase in the number Spanish-speaking at colleges nationwide. Many students wish to acquire a trade to develop skills and gain the knowledge necessary to succeed in today's workforce. For about five years, the De Anza Child Development and Education Department has worked in collaboration with local agencies to help Spanish achieve success by developing programs designed to meet their unique educational and workforce preparation needs. The Spanish-speaking students attending De Anza College can earn the Child Development Permit Associate teacher level by completing 23-25 quarter units. A 3-year grant from the WestEd Institute, made scholarships available to students to help pay for college fees, class materials and supplies. The grant also provided child supervision services to help support and ensure the participation of students with children. In order to help eliminate transportation as a barrier, courses were offered at a community site in efforts to breakdown transportation as a barrier. Courses were also offered on evenings and Saturdays, in an effort to make classes available to students who work weekdays. In addition, De Anza forged a collaboration with the ESL Department to provide an orientation for first quarter students designed to help them navigate the college and develop an educational plan.

A review of student department data showed an estimated 46.7 % utilization of college services such as financial aid as well as enrollment on ESL courses. The college offers a large number of beginning level ESL courses (ESL 200) effective beginning with the 2009-10 school year. However most students have not engaged in the assessment and placement process to determine appropriate placement. This is an area that could use improvement as the college evaluates the trajectory of Spanish speakers in the pipeline, from registration to graduation.

Over the past decade, the Child Development and Education Department has worked closely with the ESL department to create child development/ESL linked courses and create a model that starts students in their primary language. During 2008-09, the most critical issue for De Anza College's Child Development and Education program was to secure an ESL instructor to work on the activities outlined in the Education Access and Success Program model. This program is designed to transition Limited English Proficient Child Development students from instruction in their primary language to instruction

in English. The Education Access and Success model was also formulated to support English learners and ESL students (Spanish and Chinese) to develop adequate levels of English proficiency at the college level. The following was accomplished in 2009-10:

- (1) The curriculum committee approved ESL 280 in January 2010.
- (2) A binder of curriculum materials was developed to support ESL 280 and child development and education courses.
- (3) Support services were integrated into the model. In 09-10, the college approved a proposal for the reorganization of services such as tutoring, adjunct skills, and those available in the Writing and Reading Center. An initial dialogue was held with Gregory Anderson to identify how to better align services with the CDE Impact model. In 10-11, faculty will meet with the leadership of the Student Success Center. The college will also consider community service learning as a pedagogical practice to involve students in English language development.
- (4) Departmental agreements to implement all aspects of the model were secured - this particular objective is considered in progress. Due to budget issues, the commitment from Language Arts/ESL Department to fund instruction for the ESL 280 course has been secured for only Spring 2011.
- (5) A work plan for the pilot program was developed. The plan includes:
 - Development of the project design
 - Memorandum of understanding between SSH/CDE and the Language Arts Division/ESL Department
 - Advertising
 - Assessment and Evaluation
 - Technology
 - Curriculum development
 - Extended Learning Outside the Classroom
 - Funding

Research identified the following barriers to the success in implementing the model. De Anza has changed the way it approaches course repeatability. Repeatability was not accepted for ESL 280. A directive has been given to Curriculum Committee to exclude repeatability for ESL courses. A comprehensive review of Title 5 regs./Ed Code, Credit course repetition section shows adequate grounds for challenging this direction, specifically:

- “Repetition of the course is necessary for students to meet a legally mandated training requirement as a condition of continued paid or volunteer employment, and
- the course content differs each time is offered.”

The program coordinator is exploring district or campus policies and procedures that would allow course repetition in lieu of this change in Curriculum Committee, as well as reviewing the rationale for why this change was made in 09-10.

Due to budget challenges, there will be a delay in the launch of the pilot project; it’s currently slated for the Spring 2011 quarter.

In September 2009, a meeting with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Grantmaking Director Manuel Santamaria was held to discuss areas related to this professional development proposal. The discussion resulted in a request to engage in action research project. The project titled, Adult English Language Acquisition Initiative: the Role of Community Colleges in Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties was organized and launched in October 2009. My role as the coordinator provided an opportunity to convene individuals to brainstorm improvements to how schools address adult English language acquisition. In October 2009, leaders and representatives from community colleges began a dialogue to address the area that has had the most resonance related to improving Latino student success in higher education, certainly for early childhood educators as well as the success of our immigrant populations, particularly Latinos. This meeting and subsequent meetings of key stakeholders determined that improving English language acquisition for Latino and immigrant populations in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties was key to those communities’ success. The work began by addressing the following questions.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the local institution’s language acquisition programs for adults? • What are the challenges associated with learning English for both the individual student and the system? |
|--|

In subsequent meetings conducted in December 2009, and in April and June of 2010 the stakeholders have:

- Exchanged information about the programs offered at others’ community colleges.
- Got deeper insight into the national perspective in adult language acquisition and immigrant integration.

- Learned about best practices and innovative strategies implemented in other community colleges locally and throughout the nation;
- Identified ideas for collaboration between community colleges and adult education programs.
- Began work on the development of an ESL Network with a collaborative structure.
- Prepared an initial plan for a proposal to be presented to the SVCF and other funders.

The stakeholder group has identified three steps crucial to adult English language acquisition and strategic options to consider in the development of the proposal:

- Determine supply and demand for ESL,
- Assess service priorities,
- Develop programs.

Proposed short term activities include:

1. Engage leadership

Create a strategy to meet with the leaders once or twice a year, beginning with a core of 4 colleges (EVC, Gavilan, Cañada, West Valley). The strategy will also involve other participating colleges in Santa Clara & San Mateo counties.

2. Community awareness effort: ESL Professional discussion portal for community colleges, CBOs, and adult education providers

Create an on online discussion platform for the participating colleges and AELA community to:

- Encourage ongoing dialogue, discussion, and information exchange,
- Obtain input on what the community sees as important needs that require attention.
- Establish a common underlying goal to invest in and serve the immigrant population.

3. Marketing brochure

Develop a brochure for the Bay Area ESL Network. The brochure will include information about the network of all colleges and adult schools. It will show the impact and benefit of getting involved in a local AELA initiative, and will include a pledge to join and get involved in disseminating information.

4. Supply and demand mapping

Develop and implement a strategy to map supply & demand. Prepare a report and a dissemination strategy.

5. Regional Conference

Plan and implement a local conference for participating colleges to share information and to generate collaborative directions. Participating colleges can showcase their programs, hold guided discussions about changes in student demographics, student needs, the levels of ESL courses in the system and their effectiveness, and pedagogy.

Long term projects identified are:

1. Regional Conference- see above

2. Bilingual Instruction Policy

Develop a task force to review and develop a regional policy model supporting bilingual instruction.

3. Advocacy - Education Code Regulations

Studies show that when students take ESL courses with other courses, they do better academically and meet their goals. If English 1A (the gate keeper) becomes a prerequisite, it will close the door for students to take transfer and GE courses—impacting both persistence and success rates.

The group proposed the development of a strategy team to study, evaluate and propose changes to regulations that may have a positive impact on access and award completion.

4. Standardization

Develop a task force to work on standardization –in areas of curriculum, assessments, applications, and ESL levels

5. Contextualized learning

Research the programs or initiatives offered in both counties (effective practices, include measures of success, and return on investment information). Develop and disseminate a document to all colleges, adult education and community-based organizations.

Policy Impacting the Education of Spanish Speakers in Higher Education

There are a number of community colleges implementing bilingual instruction in early childhood education programs. The programs are described as Spanish to English initiatives designed for students to learn child development content, while acquiring English language skills (Education Access Program Report, pgs. 11-14). As mentioned in Section 2 of this report, there have been efforts to begin addressing bilingual or dual language instruction in community colleges. Los Angeles Community College District policies, Article 4- Special Classes & Services, allows for, “A college may offer a section of a course taught simultaneously both in English and a language other than English.”

As mentioned in section 2, the California Chancellor’s Office has prepared a legal opinion to aid community colleges in their “Provision of Instruction in Languages Other than English: Legal Opinion O 06-10 “. The opinion requires a cohort of students to co-enroll in basic skills English courses, while taking the course in Spanish or another language.

City College of San Francisco offers an array of programs to support adult English language learners, including programs tailored to early childhood educators. Most recently, the Early Childhood Education Department is working toward implementing the Soy Bilingüe Adult Dual Language Model, developed by the Center for Linguistic and Cultural Democracy. The model was developed to prepare bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural educators in the Preschool-primary grades system (program model development was funded by U.S. Department of Education).

The National Council of la Raza has established a policy position on Young English Language Learners (ELL) primarily focused on the 80% of native Spanish-speaking children in the U.S. public schools. According to information retrieved from the website, the position “supports early learning proposals that target ELL children and families and provide the following:

- Workforce development to help instructors work with diverse learners and ELLs
- Career ladder programs to support a more diverse workforce
- Native-language support, including dual-language (two-way immersion) programs
- Effective family outreach strategies
- Expanded family literacy programs that work with both parents and children to ensure school success”

OBJECTIVE 3: Work with the LPC to develop strategies that address the needs and opportunities for ECE Spanish-speaking students in community colleges.



The literature, research, data collected through the focus groups, stakeholder meetings, interviews and leadership dialogues, suggest a comprehensive approach to developing strategies to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking population in early childhood and the Spanish-speaking community at large., including:

1. The development of a dual language learning position statement. The Early Education Local Planning Council of Santa Clara County, through its English Language Committee, led the development of a position statement with members of the community. The position statement aims “to promote the use of the essential principles and best practices of Dual Language learning for all dual language learners in the county. In the future, the position statement can become the foundation for efforts to support bilingual education for all children, as a way to promote the cognitive benefits of multiple language acquisition and to support intercultural understanding” (Santa Clara County Local Early Education Planning Council Dual Language Learners Position Statement, Page 1)
2. The adoption of a community college dual language model countywide Soy Bilingüe Adult Dual Language program provides a model for early childhood and elementary education in which student earn an A.A. degree and other degrees. The Center of Linguistic and Cultural Democracy, developed the model over 15 years ago, to prepare Latinos, African Americans and European Americans to work with young children. According to the website, the core pedagogical components of the model include: (1) Language and Literacy Development, (2) Collaboration and Community Building, (3) Cultural Relevancy and Active Teaching, (4) Imagination and Cultural Expression, (5) Bicultural Voice and Cross-Cultural Competency, (6) Critical Thinking and Conscientization, and (7) Coaching and Accountability. The City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University are both in the process of implementing the model.
3. Focus Areas for Solutions in Dual Language Learning (Students forum and leadership forums/interviews)

Potential solutions to further explore and develop are:

a. Increase Awareness of the Need for DLL

- Improve the cultural relevant information in courses in order to work more effectively with children.
- Develop bilingual personnel at the teaching and administrative levels.

b. Professional Development

- Schedule additional classes that include Child psychology.
- Offer Literacy development in Spanish.
- Teacher preparation to work with dual language learners .

c. Course Needs

- Continue courses in Spanish with an English development component; remove barriers.
- Teachers need to better understand the needs of DLL children.

d. Institutional Strategies

- Consider the development of a bilingual career or track, ECE bilingual teacher.
- Develop or replicate an Adult Dual Language model for ECE.
- Develop informational packet for Counseling Departments and others at the colleges, about DLL students' unique conditions and needs.
- Organize additional support connected with courses taught in Spanish (study groups, tutoring)
- Increase student financial aid opportunities.
- Develop strategy for acquiring the support of the Deans of various Community Colleges.
- Establish a pathway to finish community college education in one college.
- Form a student advisory committee: Advise programs focused on Spanish-speaking students.

4. The development of strategies to promote Dual Language Learning (DLL) in Early Childhood Education Programs (leadership stakeholder forum)

- Building a DLL competency in existing initiatives or projects such as the Career Ladders state initiative for non-traditional students (Students of the 21st Century).
- Infuse DLL values into curriculum.



- Incorporate DLL in teaching and learning and in basic skills.
- Offer teacher training to improve instruction and grow capacity.
- Coordinate with C-PIN.
- Create an awareness campaign among all community colleges
- Offer ESL/ Language Arts with ECE Partnership
- Identify best practices in community colleges (see CDE Access report and Soy Bilingue)
- Create communication mechanisms – publishing and other
- Develop a DLL initiative like the Inclusion model fro course development
- Offer EL Authorization (similar to CLAD) with degree (AA or BA)
- Offer certificate programs/ ESL-CD

OBJECTIVE 4: Work with the LPC to develop an action strategy to improve the language services for Spanish-speaking young children and their families in ECE.

To meet this objective, researchers conducted a dual language survey and conducted program interviews with Head Start and school district administrators who have early childhood programs. For the DLL Language Services & Supports Parent Survey (2010), parents were asked to spend 15 minutes answering questions about the effectiveness of their child's care provider (child care or preschool). The survey aims to provide services that will improve the quality of programs offered by centers, family child care homes, schools, and districts in Santa Clara county. These results will offer insights into how to provide the best service possible, and help identify areas for improvement. The survey was made available in Spanish, English and Vietnamese, to capture various language groups; a total of 230 parents completed the survey; 123 of who were Spanish-speaking parents.

Program Interviews

Interviewees were conducted with program directors and administrators who oversee early childhood program in Head Start, San Jose Unified School District and Gilroy Unified school district. The interview time ranged from 1-2 hours. Interview at Gilroy Unified School District, Early Childhood Program also included a site visit and observation. Interviewees included :

- Dr. Norma Martinez-Palmer, Director of Preschool/Elementary Education and Katie Milligan, Preschool Director- SJUDS April 21, 2010

San Jose Unified is an urban district located in Silicon Valley. The District serves over 30,000 students; 8,210 or 80% of elementary-middle school level students (CA State Department of Education, Spring 2008 Census) are considered English language learners. The program serves 634 young children; over 80% of who speak a language other than English.

- Sheryll Ebbs, Director Early Education, GUSD May 10, 2010

Gilroy Unified School District is located in an agricultural area known as Gilroy, CA. The District serves over 11,000 students; 29% are considered English language learners (Great Schools: GUSD Retrieved on July 7, 2010 from www.greatschools.org/cgi-bin/ca/district-profile/636). The ECE program serves 324 children.

- Ana Trujillo, Head Start Director, SCCOE May 19, 2010

Head Start is a program in Santa Clara and San Benito counties. The program serves 2,238 young children; 73 % are non-English speakers.

The following questions guided the interviews:

- Describe the way in which your program offers services to young Spanish-speaking children.
- What is your delivery model? How do you assess the effectiveness of your program/model?
- Describe the articulation between the ECE programs and the K-3 education program.
- How do you assess language gains experienced in a preschool setting?
- What do you do to partner with families to improve languages services for Spanish-speaking children?
- What educational and/or professional development opportunities are provided to teachers to acquire skills to improve the languages services for Spanish-speaking children?
- What is the district policy on early childhood English learning and/or the district master plan for English learners?
- What are the challenges to serving ELL who are Spanish speakers? (in the larger context)

Summary of the Interviews

According to the administrators interviewed, other than English, Spanish is the most common language spoken by students and their families. Spanish-speaking children receive home language and second language development through evidence-based strategies such as dual immersion, bilingual instruction, Pre-K Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD); Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and a child's portfolio are common tools used to monitor primary and second language acquisition.

All three programs are negotiating PreK-3 articulation agreements. Teachers and administrators from Pre K-3rd grade levels assist with training and curriculum alignment, as well as determining assessment tools that will provide longitudinal outcome measures. All three programs provide intensive and on-going professional development opportunities for their teachers and providers. One area that could still use improvement: development of policy for Pre-K English language learners. Head Start of Santa Clara and San Benito counties has recently drafted a policy, which they hope will be approved by the end of 2010 (*Santa Clara County Office Of Education Head Start/Early Head Start English Language Learning Policy. 2008*)

To improve languages services, the programs offer parents and primary caregivers opportunities to discuss language development, language gains and provide some ideas for parents to support the

child's home language.

Programs administrators also had insights on the challenges ahead. SJUSD administrators reported a disconnect between early childhood and elementary school. Issues with licensing and organized labor union can make it difficult to involve educators in professional development and training opportunities. Another challenge: the preparation of associate teachers who need to improve their own language skills in English, and the lack of teacher preparation programs to address this challenge. GUSD administrators reported that the greatest challenge is scheduling ongoing collaboration with partners. In their current endeavor, the ECE program has partnered with Head Start, Go-Kids, Gavilan College, Migrant Education and GUSD K-3. Interviewees also reported difficulties finding appropriate assessment tools for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) that can provide good data and accurately measure program effectiveness. In addition, they noted a lack of available curriculum that addresses quality indicators and DAP strategies. At Head Start, one of the major challenges is finding bilingual/biliterate personnel to work with young English language learners. Challenges facing adult English language learners' include:

- Limited ability to earn an A.A. degree for Assistants and B.A. degree for teachers, as required by the Head Start Act.
- The skill level of the workforce and inconsistent and varying degrees of literacy in their primary language.
- The low number of staff that hold a child development permit, which is a job requirement.

Head Start has a special grant to address professional development needs of their workforce. Classes are offered evenings and Saturday through mostly National University. As of May 2010, a cohort of employees is training with SJCC faculty in ECE.

The Language Survey Results

One hundred and twenty four (124) Spanish-speaking parents responded to the survey. 54% of the respondents have children between the ages of 3-4; 41% have children aged 5; and 5% have children under age 2. The significant findings are as follows:

- 67% stated that teachers and providers collaborate with parents in caring for the child; 50% of the teacher/providers use the home language.
- 72% of the children use Spanish in their home; 45% use Spanish when outside of the home.
- 80% of the parents were informed of the support their children would receive in their primary language; 61% also received written materials.

- 84% of the communications from the program to home are in Spanish; 16% are in English only.
- 76% of the teacher/providers speak Spanish part of the day; 15% speak Spanish all day.
- Teachers and providers support English learning through the use of gestures, body language, storybook reading and vocabulary development.
- Music and songs were most commonly used to reinforced primary language and English language learning.
- Between 53-55% of the parents reported that the program offers educational activities to develop both the primary language and English.
- 73% of the respondents reported receiving information about their child’s language development in the home language; only 59 % reported receiving written information.
- 81% of the respondents reported that the program encouraged home language use.
- 90% of the respondents received training to support their child’s language development.
- 85% of the respondents would like to attend adult literacy classes in their primary language; Only 30% of the respondents attend adult literacy classes through their program.

Promising Program Strategies

In May of 2007, the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness, conducted a Language Development Study Circle. The study was designed, to identify values and assumptions to consider in developing strategies and recommendations to improve the language experiences for young children in early education. The work led to the development of a set of values and assumptions key to the design and development of programs to support dual language learners. According to the study (May 2007), “These values and assumptions support the notion that dual language learning is an educational model the moves our communities to shape dual language and multilingualism as a community value.

- Healthy language development is a requirement for cognitive development.
- All children can benefit from environments that focus on cultivating strong language skills.
- To achieve their potential, children need a rich language environment – with exposure to diverse vocabulary, lots of stories and books, and opportunities to develop their own expressive abilities.
- Language development is a continuous, lifelong process taking. Teachers and parents can create scaffolds to help children move through development and transfer learning between the first and second languages, and between home and school.
- English proficiency and English literacy are important for academic and economic success in this community.

- A child’s first language is an important connection to family and culture; keeping this connection is important to emotional health and parenting.
- The ability to speak more than one language is an asset. We need to erase the deficit model associated with learning English as a second language.
- A prosperous community in the global economy appreciates and supports the development of multi-lingual children.
- We can create realistic action plans that move the Partnership toward this vision.
- Parents, teachers and peers all play roles in the healthy development of language in children.
- Effective programs approach the child in the context of the family, leverage strengths and teach to the child’s potential.”

All three of the district personnel interviewed have made a commitment to improving language conditions for our young children. San Jose Unified School District is implementing **Project Seal** (Sobrato Early Academic Literacy), a pilot project in 2 sites using primary language instruction. The implementation has an articulation component between Preschool, Kindergarten and 1st grade. Teachers from all three levels are invited to participate in training and working to articulate content.

The **Pre-K Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)** has been implemented in Gilroy Unified School District, Early Childhood Program and most recently in Head Start in Santa Clara County. According to the administrators, and based on information downloaded from the website, www.projectglad.com, “GLAD is a model of professional development in the area of language acquisition and literacy. The strategies and model promote English language acquisition, academic achievement, and cross-cultural skills. GLAD was developed and field tested for nine years in the Fountain Valley School District and is based on years of experience with integrated approaches for teaching language. Tied to standards, the model trains teachers to provide access to core curriculum using local district guidelines and curriculum. GLAD is an instructional model with clear, practical strategies promoting positive, effective interactions among students and between teachers and students. GLAD develops metacognitive use of high level, academic language and literacy. During the staff development, teachers are provided with the instructional strategies, the theory and research that support the model, and the curriculum model that brings these all together in the context of district and state frameworks and standards. The second part of the training is a demonstration



session in the classroom where the model is demonstrated with students.”

The Center for Linguistic and Cultural Democracy has developed The *Soy Bilingue Preschool Curriculum*. If an organization is interested in transitioning their program into a dual language model, the curriculum can help with development of a language plan. It also includes the development and assessment of a linguistically and culturally relevant classroom.

Early Childhood program policy for English Language learners has been developed in Head Start programs with the purpose of “supporting and facilitating the acquisition of English for limited English proficient families and children in a natural, effective manner by linking culture and supporting children’s home language development as a link towards school readiness.”

CA State law (*EC* sections 313 and 60810) and federal law (Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]) require that “Local Education Agencies administer a test of English language proficiency to (1) newly enrolled students whose primary language is not English, and (2) students who are English learners as an annual assessment. For California’s public school students, this test is the CELDT. All students in kindergarten through grade twelve whose primary language is not English must take the CELDT within 30 calendar days after they are first enrolled in a California public school to determine if they are English learners. A student’s primary language is identified on the Home Language Survey (HLS), which is completed by parents or guardians when they register their children in a California school for the first time. The CELDT also must be given to students identified as English learners annually until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP)” (www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/documents/celdtresults0910.pdf).

The California State Department of Education Child Development Division, its programs and child development experts, have developed *Infant/Toddler and Preschool Foundations*. The foundations provide a tool for programs to better respond to the language needs of children whose first language is not English. The foundation is a guide for curriculum development.

The interviews with the administrators revealed that the following are the most common methods used to assess the language growth and development of young children.

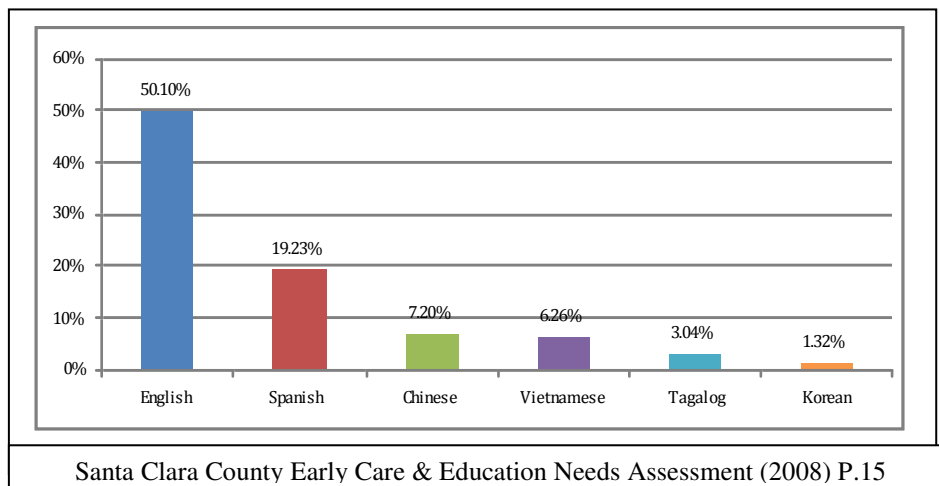
Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is a comprehensive program evaluation system designed to measure California Department of Education funded child development contractor effectiveness (www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/drdpforms.asp).

- *Idea Proficiency Test* is a nationally recognized language proficiency assessment. The IPT series of tests are currently available in English and Spanish for students in grades Pre-K–12. These tests evaluate students’ oral, reading, and writing proficiency, and allow for simple scoring and score conversion to Non-, Limited, or Fluent/Competent designations (<http://www.ballard-tighe.com/products/la/iptFamilyTests.asp>)

A *Child’s Portfolio* is a record of the child's process of learning: what the child has learned and how she has gone about learning; how she thinks, questions, analyzes, synthesizes, produces, creates; and how she interacts--intellectually, emotionally and socially--with others (www.ericdigests.org/1992-1/use.htm)

Dual Language Learning Framework

Santa Clara County has a high degree of language diversity. Because of this diversity, future endeavors must emphasize the development of a countywide dual language vision framework.. The different community stakeholders who participated in forums and dialogues reinforced the notion that it is time to shift from bilingual education to dual language learning.



Dual Language Learning is a research-based educational model designed to support the optimal care and education of “dual language learners,” infants, toddlers and preschoolers learning two or more languages at the same time, or learning a second language while continuing to learn their first (or home) language. (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center; Head Start and Early Head Start Program Preparedness List: Serving Dual Language :Learners and the Families, May 2010)

The core concept of DLL is supporting a child’s home language and culture is essential for

supporting not only complex language competencies, but all aspects of the child development (social, emotional, cognitive and language development). Supporting home languages and cultures is key to addressing educational inequities, fostering a competitive future workforce, and promoting widespread civic participation.

The Local Early Education Planning Council of Santa Clara County will continue to pursue efforts to adopt and implement this framework in Santa Clara County. The recent Early Learning Master Plan, adopted in the Spring 2010, includes dual language learning as a core concept. The plan implementation has begun through six working committees:

- Articulation and Alignment
- Data Management
- Facilities
- Parent Engagement
- Quality
- Workforce

The plan has been adopted as part of the SJ2020 Initiative, aimed to eliminate the achievement gap in San Jose by the year 2020.

Other Promising Practices in Community Colleges

There are a number of model programs in the state, notably City College of San Francisco and Los Angeles Community College District. Promising practices include:

- Increase the number of teachers who are proficient in English and Spanish and other second languages.
- Foster cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development Certificates (i.e. CLAD, Spanish to English Teacher Certificate Program).
- Encourage the use of the Natural and Interactive Approach in classes, through meaningful thematic academic content.
- Promote bilingual and project based learning.
- Concentrate on building the existing skills students in their native language, before teaching the second language, i.e. English

Conclusion and Next Steps

National, state, and local demographics are changing. Santa Clara County has a large number of students enrolled in its public education system who are considered English language learners. Community colleges early childhood programs and the early childhood educators they are preparing, have the responsibility to learn about the individual and group needs of English language learners served through early childhood programs.

The literature review reflects a critical priority to eliminate the achievement gap. The equity gap in education is widening among Latinos, as well as African Americans. It is believed that part of the equity gap is a result of our community's inability to ensure schools are ready for the children they serve. The deliberate interphase between early childhood education, kinder through 3rd education and workforce preparation is an essential element to the future success of our young children.

In exploring further, a number of issues related to childcare licensing, training offered to organized labor, training offered to non-organized labor, have created barriers to involving educators in professional development opportunities. The preparation of teachers who need to improve their own language skills in English, and the lack of adequate teacher preparation programs must be addressed. Community colleges in the area must seek opportunities to build their capacity to serve adult English learners. For many LOCAL early childhood organizations, a major challenge is finding personnel fluent (bilingual/biliterate) in two languages, English, and the predominant languages such as Spanish and Vietnamese, to work with ELL young children. The key challenges to meet, in order to improve the conditions for our young children, are related to the ability of adult English language learners in child development to earn an A.A. degree for Assistants, and a B.A. degree for teachers, or teaching permits when required by the their program/organization. In addition, it is essential to recognize the skill level of the workforce and their literacy in their primary language (various levels of literacy). The identified population could greatly benefit in two (2) strategic areas, from special programs to address their professional development needs (Ex. classes offered at flexible times, evenings and Saturdays with flexible delivery methods; the formation of cohort of employees to engage in educational activities which promote support), and most critical, clear and accessible academic pathways to complete student's goals.

This means that community colleges in our region can engage their leadership in assessing the way colleges address the need of adult English language learners through the developmental education

initiative, ESL, and VESL programs. For De Anza College, and for the purpose of the 2009-10 professional development plan, one activity established under objective #2 (not completed in the initial plan) relates to convening a meeting with the Individualized Attention and the Basics Skills teams to discuss and develop a recommendation on how De Anza College serves the Spanish speaking students. Two attempts to discuss this item with the teams were made with the Interim Associate Dean of Instruction in 2009-10, but unsuccessful (mostly due to the need for the College to tend to major reorganizational and budget challenges).

However, I will be working with the Associate Dean of Instruction to schedule in 2010-11 the conversation to address the issue above. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to be part of the leadership team of college representatives and leaders committed to developing a strategy to assess needs and implement coordinated and leveraged strategies to increase student success in high quality English language acquisition services (Adult Language Acquisition Initiative: The Role of Community Colleges in Santa Clara and San Mateo County). This is a step that can result in profound systemic change and one that can help vocational departments such as Child Development and Education, and English -as-a-Second Language, address institutional change in serving adult English language learners who are Spanish speakers.

This research has major implications for the Child Development and Education department, the college as a whole and our community. As I mentioned in the proposal submitted through Cesar Chavez's quote, "If you are outraged at conditions, then you can't possibly be free or happy until you devote all your time to changing them and do nothing but that. But you can't change anything if you want to hold onto a job, a good way of life and avoid sacrifice." The study and the findings are just a beginning to formulate the strategy to develop and improve instructional practice and policy to serve the Spanish speaking population, an untapped human resource in our communities. De Anza Child Development and Education is committed to working with internal and external community programs interested in courageous conversations. The goals are to establish the new constructs in our findings on early childhood education preparation, and in children's program development. I realize that there is much more to do to guide De Anza College, Child Development and other departments of our college to better understand the Spanish speaking students, their needs and performance as we guide campus decisions and initiatives. I hope this report opens the door to create room for dialogue at various levels. This research has helped our department strengthen our relationship with local organizations. This report will be used to inform the development of our department access and education model focused on

Spanish and Chinese speaking students currently funded by a Perkins Vocational Education grant. The model includes the launch of a pilot program expected to start in spring 2011. This report will be disseminated to partners and collaborators listed on the acknowledge page. Information and data gathered will be also be included in child development and education courses relevant to the topic such as CD 55: Language and Literacy, and CD 56: Understanding and working with English Language Learners, as well as administration courses to name a few.

It is worth noting that this report will be utilized to create a county wide report to be published by the Local Early Education Planning Council of Santa Clara County, Santa Clara County Office of Education. The report is expected to be ready by January 2011.

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Footnotes

¹ *From a t-shirt of the National First Nations Elders/Language Gathering, M'igmaq Nation (Canada)*

² *Adapted from principles developed by a Working Group from Eight County Offices of Education, convened by the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (2005).*

³ *Counterstories are a recount of the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people.*