

Preface



This book responds to the demand that all teachers be prepared to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students. The number of students designated as English language learners (ELLs)¹ has steadily increased in the United States in the last two decades. In many states, this growth has been very rapid—not only in the number of students who speak languages other than English at home but also in the variety of languages they speak. Unfortunately, teachers are inadequately prepared to respond to these dramatic demographic changes and ELL students' opportunities to learn are often limited. There is a very real need to improve our understanding of effective practices and to provide professional learning opportunities in these concepts for mainstream teachers.

Educating diverse learners to meet high standards is a complex challenge. Preparing in-service and pre-service mainstream teachers for this challenge requires systematic and sustained professional learning. This book proposes an ongoing professional development (PD) model that teachers and teacher educators can adapt for use in any linguistically and culturally diverse school and community context. Specifically, this school-based apprenticeship model guides teachers along a continuum of professional learning that addresses how to better serve the ELL students in their classes. The goals for the PD project are developed from a needs assessment of teachers' beliefs and practices about teaching ELL students. The needs assessment includes interviews with teachers, documentation of classroom practices, and observations of student learning over the course of the project. The apprenticeship model is sustained with courses or workshops that relate theory to practice and include an online component, field support for teachers, and teacher collaboration.

The PD model that we present in this book is a result of the Malihini (newcomer) Project, a year-long federally funded grant project that addressed the needs of in-service teachers and staff working with ELL students in Hawaiian schools. Central to the project were the specific professional

1. Here, we would like to take a moment to indicate that we agree with current notions in the field that call for avoiding labelling linguistically diverse students and favor the use of terms such as emergent bilingual, multilingual, or plurilingual students. We have decided, however, to use the term English language learners because those are the words used in federal and state mandates and, therefore, are currently part of the vocabulary of most educators practicing in our school system.

learning goals articulated by the teachers. These goals were to learn more about their ELL students' cultural backgrounds, linguistic needs, and funds of knowledge, and to develop instructional approaches that enhance these students' content learning and language development. The project reflects the sociocultural context of schools in Hawai'i, which include students from very different language groups. Based on the Malihini project, this book provides concrete examples of changes that elementary school teachers made to their linguistic, cultural, and pedagogic classroom landscapes. For example, we demonstrate how teachers incorporated students' home languages into their sheltered content lesson plans and how they structured classroom activities that required more student collaboration, greater demands for oral language use, and increased engagement. We also show how field supporters helped teachers make improvements in their teaching relative to their goals, and we provide observations of changes in teachers' beliefs and practices as well as changes in ELL students' participation patterns throughout the duration of the project.

Enriching Practice in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators purposefully falls halfway between a detailed discussion of the Malihini Project—where nearly every teacher encounters students who speak English as an additional language—and a “how to” ELL PD guide for teachers, teacher educators, field supervisors, PD providers, and coaches working in other school and community contexts. We balance our discussion of observed changes in teachers' beliefs and practices with step-by-step guidance for teachers, teacher educators, staff developers, and field support working in other linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. Thus, this book invites readers to (1) learn from the Malihini Project; (2) use our guidance to assess their particular needs; and (3) design, implement, monitor, and evaluate context-responsive practices and professional learning opportunities to improve practice in their own settings.

Genesis of the Book

We bring complementary experiences and expertise to the Malihini Project. Eva Ponte is an associate professor in the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i who teaches courses that involve field experiences where student teachers integrate theory and practice in partner school settings. Her involvement in the Malihini Project was a direct result of the needs voiced by educators in schools where her students are commonly placed. Ponte is also the mother of children who speak a language other than English at home and who attend public schools in Hawai'i. Christina Higgins is an associate professor in the Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai'i whose research and teaching focus on sociocultural

contexts of language learning and use. Together, we guided teachers in the Malihini Project as they engaged with theory and research on multilingualism, second language learning, intercultural communication, and English language pedagogy relative to their teaching practices.

The growth in the cultural and linguistic diversity of the United States in the last two decades has been even more acute in Hawaii, which currently has the highest percentage of multiracial U.S. inhabitants. The growth in Hawai'i's ELL population has been so steep in the last 20 years that it ranks number 5 in the nation of having the highest percentage of ELL students enrolled in K–12 ELL programs. The increase in the ELL population has been accompanied by a persistent and increasing achievement gap between ELL students and their non-ELL counterparts, both in the nation and in Hawai'i. We know that teacher quality is one of the crucial factors in promoting student learning and achievement and reducing the achievement gap, and that the majority of teacher certification programs do not provide student teachers with sufficient professional learning opportunities in this area. Teachers today must learn how to scaffold and support ELL students' language and learning in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. The contextually embedded apprenticeship model presented in this book is one way to make this happen.

How the Book Is Structured

This book is designed for a wide range of educators, including teachers, university-based teacher educators, school-based professional developers, coaches, and field supporters. Although their roles are different, these educators share responsibility for ensuring that students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds can reach high academic standards. We have purposefully structured the book so that these diverse educators can use it to support their individual roles and enhance their collaborations. Each chapter begins with general learning objectives for all readers. The body of the chapter includes concrete examples from the Malihini Project that are accompanied by opportunities for readers to reflect on what they are learning relative to their practice. Each chapter concludes with activities that guide readers' application of what they have learned. Together, the chapters provide step-by-step guidance for teachers to improve their practices regarding the ELL students in their classes, and for teacher educators (based at the university, district, school, or in partnerships) to design, implement, monitor, evaluate, and sustain a highly embedded ELL PD project in their linguistic and culturally diverse school contexts.

The first two chapters are foundational. Chapter 1 introduces the Malihini Project and presents our apprenticeship model. The chapter also outlines important steps involved in planning a new ELL PD project or revamping

existing offerings. Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of collaboration—between schools and universities, staff developers and coaches, teacher educators and field support, and among teachers at school. This chapter also describes how we use the concepts of guided praxis and activity theory to frame the Malihini Project.

The chapters that follow provide details about implementation of the ELL PD project with attention to changes in teachers' beliefs and practices relative to project goals. Chapter 3 illustrates concrete changes that teachers made to the linguistic and cultural landscapes in their classes, and includes numerous examples of how teachers learn to draw on students' home languages and cultures as resources. This chapter will be of particular value to teachers and teacher educators who work in contexts with ELL students from several different language backgrounds. Chapter 4 examines changes teachers made to the pedagogical landscapes in their classrooms, and provides specific examples of adaptations and accommodations that teachers made to their lesson plans, instructional activities, and assessments to engage their ELL students. This chapter also presents teacher reflections on the changes they made, and their reactions regarding what these changes meant for their understanding of teaching ELL students, structuring classroom activities and interaction, and supporting students' learning and well-being.

The final two chapters examine in detail the PD processes used in our project. Chapter 5 documents how field support is used as a tool to bridge the theory presented in seminars and readings with the practices that teachers implement in the field. This chapter also provides concrete examples of the strategies the field supporters used to enable teachers to implement new ELL instructional strategies successfully in their classrooms. In Chapter 6 we discuss the outcomes of the project, drawing on our field notes, final teacher interviews, and teacher evaluations of the project. This chapter also provides lessons learned for those working in other contexts.

Special Features

Enriching Practice in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms includes a number of special features that benefit teachers and teacher educators working in different configurations and contexts:

- *Chapter objectives* at the beginning of each chapter indicate what readers will be able to do with the chapter content in relation to their own professional learning.
- *Theory into praxis boxes* summarize the big ideas from the literature we used in the Malihini Project and are followed by guided critical reflection questions that encourage readers to connect the big ideas and their practice.

- *A linguistically and culturally responsive instructional planning framework* for teachers to align their unit and lesson planning with state content and language development standards, bring a language and culture lens to their instruction, focus on classroom activities and interaction, and gather formative assessment data to guide student and teacher learning.
- *Practical instruction and assessment strategies* teachers can use in their classrooms, coaches and field supervisors can use to support teacher learning, and teacher educators and PD providers can use to drive systematic and sustained professional learning.
- *A linguistically and culturally responsive teacher observation protocol* to align with the goals of the ELL PD project. Teachers and teacher educators can use this four-point continuum of professional learning to assess teacher needs relative to ELL PD project goals and to document and support teacher development over time.
- *Figures and photographs* provide the reader with concrete examples of the Malihini Project in action and can be used to ground PD group discussions about strategies, implementation, and support and resources needed to carry on the project.
- *Questions for reflection* at the end of each chapter provide teachers and teacher educators with opportunities to relate chapter content to their classroom, school, and community contexts. These questions can also be used to assess learning relative to chapter objectives.

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