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Proceedings: Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction

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Proceedings

Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction

**Roundtable Discussion June 5, 2015, Fordham
University**

Zoila Morell, Editor
Mercy College

Opening Comments

In June of 2015, as New York City expanded UPK to reach nearly all available four-year-olds, the *New York State Association for Bilingual Education* (NYSABE) and the *NYS/NYC Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network* (NYS/NYC RBE-RN) of Fordham University collaborated to hold a Roundtable event bringing together educators, policymakers, researchers, and community leaders in response to two overarching questions:

1. What are the needs of young emergent bilinguals within the structure of *Universal Pre-Kindergarten* (UPK)?
2. What is our focus and direction in preparing to meet their needs?

Participants from a wide selection of practitioners, policymakers, and other key stakeholders from the NYC, Long Island, and Westchester County areas, were invited to take part in the Roundtable which was held on June 5, 2015 at Fordham University.

The proceedings are organized into four sections: (1) Opening Comments; (2) Roundtable Welcome and Greetings; (3) History and Collaborators; (4) Panel Presentations with Breakout Sessions summaries. Following greetings from Anita Vasquez Batisti, Director of Center of Educational Partnerships, and Nancy Villarreal de Adler, Executive Director of NYSABE, the then New York State Associate Commissioner for Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages, Angélica Infante-Green (now Deputy Commissioner for Instruction), began with a “State of the Field” address on planning for young emergent bilinguals.

A panel, moderated by Dr. Luis Reyes (now Regent Reyes) and comprised of practitioners and researchers, introduced key topics (history, trends, emerging research, and new directions) in each of the five core areas of preschool education:

- Programming and instruction
- Leadership and policy
- Community partners
- Higher education and teacher preparation
- Research

The breakout sessions focused on each of the five core areas presented. Discussion within each breakout session was guided by comments and questions that emerged from the panel presentations. Also below, I include a synthesis of the consensus reached by participants of the breakout sessions. These are key recommendations the participants suggest should be considered in the field of Bilingual UPK.

The collective insights and suggested actions resulting from the roundtable can inform planning on behalf of emergent bilinguals. Together, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, can define a focus and direction that ensures meeting the needs of the growing number of emergent bilingual children in New York State.

Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction
Roundtable Discussion, June 5, 2015

Organizers	Panelists	Breakout Session Facilitators from NYS/NYC RBE-RN
Eva García Executive Director, NYS/NYC REBE-RN NYSABE Delegate	Moderator and History & Collaborators Dr. Luis Reyes, Hunter College Instruction and Programming Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College Leadership & Policy Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families Community Partners Jorge Saenz de Viteri, Latino Coalition for Early Care and Education. Higher Education and Teacher Preparation Dr. Juan Morales, Kingsborough Community College Research Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College	Abby Baruch Sara Martínez Aileen Colón Elsie Berardinelli Dr. Roser Salavert Dr. Bernice Moro Diane Howitt
Dr. Zoila Morell Associate Professor Mercy College NYSABE Delegate		

Roundtable Welcome and Greetings



Multilingual Learners in UPK: Defining Focus and Direction

Roundtable Discussion
Friday, June 5, 2015



Figure 1: Roundtable Discussion Slides 1 and 2

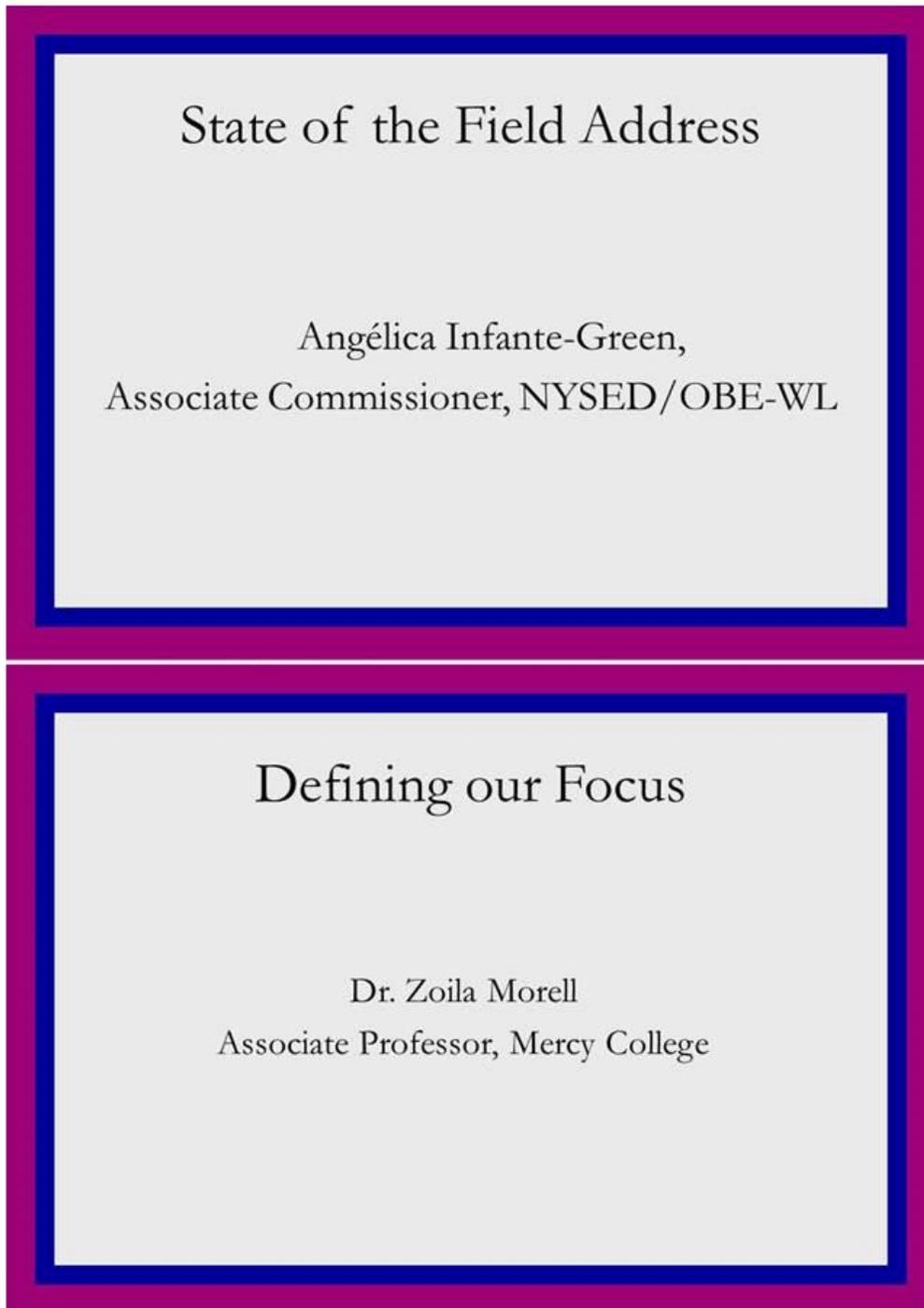


Figure 2: Roundtable Discussion Slides 3 and 4.

Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- **Purpose:** *“to help organize the efforts to provide effective instruction and programming for the growing number of multilingual children entering preschool programs at this time of rapid expansion of UPK.”*
- **Process:** *Convening scholars, leaders, and practitioners in a roundtable to articulate recommendations to the field.*

Defining our Focus

Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- **Terms:** *There are currently many terms to define the same population – multilingual learners, emergent bilinguals, dual language learners. We find the term “English Language Learner” inadequate and so we abandon that term.*
- **Starting Point:** *We promote bilingual education, that’s where we begin. Conversations revolve around implementing bilingual education.*
- **Recommendations and Target Action**

Figure 3: Roundtable Discussion Slides 5 and 6

Defining our Focus
Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- Format
 - Main Session
 - Roundtable discussions in Break-outs
- Protocols
 - Essential questions to guide thinking
 - Feedback, consensus on general recommendations
 - Identification of target action for the field
- Archives
 - Video recording
 - Audio recording
 - Websites: www.nysabe.net;
http://www.fordham.edu/info/21065/nysnyc_regional_bilingual_education_resource_network
- Dissemination
 - Statewide networks

Panel

- Dr. Luis Reyes, *History & Collaborators and Moderator*
- Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, *Instruction & Programming*
- Jorge Saenz de Viteri, *Leadership & Policy*
- Danielle Guindo, *Community Partners*
- Dr. Juan Morales Flores, *Higher Ed & Teacher Preparation*
- Dr. Zoila Morell, *Research*

Figure 4: Roundtable Discussion Slides 7 and 8

History and Collaborators

History & Collaborators Panel Moderator

Dr. Luis Reyes
Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College

History & Collaborators

Latino Coalition for Early Care & Education (LCECE), policy initiative of **The Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF)** held Public Forum at Baruch College, CUNY, 2008

Key Issue Areas in Early Care & Education: language access, opportunities for professionals in the field, school readiness, family engagement, a Quality Rating & Improvement System, & community involvement & outreach.

Figure 5: Roundtable discussion slides 9 and 10.

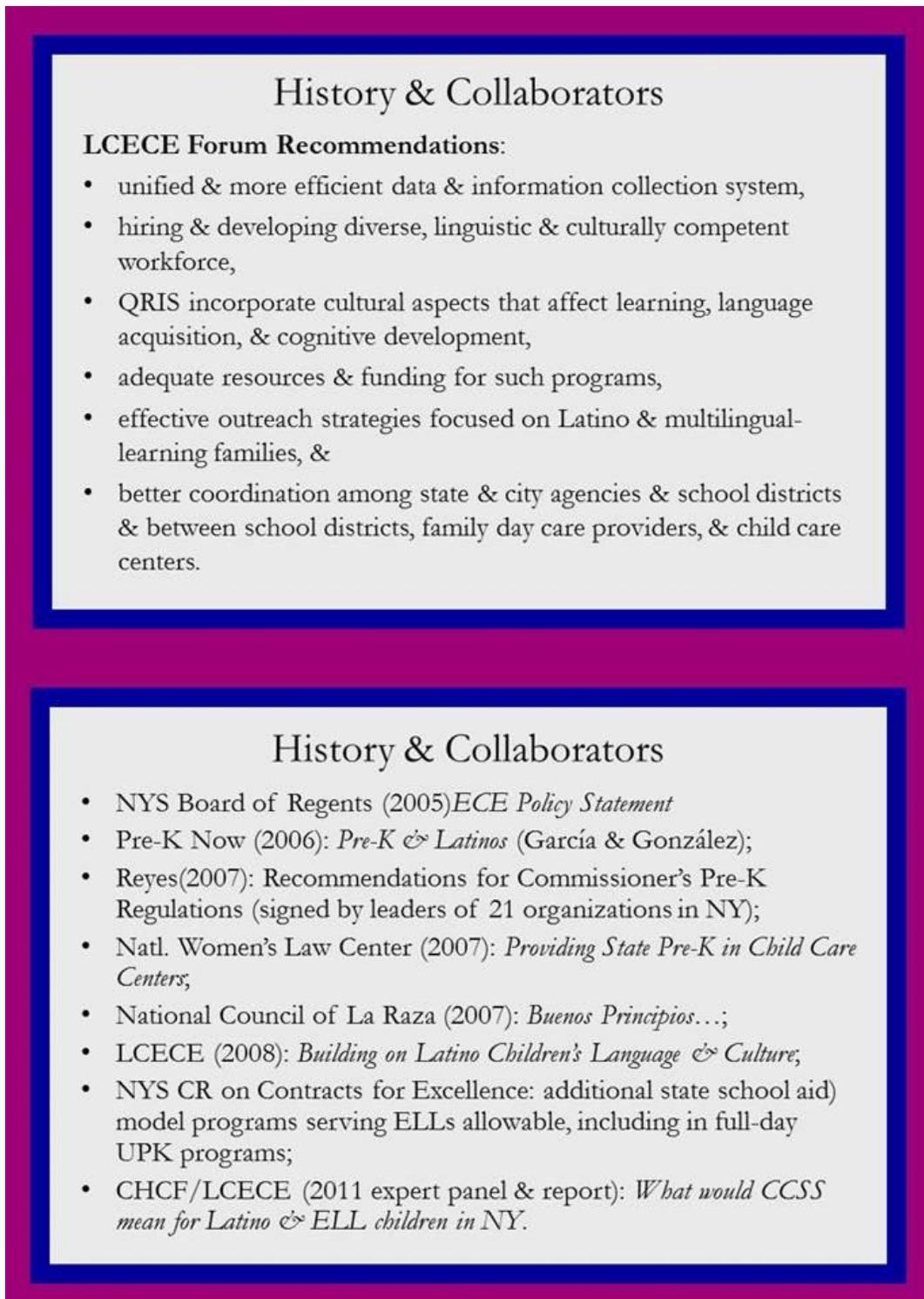


Figure 6: Roundtable discussion slides 11 and 12.

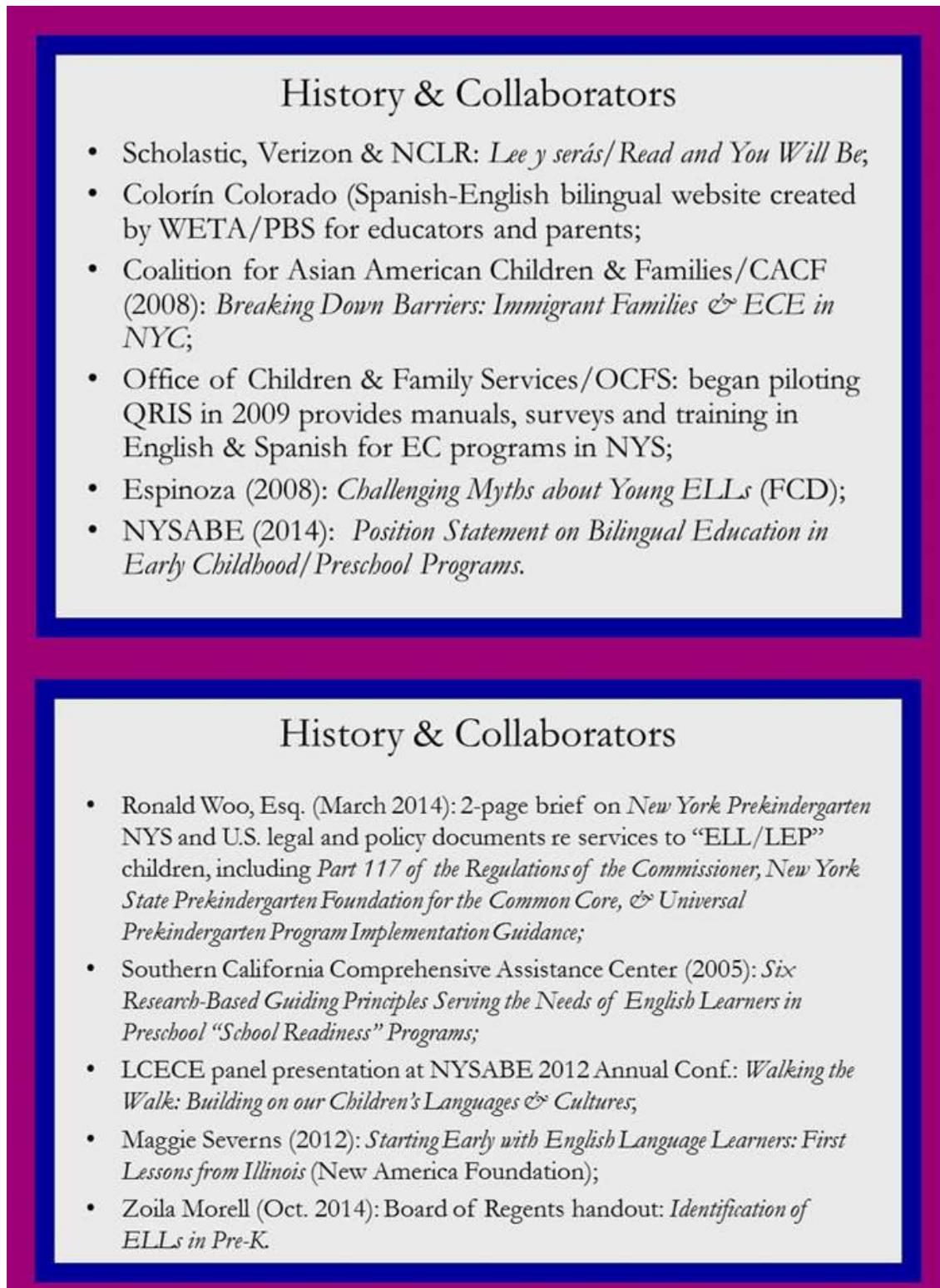


Figure 7: Roundtable discussion slides 13 and 14.

Panel Presentations and Summaries

CORE AREA I

Instruction and Programming Presentation.

Panelist: Elizabeth Ijalba, PhD, Queens College Instruction and Planning

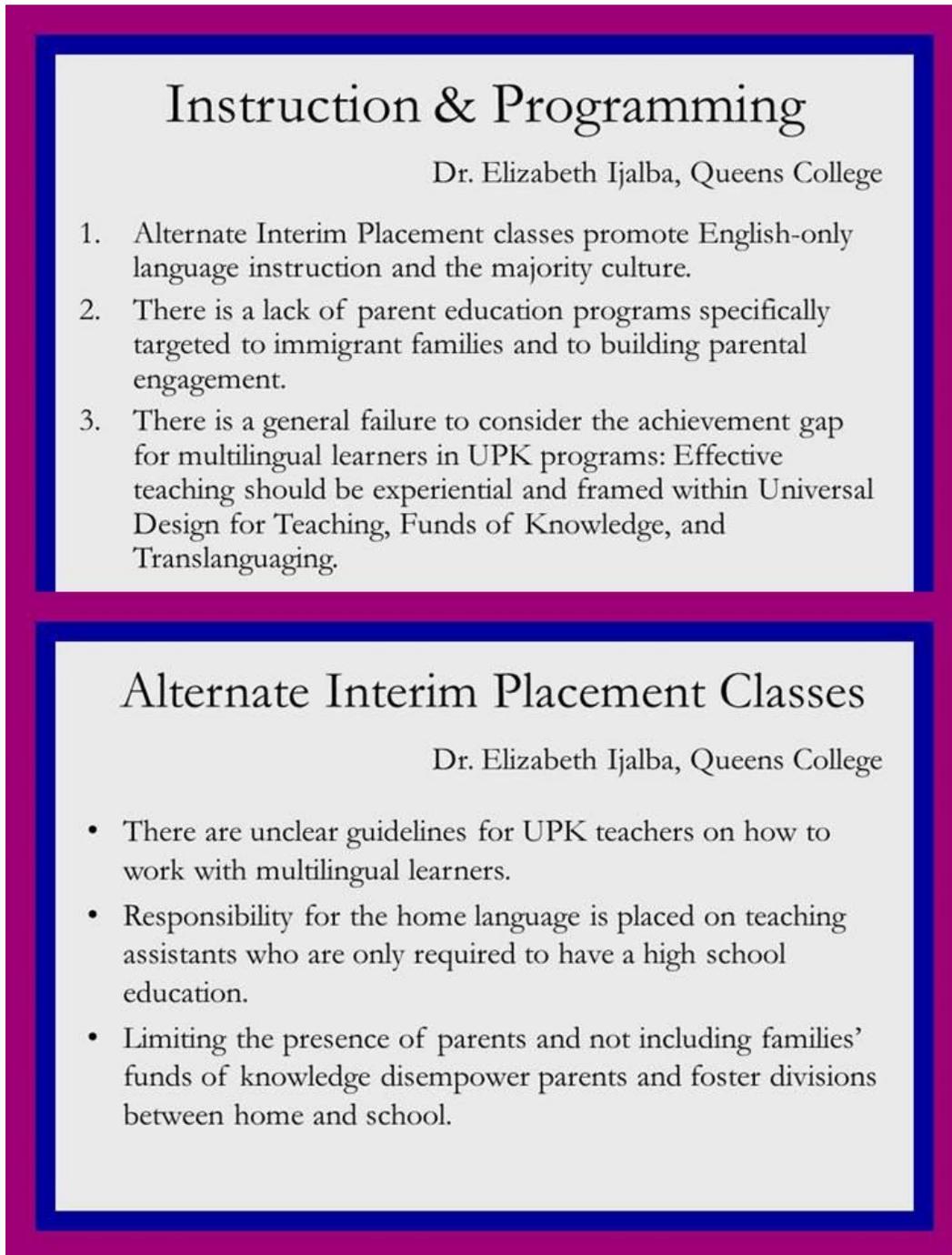


Figure 8: Roundtable discussion slides 15 and 16.

Lack of Parent Education Programs for Immigrant Families

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

- Parents are often ambivalent about using the home language when all therapies and instruction for their children are provided in English.
- Parents often have limited understanding of language and communication disorders and how to support their child's development.
- Parents often have a limited understanding of their rights, their responsibilities, and U.S. institutions.

Closing the Gap: Universal Design for Learning, Funds of Knowledge, Translanguaging

Dr. Elizabeth Ijalba, Queens College

- Instruction should include multiple ways of representation, expression, and generalization. There is current underutilization of technology and lack of guidance for teachers and parents.
- There is a need to learn about families' funds of knowledge and how to integrate this knowledge into the classroom curriculum.
- There is a need to integrate the home language(s) as a means of communication and learning for multilingual learners.

Figure 9: Roundtable discussion slides 17 and 18.

CORE AREA I**Instruction and Programming Breakout Session Summary.****NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitators: Abby Baruch and Aileen Colón**

High priority action steps:

- I. Linking parent engagement to learning**
 - A. Outreach to parent homes to establish intimacy.
 - B. Build bridges to access the funds of knowledge and the parent expertise that exists.
 - C. Identify which parents have had a higher level of education in their country.
 - D. Provide incentives to parents that will get them into the school building or if they are from low literacy regions (no library in the town).
 - E. Provide conferences to dispel the myths and to affirm the advantages of being bilingual.
 - F. Establish partnerships with CBOs. For example: Literacy Inc. to create a culture of literacy.
 - G. Partner with CBOs. They know the parents, they do not know strategies.
 - H. Create materials based on their experiences in the home. For example: Cooking or Family Celebrations. You can create visuals and picture collection/integrating technology.
 - I. Conduct workshops on how to have conversations with “little people.” Using pictures to tell a story orally, building from their own experiences, valuing the culturally diverse backgrounds of how we do things.

II. Need for High Quality Staff.

- A. Administration who is not bilingual will not know how to select high quality staff.
- B. There are not enough bilingual Pre-K teachers. Many teachers in the program are monolingual. Also, not enough dually certified teachers. (ENL and Special Ed.)
- C. In the suburbs, the Pre-K programs are run by non-profit organizations and the salaries for teachers are low because it is based on the funding. (Meanwhile, these programs are housed in buildings where teachers are on the NYSED pay scale. (salary dicotomy).
- D. There is a concern that the role of the teacher assistant (TA) is to teach the bilingual piece.
- E. Support the TA with professional development.
- F. Provide incentives for TA to become early childhood teachers.
- G. Needs to be another avenue to prove you have expertise in the home language.
- H. Need to change: Prevailing mono-lingual philosophy.
- I. Question: Are we trying to make all UPK bilingual?

III. Funding needs to be Adequate if this is a priority!

There is no uniformity in UPK programs across the State – Standards, curriculum, etc.

CORE AREA II

Leadership & Policy Panel Presentation.

Panelist: Jorge Saenz de Viteri, LCECE

Leadership & Policy



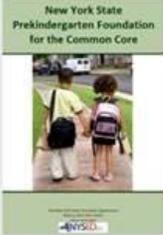
Jorge Saenz De Viteri
Latino Coalition For Early Care and Education (LCECE)



<http://jorgesaezdeviteri.com>

Leadership & Policy

Jorge Saenz de Viteri, LCECE



**New York State Prekindergarten
Foundation for the Common Core**
Guiding Principles

"The Prekindergarten Learning Standards are intended for all children regardless of economic, linguistic, and cultural differences or physical, learning, and emotional challenges."

Source: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cia1/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/nysisprek.pdf

Figure 10: Panel discussion slides 19 and 20.



Figure 11: Panel discussion slides 21 and 22.

CORE AREA II**Leadership & Policy Breakout Session Summary.****NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Elsie Berardinelli**

- I. Participants shared their role and level of experience in Universal Pre-K. Some participants voiced concern about the challenges faced by those working in Community Based Organizations (CBOs). One of the major challenges is making funding available to run programs. Funding comes from various sources. Programs outside of city often must take bridge loans while this is not the case in city run programs. They get their funds up front. How can Contract for Excellence, 7 million dollars be used? What can be done with this pot of money? This money can be used to write proposals.
- II. The availability of supports: for example, Common Core Foundation Learning Standards and the Early Childhood Guidelines etc. Question posed, “How do we make these come to life?” There is a need to have conversations with legislators, continue to push them to take the next step and come up with agreed upon principles and guidelines. It is important to approach Marco Crespo, Governor Cuomo and others, and keep the conversation going; pressing them to pay attention. They have to be pushed and the issue of poverty has to be addressed. The dialogue must be changed and the opportunity has not been there. Capitalize on the politics. Our culture does not validate bilingualism. Why are we not mandating a celebration of languages? How do we set policies?
- III. Parents/families need to be provided with information about how very important it is that they use and maintain their native language. Students will make gains if parents are supported to understand that their home language is an asset. It was agreed that family engagement is absolutely necessary and that criteria needs to be developed to make clear what authentic family engagement should look like.
- IV. Teacher training is important. In many instances children in Pre-K programs that are encouraged to speak their home language (asset model) are given a different message when they enter kindergarten in a public school. The message is not aligned to the current vision of bilingualism. We have to do a better job of aligning what happens after Pre-K so that bilingualism continues for students that are speaking more than one language. How are policies implemented so there is fairness (equitable, accessible)? Draw on resources in schools and take advantage of funding. Teacher preparation programs have to ensure that the agenda moves.

- V. Going forward/Next steps:
 - I. What is the collective vision that we can present to legislators?
 - II. There is a real anti-immigrant movement. What can we do within, without the support of legislators? Leverage the power of parents; use them to advance the agenda.
 - III. Approach elected officials and leaders of various organizations such as ASPIRA
 - IV. We need to brand ourselves. What is the collective message (Pre-K to College; multi-lingual)?
 - V. Develop a vision, with clear goals, objectives, and a timeline.
 - VI. Invite and bring in other stakeholders from private corporations.
 - VII. Set criteria- What is a high quality bilingual program? What are the elements of effective bilingual program?
 - VIII. How do we make our message inclusive – one that values world languages as well as multilingual programs?
 - IX. Let's be proactive; capitalize on the momentum, move quickly.

CORE AREA III**Community partners presentation.****Panelist: Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families**

Figure 12: Panel discussion slides 23 and 24.

Community Based Pre-K (NYC EECs)

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Imbedded and integrated into communities
- Provide continuity for families receiving other services from CBO
- Prioritize admissions for currently enrolled 3-year olds, children who have siblings enrolled, or are otherwise receiving services from the CBO
- Knowledgeable of and integrated in communities, with access and ability to reach isolated, vulnerable, and diverse populations

Improving Learning Outcomes Across Settings

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Incentives for professional development to increase number of teachers certified to teach in dual language classrooms
- Promotion of ideal that the use and development of home language is an asset
- Incentives to recruit diverse workforce
- Common Core alignment
- Data collection across settings to identify language status, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Figure 13: Panel discussion slides 25 and 26.

Promoting Bilingual Education in CBO Settings

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- CBOs have added benefit of close connection with community
- Most effective CBOs are also networked with other nearby resources that can help spread the word (libraries, district offices of elected officials, CBO partners, hospitals)
- Parent education curricula that reaches parents where they are, in their own language, to empower them as advocates for their child; town halls or info events to educate parents about their rights, what they should expect from public school settings, and the elements of the common core state standards

Challenges to Access, Diversity and Quality

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Salary disparities between settings
- Elevating quality of staff in dual language programs must be done in a way that preserves the positions of existing teachers and encourages and motivates professional development and career “ladders”
- Insufficient demographic data on public schools and NYC EECs that can be used to examine diversity and access within classrooms and in various neighborhoods
- So far, only 10 “dual language Pre-K program” in Chinese or Spanish – other rapidly increasing populations must also be represented (ie Bengali). NOTE – this designation came from applying K-12 standards to the Pre-K
- DOE is unclear about the meaning of “enhanced language programs”

Figure 14: Panel Discussion slides 27 and 28.

Challenges cont'd

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Prioritization of enrollment for existing clients in NYCEECs can reduce socioeconomic diversity in these settings (both low income and higher income groups)
- NYCEECs that receive funding from ACS or HeadStart can extend hours of Pre-K through blended funding streams, also available only to income eligible families
- To maximize ability of CBOs to effectively serve school communities, common indicators must be known about the school population that can inform practice, hiring, and coordination of resources

Untapped Partners

Danielle Guindo, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRRs) are experts in provision of professional development for early childhood educators, and can train Pre-K teachers in effective integration of emergent bilinguals; also directly communicate with parents to provide referrals and information and demystify the process of enrollment as well as support through:
- Health Care providers (neighborhood doctors and community based clinics can be hubs of info)
- Consulates
- Funders and Foundations to build on the momentum of interest in early education
- Grass roots organizations can recruit teachers as well as families
- Research institutions to facilitate data collection and analysis, and recommendations for policy and practice in UPK

Figure 15: Panel Discussion slides 29 and 30.

CORE AREA III

Community Partners Breakout Session Summary.

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Sara Martínez

How do we improve learning outcomes across diverse settings?

- Not taking play out of learning. Play based learning.
- Respecting the parents' way of showing love to their children. Play resonates for parents.
- Empowering parents by re affirming giving children care, attention, and love.
- Using bilingual assessments that are culturally sensitive and respects the parents' culture.

What is the current course of studies for cultural competency training?

- Mandating that *all* staff members must have cultural competency training.
- Empowering parents by making them real partners in education and not only using them for cake sales.
- Assessing beyond language. Culturally appropriate assessment.
- Parent/Caretaker and child - Dual generation training.
- UPK mandate - Allocating sufficient funding to train staff and validate the mandates
- Creation of Excellent Dual Language UPK.
- Who are the likely partners that we have overlooked?
- Mobilize groups of foundations, the Gates, Astor, and the Ford foundations, that advocate for children, education, and teacher training.
- Federal, State, local government, and unions.

What recommendations can we make to the field with regards to community partnerships?

Investment in a standard of cultural understanding, respect, and cultural humility into all early education practices and policies including:

- Cultural competency training for educators, and all school staff from custodian to principal
- Empower parents' role in the school community
- Use linguistically appropriate assessments and cultural competency to communicate with parents.
- Implement play based learning.

CORE AREA IV**Higher Education & Teacher Preparation Presentation****Panelist: Juan Morales Flores, Kingsborough Community College**

Higher Education & Teacher Preparation
Dr. Juan Morales Flores, Kingsborough Community College

How do we elevate the status of early childhood educators and professionals?

Main Focus:
Educate all sectors of our society about the importance of providing high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs.

At the same time, continue to:
Teach pre-service teachers and teachers about self-evaluation: being able to identify their strengths, areas in which they can improve, and their unconscious biases. Curriculum needs to reflect the diversity in our communities, cities, country, and the world.

Work hand in hand with families at all levels of education: curriculum, policy, funding, and allow them to be part of the decision making process.

Serve as mentors. Identify, motivate, and encourage students. Generate change one student at a time.

Higher Education & Teacher Preparation
Dr. Juan Morales Flores, Kingsborough Community College

Put emphasis on the impact that civic engagement activities and volunteerism can have in our schools, families, and communities.

Big Goals:
True collaboration between government, private sector, and families.

Develop an equitable system of funding schools and education. Funding dependent mainly on property taxes needs to change in order to provide all children with an equal opportunity to succeed.

Develop programs to empower teachers and communities.
Example: The Respect Initiative to Transform Teaching and Leading

Result: An equitable early childhood educational system, equitably funded, in which families, government, and the private sector collaborate for the well being of the children. Allowing for the development of programs that would best fit the families and communities in which they are located. They need to be quality programs that teach all students about multiculturalism and respects and fosters multilingualism.

Figure 16. Panel discussion slides 31 and 32.

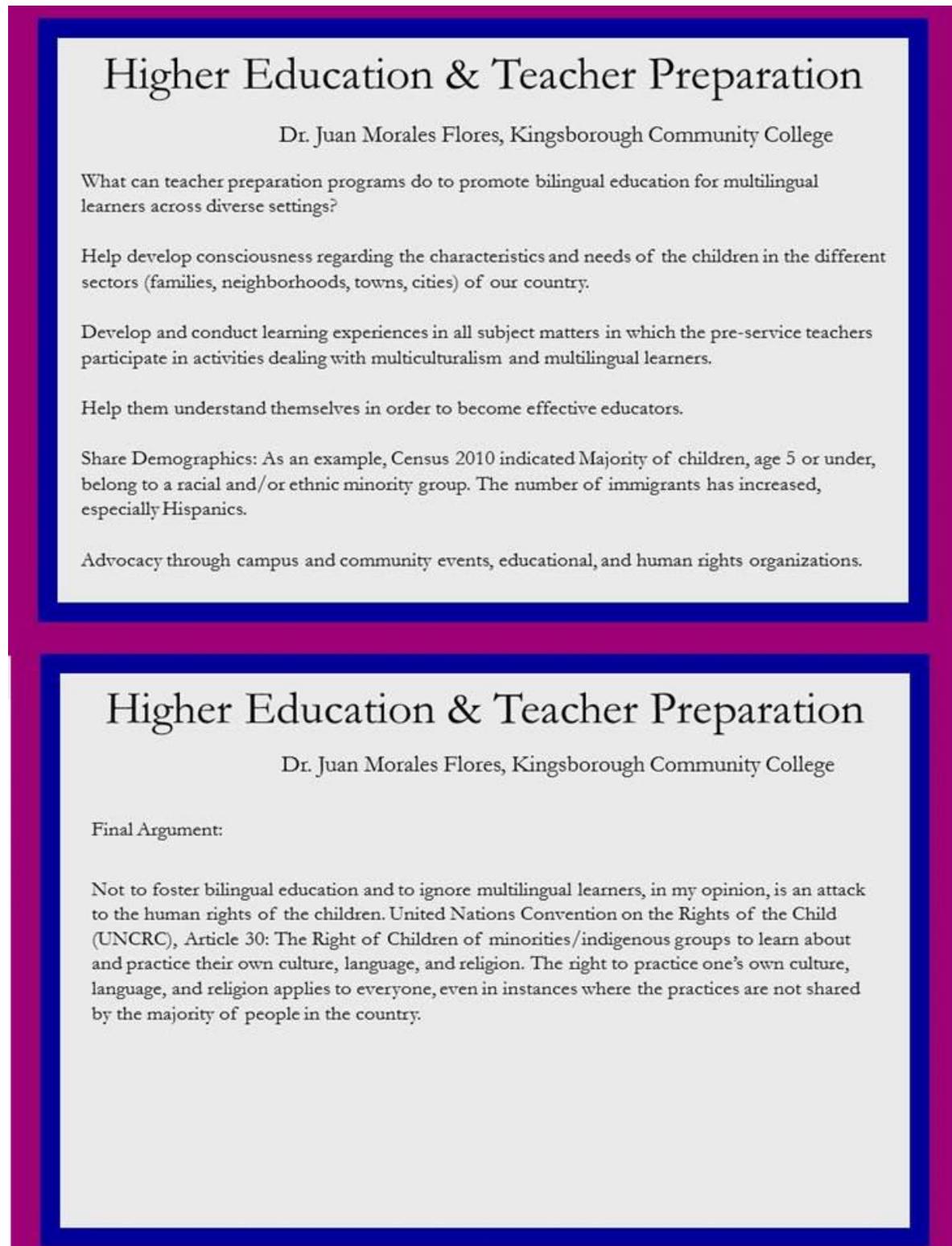


Figure 17. Panel discussion slides 33 and 34.

CORE AREA IV

Higher Education & Teacher Preparation Breakout Session Summary

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Dr. Roser Salavert

The Institutions of Higher Education design their Teacher preparation programs based on the requirements of the state. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that these requirements respond to the expectations for high quality programs for pre-K children in a diverse and multilingual society.

By the end of the conversation, we agreed to propose action on three major fronts:

- I. Ensure that the NYSED teacher certification for pre-K, bilingual and by extension all bilingual teachers, include not only methodology but,
 - A. A component that prepares future teachers to work and collaborate with diverse and multilingual families and communities;
 - B. the NYSED must require that any teacher candidate demonstrates proficiency in English and in the native language they plan to teach;
 - C. demonstrated application of current research in classroom settings, and
 - D. teachers should graduate with a vision for what students in bilingual programs will learn and an understanding of social and pedagogical goals and approaches regardless of whether students are in pre-K or high school.
- II. All IHE and teachers should know about the New York State's vision for English Language Learners and Bilingualism (*i.e.*, opportunity for a Seal of Bi-literacy to motivate children and their families from a young age to grow bilingually). The NYSED in collaboration with IHE should develop a 5-year plan to make the vision of bilingualism a reality and thus ensuring that schools and districts not only have the necessary teachers to implement bilingual programs, but ensuring that the funding to colleges is aligned to these actions.
- III. There have to be incentives to promote the acquisition of a second language among children from English speaking homes. NYSED promotes Bilingual Education Programs but they are typically available in higher incidence language *i.e.* Spanish, Mandarin, French. Incentives to teach a foreign language from pre-K to high school will also benefit colleges since they often find it difficult to prepare bilingual teachers in these *lower incidence* languages.

To help clarify:

Information about certification found via Teach Online Services

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/login.html>

- Early Childhood Education is Birth-Grade 2
- Childhood Education is Grades 1-6
- Middle Childhood Education is Grades 5-9
- Adolescent is Grades 7-12

Also found via Teach Online, for Bilingual Extension, the candidates have to take a Bilingual Education Assessment in the target language which *“assesses knowledge and skills in the foundations of bilingual education, listening and reading comprehension, and written and oral expression. Offered **in the target language** of the certificate extension sought, it consists of multiple-choice questions, audiotaped listening and speaking components in English and the target language, and reading and writing components in the target language.”*

Below is a link to the March 2015 Regents discussion item regarding additional pathways for the supplementary bilingual education extension and the ESOL supplementary certificate.

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Mar%202015/315p12hed2.pdf>

CORE AREA V**Research Panel Presentation****Panelist: Zoila Morell, Ph.D. Mercy College**

Research

Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- Settling the Bilingual/English-only question – what are the advantages?
- What does the research suggest about bilingual instruction at the Pre-K level?
- Specific areas of need for multilingual learners:
 - Incidence of poverty
 - Immigrant populations
 - Oral language development
 - First assessments
 - Inconsistent programming
 - Access to preschool

Research

Dr. Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- Specific areas of strength for multilingual learners:
 - Emergent literacy
 - Prognosis on achievement
- Understanding school readiness – the movement & the expectations

Figure 18. Panel discussion slides 35 and 36.



Figure 19. Panel discussion slide 37.

CORE AREA V

Research Breakout Session Summary

NYC RBE-RN Breakout Session Facilitator: Diane Howitt

- The importance of research as a foundational tool for good practice
- Commit resources to the promotion of understanding of research
- Create Professional Learning Communities in all schools to study research at a deep level and turnkey through the school community
- Open access to resources
 - Resources are often blocked
 - How do we open this up to the broader educational community?
 - Pathways to access
- Revamp education programs and courses at the university level to include courses
 - Multilingualism
 - Cultural and linguistic issues
 - Language learning
 - Developmental issues, etc.

- Promote deep understanding of available research with the goal of understanding threads that make up entire tapestry
- Hone in on topics for further research that will be available to all educators
 - Misidentification of students
 - Over-representation of “English Language Learners” in special education
 - Child development birth through age 5
 - Parent choice
 - Bilingual versus ESL only programs
 - L2 (English) over L1 (home language)
 - Stereotyping
 - Research on the home-student connection:
 - Home visits
 - Local school programs supporting parent-child interaction/parents as teachers
- The importance of media in the dissemination of research findings
 - Encourages parents to push for change
 - Educates policy makers on issues pertaining to multilingual learners

Conclusion & Next Steps

Eva García, NYC RBE-RN & Zoila Morell, Mercy College

- Reporting from each group
- Final Document
 - Posted on nysabe.net & NYC RBE-RN
 - Proceedings published in JMER
- Dissemination
 - Via Email to participants
 - Our networks
 - Statewide

Figure 20. Panel discussion slide 39.