INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE WITH YOUNG BILINGUAL LEARNERS: A CANADIAN PROFILE

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Abstract

The focus of this chapter is instructional practice with the growing number of young bilingual learners who arrive in Canadian childcare centres and kindergartens with little or no proficiency in the language of program delivery. The chapter begins by setting the context, briefly describing the Canadian linguistic landscape and outlining the linguistic profile of Canadian early care and learning programs. This is followed by a review of practices currently adopted by EC professionals in their work with bilingual learners. A new multilingual, strength-based direction in classroom practice is briefly described and recent initiatives are summarized. The highlights of one of these initiatives, Linguistically Appropriate Practice, are presented and the main findings of its implementation in two early learning contexts are discussed. These findings include the varied interest in practice retooling and the identification of categories of factors that affect early childhood professionals' practice decision-making. Instructional practice with young bilingual learners in the United States of America and in select regions of Europe is also briefly outlined. The chapter concludes with recommendations for designing a course of action to fuel EC professionals' interest in and commitment to linguistically responsive practice.

1. Introduction

"One of today's most misunderstood issues in education … is how to educate students who
speak languages other than English."
(García, Kleifgen and Falchi 2008)

This chapter reports on instructional practice with the growing number of children[1] who arrive in Canadian childcare centres and kindergartens with little or no proficiency in the language of program delivery. These

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[1] These children are between the ages of 15 months and 6 years.

children are a diverse group. Referred to here as bilingual[2] learners (hereafter BLs), they are mostly born in Canada to newly arrived immigrant parents. Some are acquiring one home language, while others grow up in multiple language households. Some arrive with little or no exposure to the majority language, while others have been exposed to the new language through siblings and older family members, community experiences and/or the media. Young BLs' connections with their parents' countries of origin also vary—from annual trips to regular electronic communication and extended visits from family members. In all cases, young BLs enrolled in majority language programs find themselves in a unique language-learning situation—the continued acquisition of their first or home language or languages and the learning of a new language.

This growing demographic presents a double challenge to Canadian early childhood professionals[3] (hereafter EC professionals). They find themselves ill prepared to work with children who do not understand the language of the classroom. Moreover, they describe available resources as falling short of providing concrete support and guidance. While most Canadian EC professionals acknowledge the fact that BLs are speakers of "other" languages, they view them first and foremost as learners of the classroom language. As a result, they opt for instructional practice that hurries them into the new language. Only in a small number of cases are young BLs' prior linguistic skills valued and extended and their bilingual potential facilitated and encouraged.

The chapter begins by setting the context and describing the current linguistic landscape of Canadian early care and learning programs. In Section 3, instructional practices currently adopted by EC professionals are presented. Section 4 describes a new direction in instructional practice and provides examples of recent initiatives. In Section 5, the main findings of the implementation of a new instructional practice called Linguistically Appropriate Practice or LAP (Chumak-Horbatsch 2012) in two early learning contexts are presented and discussed. Section 6 looks briefly at instructional practice with BLs in other countries. And

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[2] For reasons of convention and brevity, the term "bilingualism" is used in this chapter as a cover term to include both bilingualism and multilingualism.
[3] Early childhood professionals include childcare staff and kindergarten teachers who work directly with young children and are responsible for all aspects of program planning and delivery.

lastly, Section 7 opens the door to the next level of instructional practice investigation by providing recommendations for early learning stakeholders.

2. The Canadian Linguistic Landscape

Immigration is central to Canadian history. Often viewed as the "land of immigration"[4] and "a choice destination"[5], thousands of immigrants arrive in Canada yearly. Generally supportive and welcoming of foreign residents, Canada views immigration as an economic and cultural benefit and accepts high numbers of people from many different parts of the world for work, study or for humanitarian and compassionate reasons (Nanos 2008). Currently, there are more foreign-born residents (6.8 million or 20.6 %) in Canada than ever before. Often called a "nation of many languages",[6] the more than two hundred languages spoken by one in five people in Canada have been described as economic and cultural assets[7].

Children who do not understand or speak the majority languages (French and English) make up a significant proportion of Canadian early learning settings. In the large, high-immigrant Canadian "gateway cities" of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta, 18% to 26% speak a language other than English or French at home[8]. A recent language profile revealed that nearly half (43%) of the children enrolled in Toronto childcare centres (Chumak-Horbatsch 2010) speak one or more (of a total of 129 different) heritage languages in the home, while the Toronto District School Board reports a slightly higher number[9], where over half of kindergarteners come from homes where English is not spoken. In Vancouver schools, 126 different heritage languages are spoken by 60% of the school population[10] and in Montreal's public French-language schools, 46% of students do not speak French as their home language. In over one-third of Montreal schools, students of immigrant origin account for the majority of the population, and just under one in ten schools has an immigrant population of over 75% (McAndrew, Audet and Bakhshaei 2014).

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[4] http://www.immigrationdirect.ca/immigration-articles/statistics-facts/?gclid=CJGT6reYp8ACFQcLaQodBzkABQ
[5] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2008001/article/10517-eng.htm
[6] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/bilingualism-growing-but-not-in-french-and-english-1.1176469
[7] http://www.environicsanalytics.ca/blog/doug-norris/doug-norris-blog/2012/11/02/canadians-speak-in-many-tongues
[8] http://www.statcan.gc.ca
[9] http://www.tdsb.on.ca/HighSchool/YourSchoolDay/Curriculum/ESL.aspx
[10] http://www.vsb.bc.ca/english-second-language-information

Over the past ten years, EC professionals working in urban areas in other Canadian provinces are reporting an ever-increasing number of children who do not understand the majority language. Two reasons help explain this. Firstly, newcomers are settling in urban areas of the "other" Canadian provinces that offer affordable housing, promise economic opportunities and provide settlement support. For example, between 2006 and 2011, immigration significantly increased in the urban areas of Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Manitoba. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education reported the following between 2007 and 2012: the number of young immigrant children (between the ages of 1 and 5 years of age)[11] tripled, the number of children who did not speak an official language (English or French) more than doubled and the number of immigrant children attending kindergarten in the five-year span more than doubled.[12]

Another example comes from the province of Manitoba's "readiness for school" report[13], which shows an increase of young EAL (English as an additional language) children between 2005 and 2010.

A second reason for the increase of BLs in Canadian early learning programs is the growing change in traditional and cultural childcare arrangements or norms, where fewer immigrant women are staying at home to care for their young children and are instead joining the workforce. For example, the rate of increase (17%) for immigrant women in the labour force between 2001 and 2006 was more than double that for Canadian-born women (7%) (Saraswati 2000).

3. Current instructional practice with young bilingual learners

A recent investigation of instructional practice (Chumak-Horbatsch 2012) identified three different kinds of practices adopted by EC professionals in their work with BLs: assimilative, supportive and inclusive (see Table 1). These practices differ from one another on two aspects: the attention paid to the majority language and the support provided to BLs' home languages and cultures. The monolingual focus of assimilative practice is driven by a deficit agenda, where BLs are labelled and identified by what they lack, namely

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[11]This number would be higher if infants (ages birth to 12 months) were included.
[12] Immigration Services Division, Government of Saskatchewan: Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Microdata, 2013.
[13] http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/edi/edireport_MB_201011.pdf

proficiency in the majority language. This practice ignores their linguistic background, discounts what they have encoded in their home language or languages, fails to recognize their bilingual potential and hurries them into the majority language and culture. Supportive practices have a similar monolingual focus, with an addendum: while the focus of instruction remains the majority language, home languages are acknowledged and cultural differences are celebrated. These two monolingual practices rest on erroneous and out-dated assumptions, such as the idea that young children can manage only one language at a time, require increased input to master the new language and experience competition and negative transfer between their two languages. Ostensibly adopted in the best interests of BLs, these two practices fall short of meeting their language and literacy needs.

Unlike the two monolingual practices, inclusive or linguistically responsive practice rests on a positive, strength-based approach to home languages, recognizing the personal, social, cognitive, linguistic and economic advantages of bilingualism. Inclusive practice reflects and concretely responds to the linguistic diversity found in centres and classrooms. In line with current research findings, this practice views young BLs as bilinguals in the making or "emergent bilinguals" (García 2009), portraying them as capable, active dual language learners and acknowledging the fact that they, like all bilinguals, use their entire linguistic repertoire to navigate the many communicative contexts they encounter. Inclusive practice extends the knowledge that children have encoded in their home language(s) and views their prior experiences as important contributors to their identity formulation. Finally, inclusive practice bridges BLs' two language worlds, integrating their home language(s) daily and directly into the classroom.

Table 1: Instructional practices with young BLs (From Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012)

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE	ASSIMILATIVE	SUPPORTIVE	INCLUSIVE
Main features	• Teaching and learning the majority language. • Absorbing BLs into the majority language and culture as quickly as possible.	• Teaching and learning the majority language. • Acknowledging home languages. • Celebrating cultural differences.	• Teaching and learning the majority language. • Validating and supporting children's home languages. • Integrating home languages into the curriculum. • Using children's language skills as a resource. • Working closely with families to promote bilingualism and bi-literacy.
Focus	• Monolingual, mono-literate, mono-cultural	• Monolingual, mono-literate, inter-cultural	• Multilingual, multi-literate, and inter-cultural
Sample strategies	• Limit the number of BLs in each classroom. • Discourage interaction between children who speak the same home language.	• Use key words and phrases in the home languages to ease communication: *Come here; bathroom; Do you want some help? It's OK; sleep; stop; eat.* • Organize multicultural celebrations.	• Greet children in their home languages. • Invite family members to share and author dual language books.

Although the three practices can be characterized separately and may appear to be mutually exclusive, they are not. The shaded areas of Figure 1 show that there is overlap between them. Indeed, numerous reports, classroom observations and accounts found in early learning resources reveal that in their work with BLs, Canadian EC professionals adopt strategies across all three practices. For example, general assimilative practice may include some supportive strategies such as acknowledgement and recognition of BLs' home languages, and inclusive strategies such as including home languages in the curriculum often accompany supportive practice. However, overlap is *not* found between the two kinds of instructional practices that are starkly different, assimilative and inclusive.

Figure 1: Overlap in instructional practices
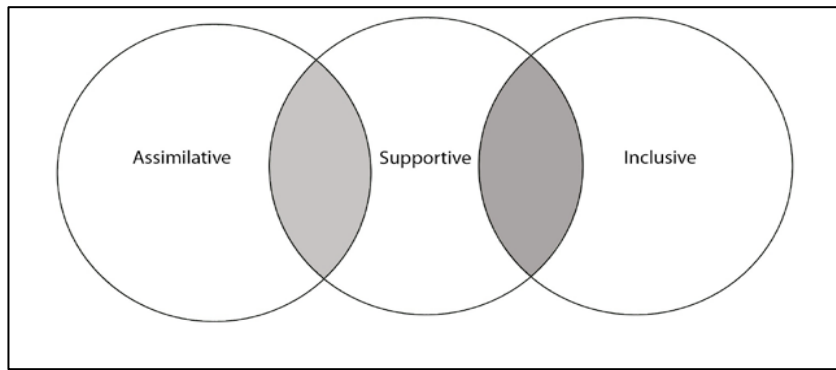
The majority of Canadian EC professionals find themselves ill prepared to work with children and families who have little or no proficiency in the language of program delivery (Meyers 2003; Webster and Valeo 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw 2007). With little or no training in linguistic diversity, childhood bilingualism and linguistically responsive pedagogy, most remain unfamiliar with the importance of the language backgrounds and experiences of BLs and often feel that these children tax their busy and demanding agendas. As a result, they prefer supportive practice, a middle-of-the-road, accommodating approach that hurries BLs into the majority language, peripherally recognizes their home languages and celebrates their cultures.

Three factors help explain this choice of practice. Firstly, Canada is a country characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity, where for the most part, its inhabitants have an open, respectful and positive attitude towards multiculturalism, diversity and immigration. As such, most EC professionals feel that a focus on the majority language, with a nod to children's linguistic and cultural differences, is the thing to do. The second reason is that many EC professionals, themselves speakers of heritage languages, view bilingualism positively and consider it appropriate to acknowledge home languages. Finally, as we will see in the next section, the majority of Canadian early learning resources promote and endorse supportive instructional practice.

Most Canadian early learning resources (curriculum guidelines and policy documents) include some information about BLs. This information varies in length, breadth, philosophy, developmental overview, theoretical framework and practicality. For example, some resources simply inform the reader about the presence of BLs, while others provide an overview of dual language learning in young children or offer

strategies and suggestions for integrating BLs into their new language environment. Taken together, the resources characterize BLs in the following way:

- BLs are learners of the majority language. They are labelled as English Language Learners (ELLs), English as an Additional Language Learners (EAL), English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners or French as a Second Language (FSL) Learners.

- BLs will encounter some difficulties in learning the classroom language.

- In learning the classroom language, BLs will go through a silent stage.

- BLs' home languages and cultures are important.

With its focus on the majority language, this characterization of BLs is problematic and inequitable for four reasons. Firstly, majority language identification and labelling of BLs — as ELLs, EALs, ESLs, or FSLs — establishes the classroom language as the only language worth knowing, learning and speaking, solidifies majority language teaching as the goal of working with BLs, devalues their home languages and literacy experiences, skills and strengths and ignores their bilingual potential. Secondly, the deficit focus of the characterization—absence of the majority language and potential difficulties—stand in contrast to established principles of childhood bilingualism that portray young children as capable, active language learners. Thirdly, the silent stage, although widely accepted and expected by EC professionals, lacks research evidence (Roberts 2014), is artificially created and is damaging to BLs (Chumak-Horbatsch 2012). In reality, BLs are not silent, but are *silenced* by the monolingual classroom agenda. Finally, colourful celebrations and displays capture only one dimension of the many cultural experiences of BLs.

A close look at Canadian early learning resources often reveals a disconnect between the images and the message conveyed in the text. While the many photos of children and families from various ethnic groups, like the one in Figure 2, reflect the diversity found in the childcare and kindergarten population, the message in the accompanying text promotes practice that focuses on the majority language, as seen in the characterization of BLs.

Figure 2: Typical photo found in early learning resources[14]

A particularly noteworthy example of image-text mismatch can be found in an Ontario ministry document entitled Supporting English Language Learners in Kindergarten: A practical guide for Ontario educators.[15] While the text promotes inclusive practice, reminding EC professionals that young children "develop their knowledge by building on their past experiences and the learning they have already acquired" and encouraging the creation of "an inclusive learning environment that supports the success of every student" (p. 4), the title of the document and the tree images communicate a strong monolingual message. The purple tree foliage, trunk, ground and roots on the cover are filled with multi-coloured translations of the word ENGLISH (Figure 3), while the purple borders (Figure 4) with white translations of ENGLISH are found throughout the pages. Together, these images communicate not the many voices and roots of BLs but rather, the centrality and importance of one voice and one root—English.
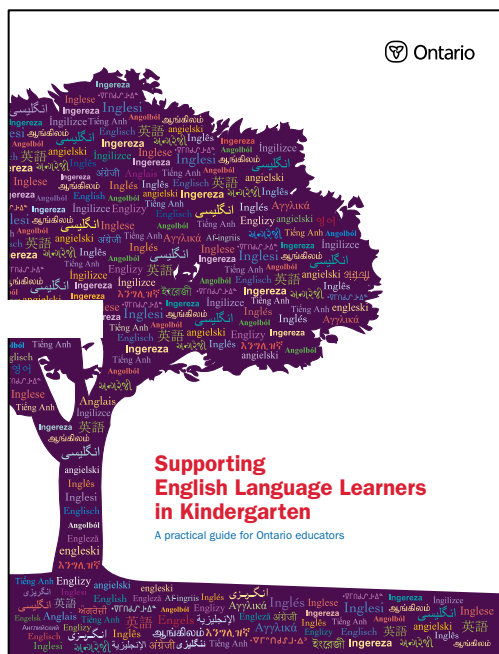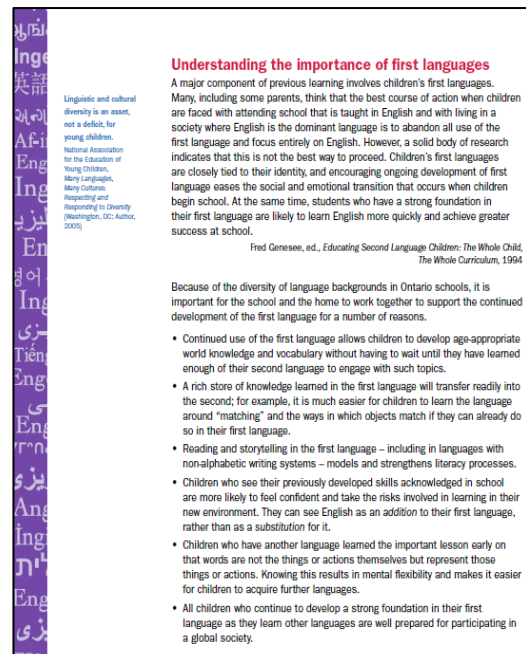
Figure 3: Cover   **Figure 4: Page 8**

In addition to the monolingual characterization of BLs, Canadian early learning resources remind EC professionals to be sensitive to cultures and languages, to "value, honour, and promote culture and language as integral components of programs, supports and services"[16], and to attend to home languages: "When educators are aware of and able to understand and respond to the many "languages" children use to communicate, they give every child a "voice."[17]. While such reminders appear to promote children's home languages, their wording is broad, leaving EC professionals wondering, "How do I do this?"

The same is true of the widespread, inclusive-like home language word-phrase strategy, found in numerous early learning resources. Adopting this strategy, EC professionals learn and use key words in children's home languages (e.g., It's OK; Stop; Are you tired? Are you hungry?), to ease communication and help newly arrived BLs transition into their new language environment. In reality, this strategy is far from inclusive. Rather, it is simply used as a stepping-stone to the learning of the classroom language. Once children gain a basic proficiency in the new language, this home language strategy is no longer needed and is abandoned.

Overall, then, the majority of Canadian EC professionals adopt for instructional practice that reflects the supportive directive endorsed and promoted in early learning resources. They view and label BLs as learners of the majority language, focus on the teaching of the majority language, peripherally acknowledge home languages and celebrate cultures.

4. A new direction

Yet, the profile sketched in the previous section is not the full picture. Information gathered through the author's on-going work (research, teaching, classroom observation and school involvement) (Chumak-Horbatsch 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012) reveals a new direction in instructional practice with young BLs. Since 2000, a growing number of Canadian EC professionals, many of whom speak multiple languages and are aware of the benefits of bilingualism, are rethinking the supportive approach, engaging in professional

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[16] Starting Early, Starting Strong: Manitoba's Early Childhood Development Framework, 2013
[17] http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf

change behaviours and adopting various inclusive instructional strategies. According to Cummins (2014), this shift to linguistically responsive pedagogy (also referred to as "multi-literacies pedagogy" (Cummins 2006) or "teaching with a multilingual lens" (Cummins and Early 2014)) is still in its infancy. In line with a number of major learning and teaching frameworks, orientations and principles, it is fuelled by the growing number of collaborations between Canadian educators and university researchers, whose projects and initiatives are redefining multilingual education.

Linguistically responsive practice is grounded in the strength-based orientation of learning (Ruiz 1984; González and Moll 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff and González 1992; Moll, and Greenberg 1990) that views children's family and community experiences as important building blocks for acquiring new knowledge. Consistent with empirical research findings from cognitive psychology on how learning happens (Bransford, Brown and Cocking 2000; Donovan and Bransford 2005; Cummins 2001, 2006; Reyes 2001), linguistically responsive pedagogy positions teachers as supportive guides who activate learners' prior language and literacy understandings, help learners formulate their identity, provide opportunities for age-appropriate levels of understanding and allow learners to take control of and self-regulate their language and literacy learning. In line with the social constructivist orientation on learning and teaching put forward by Piaget (1929) and Vygotsky (1978) and elaborated by numerous scholars (Cummins 2001, 2004, 2006; Skourtou, Kourtis Kazoullis and Cummins 2006; Cummins and Early 2011, 2014; Norton 2000; Siraj-Blatchford 2000; Toohey 2000, 2006; Wardle and Cruz-Janzen 2003), linguistically responsive pedagogy emphasizes the joint construction of knowledge and the importance of the social context in supporting and enabling learning, literacy engagement and the affirmation of learners' identities. Finally, inclusive pedagogy is founded on three psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic principles that underlie educational success: strong and effective promotion of fluency and literacy in both the home and the classroom languages; sustained multi-literacy engagement where literacy is understood in a wide-ranging way and the collaborative creation of power within the classroom (Cummins 2001, 2009).

In the sections that follow, recent examples of multilingual initiatives with BLs undertaken by Canadian researchers and educators are briefly described. The highlights of one of these initiatives, Linguistically

Appropriate Practice or LAP, are presented and the main findings of the implementation of this instructional approach in two early learning contexts are discussed.

4.1. Dual Language Reading Project

In the Dual Language Reading Project[18], a partnership between the University of Calgary and the Calgary Board of Education, teachers, family and community members shared dual language books with young BLs in mainstream classrooms and in a Spanish-English bilingual program. This collaboration bridged the school and the home, extended BLs' linguistic skills, improved early literacy skills, positively affected their identity development and helped all children develop awareness and understanding of linguistic diversity.

4.2. ELODIL

The ELODIL[19] project, developed at the Université de Montreal and also undertaken in Vancouver, concretely supports teachers who work with BLs. The goals of the project are to "legitimize the language of origin of students from immigrant families" and help, in age-appropriate ways, "to promote language awareness and openness to linguistic diversity in the classroom." The ELODIL resources (publications, book lists and videos) link to similar European initiatives, and the many classroom activities are intended to stimulate children's interest in and extend their knowledge about different language groups. Response to the ELODIL activities shows that giving home languages a place in the classroom motivates and excites BLs and helps them to understand linguistic diversity.

4.3 ScribJab

ScribJab[20] is a website and iPad application developed at Simon Fraser University. Built on the premise that children learn second languages faster and better if they have a strong foundation in their first language, ScribJab invites children to read, create and share digital stories (text, illustrations and audio recordings) in any language: English and/or French or home languages. Space is provided for young readers and authors to

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[18] www.rahatnaqvi.ca
[19] Éveil au langage et ouverture à la diversité linguistique (Awakening to Language and Opening up to Linguistic Diversity), http://elodil.com
[20] http://www.scribjab.com/en/about/about.html

discuss their stories with one another. Teachers can monitor and organize children's contributions and create reading groups.

4.4 Home Oral Language Activities (HOLA)

The Home Oral Language Activities (HOLA)[21] program supports young BLs' development in their home languages and builds family-teacher partnerships. Developed by speech and language pathologists, Early Years and English as a Second Language staff of the Toronto District School Board, the program invites families to share a collection of thematic books (available in 12 languages) and related objects with their children, to develop vocabulary, content and background knowledge. Like the three initiatives described previously, the HOLA program concretely supports children's home languages and scaffolds new learning on prior strengths and skills.

5. Linguistically Appropriate Practice (LAP)

In this section, Linguistically Appropriate Practice or LAP is briefly described. This is followed by a summary of the main findings of the implementation of this new instructional practice in two early learning contexts.

5.1 What is LAP?

LAP is an inclusive instructional approach that views young, non-majority-language-speaking children as BLs rather than simply as learners of the classroom language. LAP links BLs' home and classroom language and literacy experiences, encourages home language use in the classroom and promotes multilingualism. It brings linguistic diversity to life and prepares young children for the complex communication and literacy demands of the 21st century (García 2009, 2009a, 2009b). Developed in response to the numerous requests for concrete guidance, LAP helps EC professionals to retool the way they work with BLs and to move from supportive to inclusive instructional practice.

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[21] http://www.equinoxpub.com/journals/index.php/JIRCD/article/view/15999

LAP is grounded in dynamic bilingualism (García, 2009a, 2009c), a theory that reflects the current global and technological communication reality and focuses on languages that speakers *use* rather than on separate languages they *have*. García defines dynamic bilingualism as "language practices that are multiple and ever adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act" (García, 2009a:144). Dynamic bilingualism, García explains, is not about adding additional languages. It is about using one's entire linguistic repertoire to deal with communication circumstances or "developing complex language practices that encompass several social contexts" (García, 2010: 96).

The implementation of LAP is a four-step sequential process. In the first step, EC professionals are introduced to dynamic bilingualism, (García 2009, 2009a, 2009b). This is followed by a review of the principles of childhood bilingualism. Finally, EC professionals are encouraged to reflect on their current practice with BLs in relation to three different kinds of approaches and consider strategies for moving towards inclusive practice.

Building on their new understanding of childhood bilingualism, EC professionals are then ready for the next LAP step, familiarity with a language portrait of BLs. This pedagogical tool provides an accurate, research-based picture of BLs' linguistic reality and bilingual potential. Adapted from qualitative research methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis 1997; Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005; Hackman 2002) and guided by the question "What is good here?" the language portrait describes the language and literacy strengths, abilities and needs of BLs. It also includes troubling and challenging aspects of their language lives, including the inequities and hardships they face when they join a new language environment and encounter "unfamiliar practices and discourses" (Bligh 2014).

The third step in the LAP implementation process is to consider appropriate strategies for managing five important issues that EC professionals encounter in their work with BLs: transitioning them from home to the classroom; introducing them to their classmates; partnering with families; using home languages in the classroom; and documenting language and literacy behaviours.

In the last LAP step, knowledgeable and committed EC professionals are finally ready to implement inclusive practice. To get them started, LAP provides over 50 activities. Designed to be conducted in the

classroom language, these activities include a home language component and cover a wide range of topics and subject areas. As they transform their classrooms into multilingual environments, EC professionals select, modify and extend the LAP activities to match the ages and needs of their children and put strategies in place that actively engage both children and families.

5.2 LAP Studies

Unlike previous instructional practice studies with select, like-minded participants (Toohey 2000; Naqvi, Thorne, Pfitscher, Nordstokke and McKeough 2012), the two studies presented here were context-wide, with the participation of *all* members of the teaching staff. The goal of the studies was to help two groups of EC professionals, who met the same general condition of working directly with BLs, to retool their instructional practice. In the two studies, practice retooling (hereafter PR-ing) was defined as the process of reflecting on and reviewing one's current instructional practice with BLs, aligning it with evidence-based principles of childhood bilingualism and using the four-step LAP guide (Chumak-Horbatch 2012) to move towards inclusive practice. The research question guiding the two studies was "How can LAP help EC professionals to retool their current instructional practice with BLs and move towards inclusive practice?" Study documentation included field notes, documentation logs, home language questionnaires (children and teaching staff), LAP-related artefacts created by the children and final evaluations.

5.2.1 Study A

Study A was small-scale and was implemented over a ten-month period in an urban fee-based licensed childcare centre, (hereafter UCC). The UCC serves upper middle-class families and accepts children from 18 months to 5 years of age. At the time of the study, there were eight EC professionals, fifty placement students[22], a manager and fifty-eight children, divided into three age groups[23]. Approximately half (48%) of the children spoke one or more of fifteen different heritage languages at home, half of the EC professionals were speakers of four heritage languages and fourteen heritage languages were reported by the placement students.

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[22] Placement students were enrolled in a university Early Childhood Studies undergraduate program.
[23] Toddlers: 18 to 30 months; preschoolers: 2½ to 4 years; kindergarteners: 4-5 years.

The UCC staff enthusiastically accepted the invitation to explore a new instructional practice and expressed an interest in improving their practice with BLs and making their practice more inclusive. Study A started with three workshops[24] that introduced the four parts of LAP, provided the EC professionals with the opportunity to collectively reflect on and review their current practice with BLs and outlined the direction and scope of the study. EC professionals were invited to review, select, adapt and implement LAP activities according to their suitability, age-appropriateness and the interests of the children in their groups. They were also encouraged to keep a written record of the implementation process and progress. LAP was also introduced to the UCC families and to the placement students. The highlights of this new instructional practice were presented, the importance of family engagement was discussed and the plan of the study was explained. Throughout the study, the author conducted both group and individual validation meetings with the EC professionals to foster reflection on and discussion of all aspects of the implementation of LAP. To keep record keeping to a minimum and make the documentation task lighter and less demanding, the author took on the role of on-site observer and recorder, working directly with the children, meeting with families and collecting and photographing LAP-related artefacts created by the children.

5.2.2 Study B

Study B was conducted over a ten-month period in a large publicly funded school (hereafter PFS) situated in an immigrant, high-density, low-income, high-unemployment area of Toronto. At the time of the study, enrolment stood at 567, with 313 (55%) five-year-olds and 254 (45%) four-year-olds. PFS staff included a principal, a vice-principal, 50 EC professionals (25 teachers and 25 early childhood educators), specialized teachers (music, drama, gym, language intervention, literacy support and special needs) and an administrative team. Each of the 25 classrooms included a two-member teaching team (a certified teacher and an early childhood educator[25]) and up to 30 children. The majority of the families (97%) spoke one of 31 different heritage languages at home and only 3% reported English as the home language. In addition to

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[24] The workshops were conducted by the author.
[25] Each kindergarten teaching team included an early childhood educator and a certified teacher who work collaboratively on the management of the kindergarten classroom.

English, the majority (84%) of the teaching staff were speakers of two or more heritage languages (24 different languages in total), while the remainder were monolingual speakers of English.

Unlike Study A, only one LAP workshop[26], attended by the principal and approximately half of the teaching staff, was conducted in Study B. In the early weeks, the author prepared the groundwork for the implementation of LAP by familiarizing herself with the school community, visiting classrooms, directly interacting with the children, informally chatting with teaching teams and families and organizing an after-school event that focused on the importance of children's home languages. Following this, classrooms were assigned to one of four LAP coaches who visited the school on a weekly basis. The role of the LAP coaches was to facilitate the teaching teams and document the implementation of LAP. Teaching teams were also encouraged to record the implementation process and progress in LAP logs. As well, four professionally relevant after-school events were organized.

5.3 Findings and discussion

The LAP studies revealed three things about instructional practice with young BLs: interest in PR-ing varied across EC professionals; instructional practice decision-making was affected by three categories of factors; and LAP served as a valuable PR-ing resource.

5.3.1 Interest in retooling practice

As Table 2 illustrates, response to the invitation to retool current practice and move towards inclusive pedagogy varied across EC professionals, ranging from high interest to a total lack of interest. Column C shows that less than one-fifth (19%) of participants from the two studies chose to retool their practice, showed high interest and moved towards inclusive practice. These participants were proactive and exhibited high professional curiosity or "initiative, interest and active wondering" (Nersessian 1995) as they adopted and implemented LAP. Minimal interest in PR-ing was noted in just over one-third (35%) of all participants. In Study A, these participants implemented LAP activities sporadically and infrequently while those in Study B exhibited little or no self-initiated effort and followed the suggestions and guidance of the LAP

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[26] School logistics did not allow for additional workshops.

coaches. Finally, nearly half (46%) of the Study A and Study B participants chose not to follow up on the invitation to retool their instructional practice with BLs.

Table 2: Studies A and B: Level of interest in retooling instructional practice

	A	B	C	D	E
Level of interest in PR-ing	Study A N=8	Study B N=46	Studies A & B N=54	Study B Teachers N=23	Study B ECEs N=23
High	1 (12%)	9 (19%)	10 (19%)	3 (13%)	6 (26%)
Minimal	3 (38%)	16 (35%)	19 (35%)	7 (30%)	9 (39%)
None	4 (50%)	21 (46%)	25 (46%)	13 (57%)	8 (35%)

A closer look at the Study B levels of PR-ing (columns D and E) shows a marked difference in the level of interest in PR-ing among the teachers and early childhood educators. Twice as many early childhood educators as teachers retooled their practice (26% vs 13%). The number of early childhood educators who engaged in minimal PR-ing with the support and guidance of LAP coaches was also higher (39% vs 30%), while the lack of interest in PR-ing was lower (35% vs 57%). Also, more early childhood educators than teachers attended the after-school professional events.

5.3.2 Factors that affected instructional practice decision-making

From the available models of instructional choice and change, the Model of Teacher Change (Ni and Guzdial 2008) was selected and adapted to the BLs context. An analysis of Study A and B documentation generated three different yet related categories of factors that affected EC professionals' instructional practice decision-making with BLs: personal, professional and curricular knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. Table 3 sets out the broad characteristics that define each category.

Table 3: Three categories of factors that affected EC professionals'
instructional practice decision-making

Category 1: PERSONAL
Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs about self as language user
- Personal language history: monolingual or bilingual, languages spoken, attempted, lost   - Personal interest and investment in bilingualism   - Attitudes towards immigration, societal language use and multilingualism   - Level of self-confidence, risk-taking
Category 2: PROFESSIONAL
Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs about BLs
- The language reality of BLs   - The principles of childhood bilingualism   - Professional curiosity: motivation to enhance knowledge of bilingualism   - View of teaching: collaborative or personal enterprise   - Professional curiosity, commitment and engagement
Category 3: CURRICULAR
Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs about working with BLs curricular directive
- Curricular requirements re teaching BLs   - Early learning resources: working with BLs

It is noteworthy that identifying general categories of factors as listed in Table 3 proved to be more straightforward than attempting to identify the factors that affected the decision-making of individual EC professionals.

With participants who enthusiastically talked about their work with BLs and exhibited a high interest in PR-ing, it was clear that both personal and professional factors guided their choice to move towards inclusive practice and adopt LAP. These EC professionals were mostly speakers of two or more languages, had multilingual experiences in their homes and families and viewed childhood bilingualism favourably. Their high level of professional curiosity led them to look beyond the mandated supportive approach and to integrate home languages into the classroom agenda. Included in this group were many of the Study B early childhood educators who, as a group, displayed a greater interest in PR-ing than did the teachers.

Attempts to identify factors that affected the practice choices of the EC professionals who displayed a minimal interest in PR-ing (just over one-third) were particularly challenging. Even though they agreed to collaborate with LAP coaches, their accommodating yet disengaged attitude, together with their

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unwillingness to complete the final evaluation questionnaire, made it difficult to profile their practice decisions.

It was clear, however, that all three factors, personal, professional and curricular, were at play when the decision was made to dismiss PR-ing. Some (but not all) of the English-speaking monolingual EC professionals rejected the idea of PR-ing due to personal factors, reporting that as single language speakers, they were ill equipped to concretely support children's home languages and foster multilingualism. Participants who (for various reasons) lost their family languages in their early years were not interested in PR-ing because they felt that young BLs would also eventually lose their home languages. In a small number of cases, a negative view of school multilingualism ("English is the language of Canada and home languages, although important, belong in the home.") was translated into the dismissal of PR-ing and the adherence to supportive practice. In addition, curricular factors affected the decision-making of some of the non-PR-ing group. Some of these participants reported directly, while others inferred, that inclusive practice generally and LAP specifically are not included in the early learning curricular guidelines and hence do not fit in with the play- and inquiry-based agendas that they are required to follow in their work with BLs.

5.4 LAP: an important practice retooling resource

The EC professionals who retooled their instructional practice described LAP as an "invaluable resource" and a "helpful guide" in transforming their classrooms into multilingual environments and making linguistic diversity come to life. As LAP activities were implemented, children's initial reluctance to use their home languages in the classroom changed to confidence, enthusiasm and spontaneous multilingual play. They reached a language "comfort zone" (Brown 2008) and freely "translanguaged" (García 2011) or used words and phrases in their home languages with each other and in group activities. All of the children—and not only the BLs—were fascinated by the discovery that their friends were speakers of different languages. They developed an awareness of languages and exhibited an interest in their own home languages and those of others: for example, a child holding up a toy cow reported: "I speak Arabic and my cow speaks Hebrew". They played and experimented with language rhythms and patterns and imitated and attempted words in

each other's languages. They talked about languages with each other and used them as identity markers for themselves and their friends: "I speak Arabic and so does Waqas and Rayan". As BLs discovered that the adults in the classroom did not share their home languages, they took on a teaching role and offered to help their "students": "I'll help you and teach you, yes. Say it like this."

In addition to children's positive response to LAP, families and placement students' reaction to linguistic inclusion is noteworthy. As families witnessed their children's interest, excitement and pride in languages, their initial uncertainty changed to approval, gratitude ("Thank you for encouraging our language.") and engagement in LAP. In a similar way, placement students were motivated and encouraged when they saw children's willingness and excitement to showcase and share home languages. These students journeyed from uncertainty to personal and professional confidence ("I didn't like to talk about my being Chinese … but once we did LAP with the children, I was happy to share what I know in Chinese, so I taught them a song in Chinese.") and took on the role of home language advocates, creating and extending LAP activities and preparing home language resources for children and families.

5. 5 Summary of LAP studies

The findings of the two studies are, to some extent, generalizable and reflect current instructional practice with BLs in Canadian early learning settings. They reveal that various combinations of personal, professional and curricular factors affected EC professionals' instructional practice decision-making and that only a small number of EC professionals who retooled their instructional practice journeyed from supportive to inclusive practice. LAP proved to be a useful tool in guiding this practice change. It also helped BLs adjust to their new language environment, enriched the language and literacy experiences of all children, supported families in their language maintenance attempts and helped placement students understand the importance of home languages. Alongside this practice change, a significant number of EC professionals held on to supportive practice "as tightly as possible" (Katz and Dack 2013) and were not interested in retooling their practice with BLs. Taken together, these findings raise a question that continues to be investigated in contexts beyond education, namely how to generate interest in and commitment to change in practice among professionals.

6. Young bilingual learners beyond Canada

> "In every corner of the world, young children are learning languages at home that differ from the dominant language used in their broader social world." (Ball 2011)

The above quote reminds us that young BLs are everywhere and that the challenge of appropriate practice with this particular demographic is not unique to the Canadian early learning context. The situation in the United States is in many ways quite similar to that found in Canada. For example, provision for children's home languages or a home language mandate is included in numerous policy and educational documents (Espinosa 2008, 2013), and linguistically responsive teaching is gaining increased attention (Lucas and Villegas 2010). Yet, general suggestions to be "culturally and linguistically responsive"[27] most often translate into the adoption of supportive practice.

Unlike the widespread adoption of supportive practice in Canada and the United States, response to linguistic diversity in many European regions is quite different. Tradition and exclusivity of the official language (or languages), a wariness of "other" languages and the view of multilingualism as a problem or obstacle, together with official language or languages policy, often stand behind the widespread adoption of assimilative practice. Yet like their Canadian colleagues, a growing number of education researchers and EC professionals in many European regions are responding to their increasing "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2007) by reviewing and re-interpreting language policies, exploring and documenting language attitudes and questioning the equity and educational value of assimilative practice with BLs. For example, the Multilingual Early Learning Transmission (MELT)[28] project, a partnership between four language communities (the Frisian language in Fryslân [the Netherlands], the Swedish language in Finland, the Welsh language in Wales [UK], and the Breton language in Brittany [France]) advocates for the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, the recognition and support of home languages and helping families understand the benefits of bilingualism.

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[27] TK California: A project of early edge California: http://www.tkcalifornia.org/tk-experience
[28] http://www.poliglotti4.eu/docs/MELT_research_paper.pdf

7. Conclusion and next steps

The early learning practice profile provided in this chapter, speaks to the pressing need for broad based instructional practice retooling with BLs. This need raises two questions. Firstly, how can the current widespread adoption of monolingually focused practices, which fall short of meeting the language and literacy needs of young BLs be "intentionally interrupted" (Katz and Dack 2013)? Secondly, what course of action will serve to fuel EC professionals' interest in and commitment to linguistically responsive practice? In response to these questions, change is recommended for four different levels of early learning stakeholders.

The very first level of instructional practice change must occur at the curriculum and policy levels. Since EC practitioners rely on early learning resources for direction and guidance, these documents must accurately reflect the linguistic reality of Canadian classrooms, be aligned with evidence-based principles of childhood bilingualism and portray young BLs as capable, active language learners who require concrete support and validation to grow bilingually. The images and the accompanying messages in these resources must be synchronized in their promotion and endorsement of linguistically responsive practice.

A review of local, regional, and national leadership practices must follow the curricular and policy update and review proposed in the previous paragraph. Principals, directors and managers of early learning contexts must engage in high-leverage leadership by taking a "visible and public" interest (Katz and Dack 2013) in BLs. Together with their staff, they must move beyond one-time professional development events, actively participate in professional learning and understanding about childhood bilingualism and take on the role of "gatekeepers or facilitators of change" (Fullan 2007).

To work effectively and equitably with young BLs, EC professionals must understand the principles of childhood bilingualism and the linguistic reality of BLs. To do so, they would do well to create their own context-specific communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 2007; Katz and Dack 2013), where they engage in on-going, collaborative learning, sharing and professional understanding. When EC professionals update their understanding, assumptions and beliefs about children who grow in two (or more)

languages, they will be ready to retool their practice, position home languages as instructional assets and essential parts of BLs learning equation and teach through a multilingual lens (Cummins and Early 2014). Finally, education researchers are encouraged to turn their attention to the large number of EC professionals who focus on the majority language and either remain hesitant to venture beyond a token acknowledgement of BLs' home languages or are committed to monolingual instructional practice. Understanding the language realities and subsequent practice behaviours of these professionals will serve to rework and update the factors that affect instructional choices identified in this chapter and will help to inform the development of practice reform strategies.

On an encouraging and promising note, the growing and steady interest in retooling instructional practice with young BLs serves as evidence that this new direction is far more than a passing in-vogue event. It is a pedagogical evolution that is supporting, validating and extending BLs' language and literacy skills and abilities, strengthening the understanding and respect for diversity of all young children and transforming early education in Canada and beyond.

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