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Teachers' Critical Reflections on using the NYSED Bilingual Common Core Progressions and Implications and their use for the Quality of Multilingual Learners' Instruction

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Cover Page Footnote

I want to thank Nancy Dubetz, Cecilia Espinosa and Aida Nevarez for reading the initial drafts of this article and for providing useful and patient comments. My gratitude to the 16 teachers who were part of this study.

End Notes

1. Side-by-side bilingual programs are those in which two teachers develop the curriculum for the same grade level in different languages.
2. Dual bilingual programs are defined as programs that equally develop the curriculum in two languages. The most prevalent form of dual language programs in New York State are the so called 50/50 dual language, bilingual programs where one teacher develops a curriculum in English and the other teacher teaches it in a language other than English.
3. Transitional bilingual programs emphasize the home language in the beginning grades. For instance, a first grader can receive 90% of instructional time in his/her home language, and the instruction gradually incorporates English throughout the subsequent grades. A third grader can receive 50/50 of his/her instruction in English and the home language, and by 5th grade, English is the dominant language of instruction (e.g., 80%) as instruction in the home language diminishes.
4. Push in ENL teachers enter the classrooms and provide support while the classroom teacher is teaching. The support and scaffolds have to be associated with a content area that the classroom teacher is in the process of developing.

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Teachers' Critical Reflections on using the NYSED Bilingual Common Core Progressions and the Implications of their use for the Quality of Multilingual Learners' Instruction

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In this article I discuss findings of a qualitative study that explores the insights of a group of teachers about implementation of the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Bilingual Common Core Progressions (BCCP). Moreover, I explain teachers' suggestions on best pedagogical practices that could be used in the instruction of multilingual learners when implementing the Next Generation English Language Arts (ELA) Standards. The findings may guide any future revision and implementation of BCCP.

Keywords: multilingual learners, New York State Education Department, bilingual common core progressions, English Language Arts Standards

Between 2015 and 2017, Mary Ellen Elia, New York State Education Department (NYSED) Commissioner of Education, oversaw the revision of the NYSED English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-New York State's version of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). During the revision process NYSED designed surveys, which asked teachers, administrators, and educational stakeholders to provide their input on how to improve the CCLS. The modifications that resulted from this re-examination included, among other things, reinstating play at the center of early childhood education, avoiding the redundancy that characterized the CCLS writing standards, and fostering reading of fiction and non-fiction texts throughout the grade levels instead of emphasizing just non-fiction reading, as the CCLS suggested. An important addition that emerged from this revision is that education should aim to establish lifelong practices for readers and writers, not just prepare students to be college and career ready' as the CCLS demanded (Engage NY, 2012). The re-examination of the CCLS resulted in the NYSED Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS). Appendix A summarizes the additions and changes embedded in the NGELAS.

The insightful and detailed revision of the CCLS prompted me to explore the implementation process of the Bilingual Common Core Progressions (BCCP). For that

purpose, I conducted an exploratory study to identify the experiences of 16 teachers of multilingual learners in dual bilingual, transitional bilingual, and English as a new language (ENL) programs that had implemented the BCCP. This study aimed to identify the teachers' insights about using BCCP and to gather suggestions that would inform the implementation of the NGLS in classrooms with multilingual learners.

In this article, I open the discussion by providing a background to the CCLS and BCCP projects and then, present an overview of the BCCP. This is followed by a description of the study design and discussion of the main findings. Of importance to the discussion are the recommendations that the teacher informants made for scaffolds and pedagogical practices that could be integrated into the NGLS pedagogical practices in dual, transitional bilingual, and ENL program settings. The final section includes a short summary of the study's findings and commentary about their significance for enhancing the education of multilingual learners.

Background of the CCLS and Overview of the BCCP

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law. ESSA reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provides federal funds to improve elementary and secondary education and replaced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The new law requires each state to develop a plan describing the design and implementation of a statewide accountability system to improve student academic achievement. Until the current administration decides to ratify or change the measures embedded in ESSA, states must use the parameters prescribed in this act to frame their educational outcomes and accountability measures. One of the many goals of ESSA is the development of English by multilingual learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

In New York State, the more current official term used to refer to students who speak a home language and English is Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (NYSED, Office of Accountability, 2015). This term is embedded in the New York State Commissioner's Regulations (CR) Part 154 (NYSED, 2018), which delineates the policies pertinent to the education of this population. However, in this article, I use the term multilingual learners. This term emphasizes that the education of these students goes beyond English language learning (CUNY-New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals, 2018) by developing their home languages through a challenging, content-based curriculum implemented in English and their home languages.

During the decade of 2010, three main initiatives enhanced the implementation of bilingual education programs and the enhancement of bilingualism in public schools. First, the BCCP can be considered to be a positive outcome of the changes outline in CR Part 154. Specifically, the current version of CR Part 154 requires that local educational agencies (LEAs) implement accountability to measure the progress that multilingual learners have made in meeting grade level standards. In 2012, the NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) presented the BCCP, an initiative that actively promotes bilingualism in schools. The BCCP aimed to provide teachers of multilingual learners with academic and linguistic scaffolds to develop the home language (Home Language Arts Progressions [HLAP]) and the new language (New

Language Arts Progressions [NLAP]) that would support the implementation of the CCLS specific to ELA content (Engage NY, 2014).

More importantly, the NLAP replaced the existing English as a second language (ESL) learning standards and the HLAP replaced the New York State's native language arts standards. This signaled an important, conceptual shift because the previous ESL and native language arts standards exclusively targeted language proficiency, sometimes at the expense of content knowledge. The BCCP promotes the concept that multilingual learners have to master grade-appropriate content while developing language skills. Thus, through implementation of the BCCP, multilingual learners are expected to learn the same content as monolingual learners. These Progressions have carved out a place for bilingual educational practices in conjunction with the commitment of NYSED representatives to support bilingual education, particularly in New York City.

Second, there has been an increase in the number of bilingual education programs implemented in schools. The NYCDOE Office of English Language Learners *2013 Demographic Report* stated that there were 462 dual and transitional bilingual programs in the city (2013). In 2016, the then-NYCDOE Chancellor Fariña announced the opening of 38 bilingual programs (29 dual language and nine transitional programs; NYCDOE, 2016) and 68 programs for the 2017–2018 school year (39 dual language programs and 29 transitional programs; New York City Department of Education, 2017), the most programs to open at the start of an academic year. For many teachers working in these programs, the 2012 BCCP contributed to their understanding of how bilingual education could be enacted within the common core classroom (Rymes, Flores, & Pomerantz, 2016).

Third, bilingualism has also been supported across New York State by the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy for high school students. This award is granted to students who demonstrate that they are bilingual and biliterate, and their high school diploma demonstrates this achievement (NYSED, 2019). Taken together, all of these initiatives—from launching new programs that offer bilingual education, to the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy, and the creation of the BCCP—are all part of an ongoing political effort to place bilingual education at the center of educational practices fostered by the NYSED. From a pedagogical perspective, the BCCP was presented as a way to create the conditions for the academic success of multilingual learners in a common core classroom (Velasco & Johnson, 2015).

A closer look at the nature and structure of the BCCP is offered below. Specifically, I describe three key aspects of the Progressions.

Language of Instruction and the Implementation of the CCLS with Multilingual Learners

One of the key aspects of the BCCP is the conceptualization that language development is a gradual process that is not necessarily linear or predictable. In other words, language development takes time, it is uneven, and it depends on the context in which the language is learned as well as the learners' opportunities to engage in conversations with adults and peers. This conceptualization moved away from the

traditional approach of associating language growth with predictable language stages (Valdés, Capitelli, & Alvarez, 2010).

Most importantly, the BCCP emphasizes the perspective that languages are complimentary, and not unrelated (Cummins, 2008; García, 2009). Thus, the term, *progressions* was selected because it was meant to denote gradual development of the new and home language. Language development is a unique and uneven process; it is influenced by different factors, including the teaching and learning context, the reading materials, the opportunities for communicating with speakers of that language, the time required for reflecting and sharing thoughts through oral and written language, and the motivation to learn (Cook, 2016; Valdés, Menken & Castro, 2015; Verplaetse-Stoops & Migliacci, 2008). Therefore, the term, *progressions*, was meant to convey the fluidity that characterizes oral and written home and new language development.

The BCCP focuses on language instruction by presenting two sets of resources: the NLAP and the HLAP for the ELA reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards. The BCCP specifies that each ELA CCLS should present instructional scaffolds across the five levels of language proficiency that NYSED supports (Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, and Commanding) for the NLAP and the HLAP. The BCCP also divides the academic scaffolds into receptive communication skills (listening and reading) and productive communication skills (speaking and writing).

The BCCP: A Tool for Scaffolding Instruction

A second important premise of the BCCP is that, by presenting every CCLS standard twice in the form of a template or table that addresses either the HLAP or the NLAP, the demands set by the standards can be scaffolded for all students in the two languages of instruction (English and the home language). However, one of the characteristics of the NLAP is that it is integrated into the home language for entering, emerging, and transitioning students. Table 1 below presents a summary of the scaffolds outlined in the NLAP and the HLAP templates highlighting this integration in bold letters. For Entering, Emerging, and Transitioning students, teachers are encouraged to accept and use, when possible, the students' home language. This practice serves an academic purpose since it facilitates reaching the grade level academic demands embedded in the specific standards a teacher is targeting. By following this practice, dual and transitional bilingual teachers can encourage their students' insights in either the home or new language, but always for the purpose of academic achievement. It is expected that this scaffold is gradually released so that it is not needed for the last two language proficiency levels. This can take the form of providing opportunities for multilingual learners to talk with their peers who speak the same language, write and read books in their home language on subjects being discussed in class.

Table 1

Language Support for New and Home Language Students

Proficiency Level	New Language	Home Language
Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize pre-taught words (e.g., new words that the student is unfamiliar with) and phrases found in the text/context. -Associate and organize words and phrases. -Participate in partnerships and/or small group settings. -Use cloze sentences for writing in the new and/or home language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize pre-identified words (e.g., words about which a student might have some knowledge of their meaning and use) and phrases found in the text/context. -Associate and organize phrases and sentences. -Participate in partnerships and/or small group settings. -Use cloze sentences for writing
Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize pre-identified words and phrases found in the text/context. -Associate and organize phrases and sentences. -Participate in partnerships and/or small group settings. -Use cloze paragraphs for writing in the new and/or home language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information using word banks of phrases and sentences. -Associate and organize information with teacher support and graphic organizers. -Participate in partnerships, small groups, or whole class settings. -Write a short essay using graphic organizers and teacher modeling.
Transitioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information using word banks of phrases and sentences. -Associate and organize information with teacher support and/or modeling. -Participate in partnerships, small groups, or whole class settings. -Write a short essay using graphic organizers and teacher modeling in the new language. occasionally, in the home language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information with the support of glossaries and with teacher prompting. -Associate information with teacher prompting. -Participate in partnerships, small groups, and whole class settings. -Write a short essay with teacher prompting.
Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information with the support of glossaries and with teacher prompting. -Associate information with teacher prompting. -Participate in partnerships, small groups, and whole class settings. -Write an essay with a teacher In the new language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information with the support of glossaries. -Associate information with teacher prompting. -Participate in partnerships, small groups, and whole class settings. -Write an essay using previously created graphic organizers.
Commanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information independently. -Associate and organize information independently. -Participate in partnership, small group, and whole class settings in the new language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recognize information independently. -Associate and organize information independently -Participate in partnership, small group, and whole class settings.

Source: Velasco & Johnson (2015, p. 45)

The language supports presented in Table 1 across the five levels of language proficiency, (e.g., sentence starters, word banks, glossaries, cloze sentences, and paragraphs), represent language scaffolds that can be used to foster a deeper understanding of the content being developed (Walqui, 2008). These scaffolds are embedded throughout the NLAP and HLAP templates. Notice that, for all the language proficiency levels, students are encouraged to work in partnerships and small and large groups in order to encourage oral interactions in the home and new language and to provide academic and linguistic support for each other. The BCCP became a tool that teachers of multilingual learners could use to identify pedagogical resources that could support them in scaffolding content and language as the students met the academic demands of the CCLS. While NYSED engaged in gathering information on the implementation of the CCLS, I engaged in obtaining information on how teachers of multilingual learners viewed the scaffolds presented in the BCCP. This is the focus of the next section.

Study on the Implementation of the Bilingual Common Core Progressions

To explore the teachers' perspectives on the BCCP, I conducted an interview study in September, October, and November of 2017. All 16 of the teachers that were interviewed worked in New York City school settings with multilingual learners. The teachers who participated in this study had all been part of at least one of the three full-day workshops sponsored by the NYCDOE in 2017. The three workshops took place during February, April, and May of 2017. A member of the NYCDOE and I conducted these workshops together. Furthermore, 10 of the 16 teachers had also participated in professional development sessions offered by the Regional Bilingual Resource Network (RBERN) prior to 2017. All the workshops centered on implementation of the BCCP. A total of 75 teachers participated in these three workshops. During the summer months of 2017, all 75 teachers were contacted via email and asked to participate in the present study. Thirty-three teachers answered the email. Of these 33 teachers, 16 completed all three of the individual one-to-two hour-long interviews. The interviews were conducted after school hours at the teacher's school between September and December, 2017. All of the teachers also participated in a final focus group that took place at Queens College on December 2017. This final group conversation lasted three hours. This article only reports the insights and suggestions of the 16 teachers who completed the three individual interviews and who attended the final focus group.

All of the teachers were female; they had been teaching their respective grade levels for 3 to 5 years and had been implementing the BCCP for 2 to 4 years. They ranged in age from 28 to 41. Table 2 below presents the characteristics of the bilingual education programs where the informant teachers were employed. Seven teachers worked in transitional bilingual programs that use Spanish to scaffold English instruction, and they were also responsible for providing ENL support and instruction in their classrooms. Also, seven teachers taught in dual language bilingual education programs. These programs used two languages to instruct academic content and students with different home languages, including English. Finally, two ENL teachers

participated in this study; one worked at a middle school and the other worked at a high school.

Teachers working in side-by-side programsⁱ came from the same school. All the other teachers came from different schools. All 16 of the teachers who participated in these interviews were working in schools located in the borough of Queens. In New York City, Queens is the second-largest (after Brooklyn) and the most ethnically diverse urban area in New York State. According to the 2017 US Census, an estimated 2,358,582 residents lived in Queens in 2017, and 48% of them were foreign born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

Seven of the 16 teachers who participated in this study taught in dual bilingual programs within a partnership (or side-by-side programs). One teacher developed the curriculum in English—usually a monolingual teacher—and the other teacher, who was bilingual, developed the home language. Five of these teachers taught in elementary school settings and three taught in middle school classrooms. The teachers who worked in middle, dual language schools (who spoke English and Spanish, see Table 2) exclusively taught a subject area associated with one language: math in Spanish and social studies in English.

Table 2*Characteristics of Programs where the Study Informants Work*

Program Placement of Teacher Informants	Number of Teachers	Teacher Informants Instructional Responsibilities by Language, Type of Instructional Program, and Grade
Teachers in dual language bilingual programs ⁱⁱ	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teacher worked in a 2nd grade Korean-English program (self-contained, or teaching both languages). • Two teachers worked in a Mandarin Chinese-English 5th grade classroom (side-by-side program). • Two teachers worked in a Spanish-English 1st grade classroom (side-by-side). • One teacher worked in a dual language program teaching math in Spanish to 6th grade students. • One teacher worked in a dual language program teaching social studies in English to 6th and 7th grade students.
Teachers in transitional bilingual programs and ENL programs. ⁱⁱⁱ These teachers provide ENL support and instruction to their students.	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two teachers worked in a transitional bilingual program teaching Spanish-English in a 2nd grade class. • One teacher worked in a transitional bilingual program teaching Bengali-English in a 3rd grade class. • Two teachers worked in a bilingual transitional program teaching Spanish-English in a 4th grade class. • Two teachers worked in a bilingual transitional program teaching a 5th grade class.
ENL teachers Push in teacher ^{iv}	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One teacher taught ENL to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes. • One high school teacher was a push in teacher in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classes.

The individual interviews were semi-structured. The following three guiding questions were designed to facilitate the teachers' ability to reflect on the advantages and shortcomings of the BCCP:

- How do you use the BCCP?
- How has the BCCP contributed to making you a better teacher of multilingual learners?
- What are the shortcomings or areas where the BCCP can be improved?

After all the interviews were completed, a focus group meeting was held and all 16 of the teachers attended. Initially, I shared the findings and asked them to react to and clarify the information, and ask questions. After the findings were discussed, the meeting evolved into a conversation in which the teachers shared and discussed their suggestions for creating pedagogical practices to use in classrooms with multilingual learners that are facing the demands of the NGELAS.

All of the teachers' answers and insights were carefully documented through copious field notes and audio-recorded interviews. I also took photographs of instructional materials produced by the teachers, and I photocopied the students' work.

To collect this information, I obtained permission from the NYCDOE, the school principals, and the teachers. The field notes were continuously read to identify any missing information, doubts, and points requiring further clarification related to the teachers' answers and observations. Only those comments that provided information relevant to the three research questions were further scrutinized, which was done by writing analytical memos and discussing them with the teachers. The following section presents the teachers' insights and experiences related to implementing the BCCP.

Findings

This section discusses the main findings from the individual interviews with the teacher informants and the focus group meeting. First, I present some of the issues that they identified as problematic in their implementation of the BCCP. Then, I identify some of their suggestions for how to improve the BCCP.

Issues Identified by Teacher Informants

The teachers identified three main issues regarding the implementation of BCCP. Their experiences implementing the BCCP informed their answers:

- Isolation versus integration
- Presence of the home language in English learning contexts
- Limited representation of the Linguistic Demands section of the NLAP in different languages

Isolation versus integration. In the BCCP, every standard is presented in isolation. This resulted in the creation of more than 600 templates or tables that encompassed lessons for use in PreK to 12th grade classrooms. For the teachers in the study, this suggested that each standard has to be introduced and addressed separately. Depending on the grade, teachers are expected to analyze an average of 60 templates, which makes it cumbersome and, according to some of the teachers, overwhelming. Perhaps, more importantly, when I prompted the teachers to discuss the shortcomings or areas where the BCCP could be improved, 14 of the 16 teachers (88%) thought that by presenting the standards separately, they had to be addressed independently and not in conjunction with each other. In the final focus group meeting one of the 16 teachers working in a transitional classroom reacted to this finding by suggesting:

Standards can be targeted simultaneously. For example, students can research and discuss their findings with a partner or in a small group and/or whole class setting. These discussions would entail not only reporting the findings, but also offering feedback to peers and sharing how they each want to write about what they have learned (Interview Notes, Nov. 15, 2017).

The research task described by this teacher would target the speaking and listening standards. This task sets the expectation that students will share their findings orally (CCLS standard 4 for speaking and listening), and in writing, based on their reading and research (CCLS standard 9 for writing). Specifically, this task can be supported by placing students in groups, and asking them to share what they have learned and how they will convey it in their writing. Students can discuss the

organization, vocabulary, structure, and conclusions of their written assignment with their peers and teachers. All the teachers agreed that best teaching practices assumed that more than one standard per activity would be targeted.

Presence of the home language in English learning contexts. When answering the first two questions, all 16 teachers (100%) agreed that using the home language while instructing in English had strengthened their teaching. This is an element that the teachers appreciated; and they made constant use of it in their classrooms. The dual language bilingual teacher working in a Korean-English school shared that she engaged in this practice prior to knowing the BCCP. However, the BCCP had provided deeper understanding about language use in her classroom. It had validated her perception that using English (her students' stronger language) in the classroom, supported students' understanding, even when Korean is used as the language of instruction. This teacher explained:

In my school, English is the stronger language of my students, and, in many cases, their home language as well. Korean functions as a heritage language that has been integrated into a dual, bilingual program. My students need support, and learning Korean and English can be one of the ways in which I can provide this support (Interview Notes, October 3, 2017).

This example also illustrates how the home language is not always a language other than English; however, teachers can be flexible in providing support by knowing how languages function in their students' lives (Moll, 2013). All the bilingual teachers in this sample shared that they felt comfortable providing explanations, information, and instructions in the home language when working in English language contexts. This is one of the key insights included in the BCCP document, and shown in Table 3. Notice that, at the end of every column for entering, emerging, and transitioning students, there is a statement that acknowledges the presence and use of the home and new language in the NLAP. For the 16 teachers who participated in this study, this was a particularly useful statement because it placed content at the center of learning and allowed the students to process their understanding in their home language.

Table 3

Section of an NLAP for Entering, Emerging, and Transitioning Students in which the Presence of the Home Language is Integrated into English Learning Settings (as seen at the bottom of each of the language proficiency levels)

NEW LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRESSIONS (ESL/New Language)

Common Core Anchor Standard (RI.6): Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.				
Common Core Grade 4 Standard (RI.4.6): Compare and contrast a first- and second-hand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.				
5 Levels of Language Development	Entering (Beginner)	Emerging (Low Intermediate)	Transitioning (High Intermediate)	
When acquiring a new language, using grade level texts and appropriate sup				
RECEPTIVE	Oracy and Literacy Links	Listening-Centered Activity: Organize <i>pretaught words and phrases on a T-chart</i> to identify first- and second-hand accounts of the same topic, as text is read in <i>partnership and/or teacher-led small groups</i>	Listening-Centered Activity: Organize <i>preidentified words and phrases on a T-chart</i> to identify first- and second-hand accounts of the same topic, as text is read in <i>partnership and/or small groups</i>	Listening-Centered Activity: Organize <i>phrases and sentences on a partially completed T-chart</i> to identify first- and second-hand accounts of the same topic, as text is read in <i>partnership, small group and/or whole class settings</i>
		Reading-Centered Activity: Organize <i>pretaught words and phrases on a Venn diagram</i> to compare and contrast first- and second-hand accounts of an event or topic	Reading-Centered Activity: Organize <i>preidentified words and phrases on a Venn diagram</i> to compare and contrast first- and second-hand accounts of an event or topic	Reading-Centered Activity: Organize <i>phrases and sentences on a partially completed Venn diagram</i> to compare and contrast first- and second-hand accounts of an event or topic
		<i>in the new and/or the home language.</i>	<i>in the new and/or the home language.</i>	<i>in the new and, occasionally, in the home language.</i>

Source: Engage NY, 2014.

Limited representation of the Linguistic Demands section of the NLAP in different languages. For the reading standards, the NLAP presents a section called Linguistic Demands, which provides an example of how a teacher can use a text to target some of the linguistic markers associated with the cognitive demand embedded in the standard. For example, the template addressing the Reading for Information, standard 6, grade 4 (see Appendix B), states that students should: “Compare and contrast a first-hand and second-hand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided” (NYSED Common Core Learning Standards for English

Language Arts, 2010). The example presents Neil Armstrong recounting his first-hand experience as he stepped on the moon; a second-hand excerpt describes the same event depicted by a different writer (Floca, 2009). Some of the linguistic markers associated with this standard include the analysis of how the pronouns change from the first-hand account (my, we, me) to the second-hand account (they, themselves, their).

All of the NLAP templates include a Linguistic Demand section that targets English. However, in the HLAP templates, not all the grade levels include a Linguistic Demand and not all of the main languages found in the classrooms are included in that section. In fact, in the HLAP templates, only 1st, 4th, 7th, and 11th/12th grades have a Linguistic Demand section. In terms of the home languages represented in this section, only languages considered to be high incidence languages are represented. In New York City, dual and transitional bilingual programs have been created in languages that are considered to be high incidence languages, such as Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, and Formosan), Arabic, Haitian, and Bengali (NYCDOE, 2017).

For instance, HLAPs Linguistic Demands section in Spanish is found throughout the different grade levels. Chinese and Arabic linguistic demand sections are clustered for the 1st and 4th grades, but they are seldom included for other grades. For Bengali and Haitian, the HLPAs templates provide a few examples. This lack of consistency of examples presented in the different languages is the result of the difficulty in finding authentic fiction and non-fiction texts appropriate for students at different grade levels and across different languages that could also match the cognitive demand embedded in the standards.

An added difficulty is that, dual and transitional bilingual programs have also been created for low incidence languages, such as Yiddish, French, Italian, and Korean. Low incidence languages are not represented in the HLAP Linguistic Demand section. When the teachers discussed the shortcomings of the BCCP, this was an issue that triggered comments, which conveyed frustration from the dual language and transitional bilingual teachers.

One of the teachers working in the bilingual transitional program teaching Spanish-English in the 4th grade said: "*Fostering bilingualism and biliteracy requires abundant materials that are not always available*" (Interview Notes, Dec. 4th, 2017). This creates an asymmetric relationship between English and the language other than English being taught in a school. Many administrators and teachers that I have worked with think that authentic texts written in a language other than English should be the first choice used to develop language and literacy. While this scenario would be ideal, in reality, it is difficult, and in some cases impossible, to find high quality books written in all these languages that match the curricular needs in New York City classrooms. Even finding books for dual language programs offering Spanish, which is the language most often spoken by multilingual learners (64%) in the NYC public school system, can be challenging (NYCDOE, 2017). As one of the teachers interviewed for this study, who also implements the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) in her 2nd grade classroom, stated:

The books in English for the units are well organized and interesting. For Spanish, TC offers a list of books, usually of lower quality, difficult to find, and not as many as there are to develop the units written in English.” (Interview Notes, Sept. 7, 2017).

In essence, the teachers in the study found that the BCCP conveys an isolationist perspective of language by presenting the NLAP and the HLAP separately. They noted that the Linguistic Demand section did not provide enough examples in the different home languages. The teachers did find that including the home language in English teaching and learning contexts supported students who benefited from receiving and sharing information in their home language.

The next section summarizes the unexpected findings of the study. The open discussion that ensued in the final focus group meeting provoked the teachers to identify suggestions that they felt should be used in the implementation of the Next Generation Pedagogical Practices for multilingual learners. Although this issue was not part of the inquiry, the teachers’ insights suggest their agency in wanting the NGELAS to be infused with pedagogical practices that are unique to multilingual learners.

Suggestions Given by Teachers

The following three pedagogical principles were suggested as ways to implement the NGLS with a focus on multilingual learners.

- The role of talk and its critical relationship to literacy development;
- Encouraging metalinguistic awareness;
- Grouping students into flexible partnerships and small and large groups (including the whole class).

These pedagogical principles should not be considered to be separate entities. The teachers saw them as being interrelated, creating a vision as to how a multilingual classroom can work.

The role of talk and its critical relationship to literacy development. An interesting result of the final focus group meeting held with the 16 teachers was the suggestion that scaffolds for multilingual learners and their teachers should be presented in reverse order. In other words, in the ELA standards, speaking and listening should be placed first, followed by reading and writing.

- According to the teachers, the speaking and listening standards are always followed by reading and writing. Unfortunately, the CCLS and the NGLS include reading and writing first, followed by speaking and listening. All the teachers in this sample agreed that oral language development is important for all students, but it is especially important in the education of multilingual learners. All the teachers acknowledged the importance of oral language development for all students, yet they agreed that it should be uniquely highlighted when teaching multilingual learners (Smith, 2003).
- Many factors affect students’ attention to oral language and their willingness to engage in conversations. These factors include interest in

and motivation toward the topic of conversation, their relationship to the speaker, and the context and language used to communicate. For multilingual learners, including students who speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE), or any form of vernacular language, this is an important point (Sayer, 2013). A student might comprehend the information that a speaker of standard English conveys, but he/she will only be able to answer in his/her home language. Although traditionally allowing this flow during a conversation is considered to be disruptive, supporting it in the classroom, demonstrates how comprehension and communication can be emphasized in instruction.

Another unexpected insight was the discussion of the relationship between oral language development and literacy. Literacy development is not as effortless and natural as learning to talk. Unlike oral language, reading, usually, has to be taught, and talking plays an important role in developing literacy. Students who know the fluidity that characterizes a conversation will also know the importance of fluency in reading (Snow & O'Connor, 2013). Word meanings will be more easily accessed if a student has used them in their oral language; this, in turn, will increase reading comprehension (Escamilla, et al., 2013).

Foster metalinguistic awareness in bilingual students. The second pedagogical principle that the 16 teachers suggested was the development of metalinguistic awareness by opening spaces where multilingual learners can compare different aspects of the languages they are in the process of learning. The two teachers working in a dual bilingual program teaching 1st grade shared how they have been engaging their students in comparing how syntax (e.g., past tense formation in Spanish and English) and punctuation differ in both languages. This aspect is not embedded in the BCCP, but the teachers in this sample were aware of recent discussions on the role of translanguaging, whereby students are free to make use of their entire linguistic repertoire (García, 2009; García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; García & Kleyn, 2016). These teachers stated that, "*opening a translanguaging space is what allows for reflecting and thinking about how languages work*" (Interview Notes, Dec. 4th, 2017). After this comment, all 16 teachers expressed a desire for their classroom practices to reflect translanguaging in communication and teaching

Developing multilingual learners' metalinguistic awareness is based on the conceptualization that the languages that a multilingual learner is in the process of learning are complementary, not unrelated (García, 2009). The juxtaposition of two (or more) language(s) that are learned simultaneously enhances the students' awareness of the differences and commonalities of the languages in question. This runs contrary to the idea that bilingualism is enhanced by keeping languages segregated and compartmentalized (Cummins, 2008). Moreover, according to Escamilla et al. (2013), metalanguage plays a role in developing biliteracy. Developing metalinguistic awareness supports the multilingual student in grappling with more complex texts as a reader and as a writer.

Some of the examples that the teachers gave in the focus group centered on an exploration of form. For instance, in Spanish the adjectives follow the noun they

qualify; in English, the adjective precedes the noun. In Chinese, there are no special endings of words to indicate adjectives (quick/quickness) or adverbs (quickly). Bengali uses a Subject + Object + Verb (I rice eat/আমি ভাত খাই), whereas English uses a Subject + Verb + Object (I eat rice).

The discussion extended to word knowledge. Vocabulary growth in multilingual learners does not have to exclusively center on the exploration of cognates; it can explore how these words are used in each language. For example, cognates in Spanish and English do not function in the same way. Usually, the English word is considered more academic than its Spanish counterpart. *Abrupto* or *pálido* in Spanish are more commonly used than the English *abrupt* or *palid*, which are associated with literary language. For the teachers in this sample, implementing metalinguistic practices not only fosters a reflective process about language(s), more importantly, it supports the creation of pedagogical practices that uniquely support multilingual learners.

Grouping students into flexible partnerships and small and large groups (including the whole class). One of the conversations that the 16 teachers had in the focus group meeting was that, in today's classrooms, one of the main goals is to reach all learners by considering each student's readiness, interest, and behavior. The high school ENL teacher said: *"Grouping and regrouping students, regardless of the grade level, is a useful practice that remains largely unexplored. But, in my experience, when the groups are well thought out, the practice can make students more productive"* (Interview Notes, Dec. 4th, 2017).

Flexible grouping entails more than just moving a student's seat; it is a practical way to differentiate instruction as learning needs dictate (Tomlinson, 2004). Flexible grouping means strategically distributing students in order to deliver or enhance instruction. This can be done as a whole class, as a small group, or with a partner. Flexible grouping creates temporary groups that can last one hour, one week, or even one month. It is not permanent; it is a temporary way for students to work together in a variety of ways and configurations, depending upon the activity and learning outcomes.

There are a number of instructional benefits to flexible grouping that facilitate oral language and metalanguage. Flexible grouping is a great way to encourage oral language interactions around subject areas. Students can support each other by using their home and/or new language in order to improve their comprehension. Students can translate for each other, or they can engage in reading a text excerpt, which, in turn, will foster metalinguistic analysis (Goodwin & Jiménez, 2014). These activities are unique to multilingual classrooms, and they can support multilingual learners in deepening their reading comprehension and writing accuracy.

Final Remarks

In this article, I presented an overview of the NYSED BCCP. The focus of my discussion was to report the results of interviews conducted with 16 teachers working in dual language and transitional bilingual programs as well as English as a New Language programs who have been implementing the BCCP for two to five years.

The teachers' insights and suggestions were instrumental in providing qualitative feedback that can inform the scaffolds and pedagogical strategies used in bilingual education settings when implementing the NYSED NGELA standards—the revised version of the 2010 CCLS. The 16 teachers shared their perspectives about the BCCP, and taken together their insights have the potential for improving the education of multilingual learners.

Essentially, the teachers in this study want to integrate the home language and English within a content-based curriculum and to foster oral language development. This follows the premises presented in the NLAP BCCP. The teachers interviewed for this study would like to see pedagogical suggestions on how to support a student's analytical process by bringing languages together and by nurturing a deeper understanding of how languages work. They also want to foster conversations among multilingual learners in partnerships, small groups, and whole class settings. For the teachers, a flexible grouping approach is the best way to encourage oral language interactions around subject areas and to facilitate metalinguistic analysis. The teachers' suggestions conceptualize bilingualism from an integrative and dynamic perspective, and they have the potential to support the creation of pedagogical practices and considerations intended for the multilingual learner.

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Appendix A

Summary of the Additions and Changes Embedded in the 2017 Next Generation English Language Arts Standards in Comparison to the 2011 Common Core Learning Standards

Addition or Change	Reason	Links
Support for teachers working in Grades PreK to 2	The NGLS presents an introduction centered on early childhood with guiding points on how the standards can be applied in PreK to 2 nd grade classrooms. There is a more specific focus on the importance of learning through developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices and play.	http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/introduction-to-the-nys-early-learning-standards.pdf
Addition of lifelong practices for readers and writers.	The CCLS aimed at preparing students to be college and career ready. The NGLS has the same aim, but the goal extends to empowering students to be active participants in professional, civic, and academic spheres.	http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/introduction-to-the-nys-english-language-arts-standards.pdf
Merging of the Reading for Information and Reading Literature Standards	There can be a fine line between reading fiction and non-fiction texts. For example, historical fiction can describe a specific period that comes to life by introducing fictional characters. In these cases, students need to recognize that fiction and non-fiction can merge. Students need to develop the skills to recognize and differentiate these elements. For each reading standard, a code has been added to clarify if it applies to Reading for Information (RI), Reading Literature (RL), or both (RI and RL).	http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/fact-sheet-examples-revised-standards-may-2017.pdf
Reduction of the CCSS Writing Standards	Several of the CCSS Writing Standards were considered redundant, and they were not included in the NGLS. In the NGLS, there are grade-specific changes intended to clarify writing expectations.	The Crosswalk document specifies the changes between the CCLS and the NGLS by grade level. The changes to the Writing Standards can be found in these documents: http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/teachers/next-generation-ela-learning-standards-crosswalks
Changes to the Language Standards	The Language Standards focus on English writing conventions and punctuation. These standards are presented in the CCLS by grade level, and they are currently grouped within grade bands for Grades PreK–2; 3–5; 6–8 and 9–12.	http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elarg.html

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Appendix B

Example of the Linguistic Demand Section for Reading for Information, Standard 6, Grade 4

Common Core Grade 4 Standard (RI.4.6): Compare and contrast a first- and second-hand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.		GRADE LEVEL ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Compare and Contrast First- and Second-Hand Accounts of an Event or Topic</i>
Linguistic Demands: The following are examples in English that may vary based on the language of instruction. In the first three levels (entering, emerging and transitioning), students can approach these linguistic demands in the new and/or home language.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify pronouns that indicate first- and second-hand accounts (e.g., first-hand accounts use I, me; second-hand accounts use third person, he/they). Use compare-and-contrast words and phrases (e.g., same, different, but, similar, whereas, however) to compare first- and second-hand events. 		
Example to Address the Linguistic Demands		
Text Excerpt	Teacher Directions	
<p>Text 1 (First-hand account)</p> <p>Interview with Neil Armstrong: First Man to Walk on the Moon</p> <p>In my view, the emotional moment was the landing. That was human contact with the moon, the landing. . . . It was at the time when we landed that we were there, we were in the lunar environment, the lunar gravity. That, in my view, was. . . the emotional high. And the business of getting down the ladder to me was much less significant.</p> <p>Text 2 (Second-hand account)</p> <p>High above there is the Moon, cold and quiet, no air, no life, but glowing in the sky. Here below there are <i>three men</i> who close themselves in special clothes, <i>who</i>—click—lock hands in heavy gloves, <i>who</i>—click—lock heads in large round helmets. It is summer here in Florida, hot, and near the sea. But now <i>these men</i> are dressed for colder, stranger places. <i>They</i> walk with stiff and awkward steps in suits not made for Earth. <i>They</i> have studied and practiced and trained, and said good-bye to family and friends. If all goes well, <i>they</i> will be gone for one week, gone where no one has been. <i>Their</i> two small spaceships are Columbia and Eagle</p> <p>Text 1 Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/25/apollo-11-neil-armstrong_n_1830571.html</p> <p>Text 2 Floca, B. (2009). <i>Moonshot: The flight of Apollo 11</i>. New York: Atheneum. (From Appendix B, CCSS, p. 56.)</p>	<p>In a mini lesson, small group or whole class conversations, discuss how a first- and second-hand source can be identified by the use of pronouns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 1—First-hand account: Identify nouns and associated pronouns (bold) (e.g., I, my, we) that indicate the topic of the text (e.g., the landing on the moon). Text 2—Second-hand account: Identify the nouns and associated pronouns (<i>italics</i>) (e.g. <i>three men, who, they</i>) that reflect that this is a secondhand account. Use compare-and-contrast words to explain the differences in the accounts (e.g., The first- and second-hand events are similar because ____; Even though both accounts show ____, they differ in that ____). 	

Source: Engage NY, 2012.

End Notes

ⁱ Side-by-side bilingual programs are those in which two teachers develop the curriculum for the same grade level in different languages.

ⁱⁱ Dual bilingual programs are defined as programs that equally develop the curriculum in two languages. The most prevalent form of dual language programs in New York State are the so called 50/50 dual language, bilingual programs where one teacher develops a curriculum in English and the other teacher teaches it in a language other than English.

ⁱⁱⁱ Transitional bilingual programs emphasize the home language in the beginning grades. For instance, a first grader can receive 90% of instructional time in his/her home language, and the instruction gradually incorporates English throughout the subsequent grades. A third grader can receive 50/50 of his/her instruction in English and the home language, and by 5th grade, English is the dominant language of instruction (e.g., 80%) as instruction in the home language diminishes.

^{iv} Push in ENL teachers enter the classrooms and provide support while the classroom teacher is teaching. The support and scaffolds have to be associated with a content area that the classroom teacher is in the process of developing.