

# **CBER Explorations in Bi-National Education**

**Number 5**



Teacher Recruitment and Employment practices  
in Selected States: Promising Prospects for Foreign-  
Trained Teachers

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Promising Prospects for Foreign-Trained Teachers***

***By Carlos Vallejo and Ana G. García***

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## Editor's Preface

### CBER Explorations in Bi-National Education

#### **Preface to the Series**

As we welcome a new century and a new millennium, dire predictions are being heard in education circles concerning the teacher shortage that will face U.S. schools in the near future. In the next few years, baby boomer teachers will retire in record numbers. To complicate matters, not enough young people are entering the profession. The pipeline leading from high school to the profession is far from full. This is especially true of Hispanic youth, many of whom leave school before having the option of entering teaching as a career.

But crises sometimes lead to opportunities. Such is the case of those states with large Spanish-speaking populations. Mexico has long been the most important source of Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States. Recently, immigration from Mexico has begun to change. Once a phenomenon limited to unskilled and semi-skilled workers, it now involves immigrants that are markedly diverse. Among recent newcomers there are growing numbers of people from the urban areas of Mexico where educational opportunities are better. This change in the demographics of Mexican immigration signals an increase in immigrants from the professional and technical classes. Well prepared professionals and technicians are coming to the United States to live and work. They have much to offer their new country.

Mexican teachers are part of this shift in immigration patterns. In difference to previous generations of teachers, the Mexican teacher of today has undergone the equivalent of a four-year college education. The obvious difference between Mexican and U.S.

teachers is that the former may not have a full command of the English language. They cannot therefore, practice their chosen field in U.S. schools. In addition there appear to be critical gaps in the Spanish proficiency and literacy of U.S. teachers who are already credentialed as bilingual education teachers here (Guerrero, 1999). As they acquire English, the growing number of Mexican teachers in our midst—teachers who are fully proficient in Spanish—is welcome news for bilingual education. Here is a new and untapped pool of teaching talent waiting in the wings and eager to prepare for teaching duties in the United States.

*Project Alianza*, one of the initial sponsors of this monograph series, focuses energy, resources, and attention on this new resource: *normalista* teachers educated in Mexican teacher colleges (normal schools), who reside in the United States and who aspire to re-enter the profession in the United States. The alliance, consisting of several universities, a national R&D organization, and a bi-national foundation, has taken on the challenge of reducing the structural, cultural, and linguistic obstacles that have precluded the integration of this new pool of teachers into U.S. classrooms as full professionals. With financial support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the members of *Project Alianza* are working to overcome these obstacles. They expect to facilitate the certification and absorption of several hundred teachers who started their education in Mexico and hope to work here, after meeting all the requirements that are met by every other teacher in the states in which they expect to work. By pointing the way to a new form of international collaboration in education, *Project Alianza* will make an important contribution to diminishing the anticipated shortage of well prepared teachers in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

When the opportunity was extended to the Center for Bilingual Education and Research to become one of *Project Alianza* partners, we accepted eagerly. Bi-national collaboration at all levels of education between the United States and Mexico is one of our strongest interests. We see no reason why the problem of educating immigrant youngsters should fall solely on U.S. schools and teachers. We were aware, even before the *Project Alianza* effort began, that important players in the Mexican educational system were willing and able to help reduce the cultural and linguistic

barriers to the adequate education of these students. When we reviewed the history of previous bi-national collaborations, we were surprised to learn that only a few isolated efforts had been made to bring together educators from both sides of the border, to engage in dialogue and to develop spaces and opportunities in which to explore ideas for educating immigrant children more collaboratively and perhaps more successfully. To the extent that research, collaboration, and innovation have taken place, they have occurred almost exclusively within the United States. It was as if an implicit assumption existed that Mexicans had no cards in the matter and that our respective professional obligations ended on our respective sides of the border. Since we live and work along one of the most open borders in the world, it is difficult to explain why educators in the United States have shouldered the difficult task of educating these students without consulting or collaborating with colleagues who worked with them before they immigrated.

From these observations and concerns arose the idea of publishing a series of papers aimed at promoting a continuing bi-national conversation concerning this problem. We choose the term "Explorations in Bi-National Education" as the title of this collection. With five monographs currently in the series, the Center for Bilingual Education and Research (CBER) hopes to inform the dialogue over the nature of education in areas with substantial Hispanic concentrations and on the mutual obligations of sending and receiving countries to collaborate in meeting this challenge. By helping to arrange for the integration of Mexican *normalistas* into the U.S. teaching force, we hope that other issues will surface, and that researchers and scholars, in both countries, will rise to the challenge.

The role of CBER and Arizona State University in *Project Alianza* is the preparation of three policy related research reports, which will be part of our "bi-national explorations" series. It is our hope that they will be useful to policy makers and practitioners involved in these bi-national efforts.

The first of these monographs is a wide-angle view of the ways in which the United States and Mexico educate and credential teachers for the K-12 sequence. In the course of gathering and assembling

this information we found, to no one's surprise, that the topic is more complex than first meets the eye. The Mexican case is national in scope and offers little variation. There is little or no variation between each of the Mexican states or regions. All teachers in Mexican normal schools follow essentially the same curriculum which is prescribed by the central government through the Secretaría de Educación Pública. The U.S. system—in reality a hydra's head of state systems—is as variegated as the American states themselves. The role of colleges and universities is also different in the two countries and the subjects and experiences stressed in each country also vary in major ways. Still, upon completing the task, it was clear that enough similarity exists, that there is a solid common base on which to build a unifying structure between the two systems.

The second report in the bi-national education series focuses on the perplexing question of language proficiency of teachers. We explored the issue of whether Spanish-speaking bilingual education teachers in the United States are sufficiently proficient and literate in Spanish to function in the more demanding—and more promising—program models such as the dual-language or two-way programs of bilingual education. Michael Guerrero of the University of Texas at Austin authored *Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers*, an important probe of a long neglected question in bilingual education: what level of mastery, in Spanish, is required of bilingual education teachers in order to teach effectively in two languages? The results of his analysis are worrisome. While Guerrero's exploration does not give us a final and conclusive answer, it makes a timely contribution by pointing out major research areas that require attention and policy questions that require discussion. Building on Guerrero's analysis we can infer that, in this area, Mexican teachers who obtained a full college level education in Spanish, have an important contribution to make to our field.

In the third report in the bi-national education series the authors reported on the conversations they held with *normalista* teachers involved in *Project Alianza* before they completed their studies and became credentialed in the United States. They sought to



discover, in general terms, the *normalistas'* views about the teaching profession, the preparation of teachers, and the role of teachers in the community. This report revealed a high level of congruence between the Mexican trained teachers and their U.S.-reared counterparts involved in bilingual education programs. Nonetheless, some differences were detected and these may become more marked once the teachers enter U.S. classrooms and begin to practice the profession they interrupted, often for many years, as they sought a social and economic footing in this country.

In the fourth of the series, John Petrovic begins the much-needed task of comparing the curricula of public schools in the United States and those in Mexico. As was the case with the teacher education report, we were faced here with a difficult comparison since the K-12 curriculum is national in Mexico and thoroughly decentralized in the United States. By focusing on two key states with large Hispanic population, Petrovic was able to identify differences and similarities in the curriculum objectives for math and language arts in the two countries. It is the first of many such analyses that should be carried out in order to pin down the differences between what bi-national children experience in one country and in the other. Much remains to be done in this critical area and we hope that our initial efforts will inspire others to continue the task.

In the current study *Teacher Recruitment and Employment Practices in Selected States: Promising Prospects for Foreign-Trained Teachers* we broadened the perspective to include the experience of states and school districts that have credentialed foreign-trained teachers, other than those involved in *Project Alianza*. We set out to document, in broad terms, the collective experience of these entities in order to identify problems and opportunities that others have had in working with foreign teachers, chiefly *normalistas*. We were pleased to find that these efforts have been mostly positive. Problems and obstacles exist, but are not intransigent and can be solved with only modest effort and the will to act.

## Editor's Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to or have encouraged the development of CBER's concept of bi-national education and the concept of a *border pedagogy* crafted expressly for the special needs of the U.S./Mexico border. They share our belief that education should not be constrained by borders and that educators must challenge the divisive nature of political borders by working together, across borders, in pursuit of their educative mission. Among those who have encouraged us to develop this idea were David Berliner, Dean of Education at Arizona State University; Margarita Calderón, of the CRESPAR organization at Johns Hopkins University; and Graciela Orozco, of the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation in Mexico City. All of them have made important contributions to our work in this area.

We invited several colleagues to read our drafts and offer suggestions. We could not have completed the work without their help. We are indebted to Ashlea Deahl, Brian Cassity, Gerda de Klerk, and Wayne Wright, of ASU, for assistance in line editing the text. The staff of the Center for Bilingual Education and Research were required to use both sides of the brain to complete these volumes. They were outstanding in their support of writers, editors, and artists. To Elsie Szecsy, we are indebted to you for your assistance. To Pauline Stark, Administrative Assistant, muchas gracias por todo. Andrea Everette, Secretary Administrator, plunged into the intricacies of desktop publishing software from the day she walked into the office and never looked up from her screen until the work was done.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation underwrote a substantial portion of the costs for writing and producing some of the volumes in the series. We greatly appreciate their support. Special thanks to Cuca Robledo and Lalo Villarreal of IDRA, the leaders of the *Project Alianza*. They exercise leadership with warm support, lots of encouragement, and great humanity. In short, they are architects of this international learning community. Un abrazo para ustedes.

On behalf of the Center for Bilingual Education and Research and the Kellogg Foundation, we would like to thank each of the individuals that so generously agreed to participate in the study. This study would have been impossible without their cooperation and assistance.

Individuals invited and selected for participation served in an administrative capacity. Participant categories included principals, directors of Human Resource Services and State Departments of Education. Sites selected for participations were Arizona, Illinois, Texas, Florida, and Washington, DC.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks to the many colleagues involved in the day to day work of *Project Alianza*. Your views were critically important to us since you were the first customers. I thank you for providing valuable help as the writing unfolded and helping us fine tune the contents of several of the volumes in this series. Gracias, han sido muy amables con nosotros.

With all these friends and supporters we could hardly go wrong in any major way. Still, for those stubborn mistakes of commission and omission that remain, we take full responsibility.

Josué M. González  
Center for Bilingual Education and Research  
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Tempe, Arizona  
July, 2001

<sup>1</sup> The *Project Alianza* partners are the Intercultural Development Research Association, Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation, Arizona State University (ASU), California State University at Long Beach (CSULB), The University of Texas - Pan American (UT PanAm), The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and Southwest Texas State University (SWT).

## Biographical Information

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Carlos Vallejo is an Associate Professor in the Division of Curriculum & Instruction in the College of Education, Arizona State University. In addition to his traditional faculty assignments, he has held a number of quasi-administrative positions in the College. Over the past number of years he has served as Associate Director for the Center for Bilingual Education, Program Coordinator of the Multicultural/Multilingual Program Area, Interim Director for the Center for Diversity, Recruitment and Support Services, Principal Investigator for numerous Title VII grants in the area program development, teacher training and student recruitment and school-community partnership development.

# INTRODUCTION

Arizona, like many other states, is seeing a growing number of students who speak little or no English at a time when the number of children—both native English speakers and English language learners—is increasing dramatically throughout the United States. Emerging demographic data (Bureau of the Census, 2000) reveal that the number of school-age children will continue to increase substantially as we enter the new millennium. These changes and issues pose a series of perplexing questions, not only for personnel directly involved in the teaching and learning process, but also for the larger society. With increasing numbers of students in the classroom comes increased demand for teachers. However, not enough new teachers are entering the field with the required skills, knowledge and dispositions to educate a much more diverse student population.

It is estimated that approximately 3.5 million students enrolled in American public schools are English language learners (ELLs) (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1999). By the year 2010, minority students will be the largest segment of the student population in six states: California, Texas, Florida, Arizona, Illinois, and New York. In addition, there is a need to find resources to improve the quality of education to meet the needs of children who have been typically described as at-risk-students.

If education is a key predictor of employment, and ability to communicate in English is a means to the key, it is clear that language minority students need to learn English in order to participate fully in the economic and social destiny of this country. The rapid growth in the number of students who come from home environments where English is not the primary home language underscores the need for classroom personnel who are professionally prepared to understand and relate to language minority students, families, and communities, both from the English-dominant perspective as well as from the English language learning perspective.

Arizona is one of the fastest growing states in the country and this growth includes large numbers of a language minority (non-English-speaking) population. In little more than a decade, the number of English language learners in Arizona tripled (from just 32,563 in the 1984-85 school year). Perhaps the greatest challenge that administrators face is finding qualified teachers to help English language learners to achieve. To meet the needs of English language learners, Arizona schools are required by state law to staff classrooms with teachers who have completed appropriate training, either in bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL). Even though all three of Arizona's major universities (i.e., Arizona State University, Northern Arizona, University of Arizona) offer bilingual education and ESL endorsement programs, the present graduation rate of undergraduate and graduate students with either endorsement falls far short of the demand.

Children's attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their views of their own and others' worth are influenced by the contact they have with teachers who represent power and authority in the classroom. In a pluralistic society it is important for all children to see the faces of their own and each other's race represented in positions of authority. All children need contact with minority teachers to help prepare them to live and work in an increasingly multicultural, multiethnic society (Yopp, Yopp, & Taylor, 1991). Arguably, the presence of increasing numbers of minority teachers in classrooms both nationally and locally is a desirable goal. However, achieving this goal has been elusive because fewer minority teachers than needed are graduating from teacher education programs in the United States. One possible way to increase the number of minority teachers in classrooms in Arizona and across the United States is to recruit and train experienced teachers from other countries, particularly Spanish-speaking countries such as Mexico.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

School reformers have pointed out the lack of synchrony between the home and school culture as a significant obstacle to the achievement of minority students. A critical question that is explored in this preliminary report is how education professionals in school districts and/or public schools are working to increase the size of the minority teaching force. This study reports on requirements that state agencies, school district human resource services offices, and building principals in the states with the highest proportion of English language learners have with the recruitment and employment process of foreign-trained teachers. The study also examines a number of critical questions and/or assumptions related to the recruitment and employment of foreign-trained teachers. Through this preliminary report, we hope to broaden and add to the conclusions of existing studies, and raise additional questions, concerning the need for expanding the pool of potential teachers from underrepresented groups.



## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature was conducted to provide background information on the issue of teacher shortage, the recruitment of foreign-trained teachers into U.S. schools (especially Spanish-speaking teachers), and the implementation of programs for recredentialing foreign-trained teachers. The efforts of educational institutions to bridge the gap between an increasingly minority dominated student population and a continuing underrepresentation of minority teachers in the teaching force were examined. A national educational concern is the disproportionately low number of Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other individuals from other minority groups who choose teaching as a career. The continuing absence of these faces from the teaching corps steals opportunities from all students, and especially minority students, of a rich array of role models (Glass, 1991).

### PROJECTED TEACHER SHORTAGE AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT DATA

For the past 10 years, the need for public K-12 teachers has grown tremendously (Snyder, 1999). The number of teachers in the United States is 3.1 million, 2,666,034 of whom teach in public elementary and secondary schools (Snyder, 1999). Another 400,000 teach in private elementary and secondary schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, NCES, 1997). The number is projected to increase by 1.1% annually to a total of 3.46 million by

2008 (Gerald & Hussar, 1998). Elementary school teachers will increase to 20.5 million and secondary school teachers will increase to 1.19 million by 2008 (Gerald & Hussar, 1998). On the other hand, the number of students enrolled in K-12 settings is projected to increase to 54.2 million for the same time period. Furthermore, other factors such as teacher retirement and increased immigration will continue to increase the number of students, and create a need for more teachers (Yasin, 1999). The disparity between projected number of teachers required to educate a growing and increasingly diverse student enrollment and the actual number of teachers already in the profession or preparing to enter it is at an all time high. Some researchers estimate that districts will have to hire 200,000 teachers annually over the next decade to keep pace with the rising student enrollment and teacher retirement (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Other researchers note that teacher shortages are limited to particular regions and communities; communities such as urban and poor will have the greatest need for teachers (Yasin, 1999). These are the communities that also have the greatest need for teachers with an ability to relate to students who are non-native speakers of English and who may come from homes where English is not the home language.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1997), 20% of teachers abandoned their profession within the first three years, and Darling-Hammond & Sclan report that 9% leave the teaching profession within their first five years (1996). Several researchers have found that dissatisfied teach-

ers leave the profession because of burnout. According to Raquepaw & de Hass (1984), the five most frequently cited causes of burnout were lack of administrative support, lack of parental and community support, workload, low student motivation, and discipline problems. These authors also reported that developing a positive relationship with the administration, decreasing teacher workload, receiving more parental and community support, and developing effective disciplinary procedures were the most frequently suggested strategies for decreasing burnout. Similarly, Marlow (1996) conducted a study that examined their reasons for considering leaving the teaching profession. The researcher analyzed teacher perceptions in order to achieve a clearer understanding of the realities of the work place and how they affect a teacher's decision to leave. The researcher found that 44% of the teachers occasionally considered leaving the teaching profession. Reasons for leaving the profession included the following: students' lack of motivation and discipline, and poor student attitudes. Teachers also reported that emotional factors also influenced their decisions. The following emotional factors influenced them to leave the professions: lack of fulfillment, boredom with the daily routine, stress and frustration, lack of respect from the community, parents, students, and administrators, and low paying salaries.

#### FOREIGN-TRAINED TEACHERS

Because there is a shortage of U.S. trained minority teachers, public school administrators are finding ways to recruit and certify individuals who have received their formal

training at institutions outside of the United States. Some school districts turn to Mexico or Spain to recruit teachers in an effort to educate the growing population of Hispanic children. While different attempts are currently underway to increase the number of minority teachers, many foreign-trained teachers already live and work in the United States.

Public schools need minority teachers for several reasons. First, they become role models for minority students. According to Fuller (1992), role models are fundamentally important in influencing students values and norms. Teachers do more than instruct content. They stand as role models for what it is like to be an educated person, and they provide minority students someone with whom to identify. Second, an ancillary benefit of the presence of minority teachers in schools is that other students, including White students, also experience a minority adult as an authority figure in the classroom. This enriches their educational experience as well and also prepares them for life in a culturally pluralistic world.

Every year many foreign-trained teachers with professional qualifications from their native country and strong desire for a better quality of life choose to live and work in the United States. However, when they arrive they soon discover that their credentials do not correspond with the teaching certificate requirements as prescribed by governing agencies (State Department of Education and the Office of Teacher Certification). Consequently, they are often faced with the dilemma of not being able to utilize fully professional credentials earned in their home countries. As a

result, many accept employment that significantly under-utilizes their professional preparation and linguistic competence. Furthermore, many of these foreign-trained teachers do not have the resources to negotiate the application process for a state teaching certificate or understanding of the requirements set out by a state department of education through its teacher certification office. An important barrier that foreign-trained teachers also face is the lack of English proficiency; this has been a critical barrier for their integration into the public schools.

#### COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

As the student population in U.S. schools becomes increasingly culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, teachers representative of a variety of cultural backgrounds are essential resources in the public schools. The recruitment and retention of culturally sensitive and linguistically proficient teachers in both English and another language has become one of the critical educational issues of the 1990s (King, 1993).

There are a number of private and public foundations that fund programs dedicated to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of minority students in teacher education. For example, the Ford Foundation provides funding for a number of educational initiatives, which address issues related to the recruitment of minority students into the teaching profession. Their work has been dedicated to increase the presence of minority students in teacher education programs. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's *Pathways to*

*Teaching Careers* is designed to increase the number of teachers, especially minorities, working in public schools. Similar to the Ford Consortia program, the program recruits from a variety of pools, including paraprofessionals, and adults from non-traditional backgrounds. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation has funded *Project Alianza* to increase the number of bilingual teachers in the Southwest. Several institutions are preparing normalista teachers (teachers who have been trained in Mexican normal schools) to increase the number of competent bilingual teachers. This work is a unique teacher-preparation program that creates opportunities for these foreign-trained teachers to become teachers and leaders in U.S. bilingual settings. Thus, the Kellogg Foundation is providing the financial support for this study.

Another effort to address such teacher shortage has been made by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) (Varisco de García & García, 1996). OBEMLA and the University of Texas at El Paso established the *Binational Initiative for Educational Development*, which sponsors binational meetings to promote collaborative projects, seminars, and workshops on teacher exchanges and bilingual teacher recruitment and training, and a summer institute for Mexican and U.S. educators and researchers. OBEMLA has also promoted efforts to recruit and certify foreign teachers and to develop comparable teacher education programs at U.S. and Mexican universities that will allow international transfers of credit.

Foreign-trained teachers are currently an important human resource for the nation's schools, providing a variety of skills and talents to facilitate classroom instruction. They are especially important contributors in bilingual classes where they are selected in part because their ethnic background matches that of some of the students. Foreign-trained teachers bring to school their teaching experience, personal knowledge of language, and culture which might be unknown by the regular monolingual teacher.

These teachers enter the classroom as a response to the demands for minority member participation in the education of their children.

## METHODOLOGY

To learn about emerging practice in the recruitment and employment efforts of foreign-trained teachers in public schools, we conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with administrators in state educational agencies and the largest school districts in the ten states with the largest Hispanic student population. Our aim was to find out:

1. Where their teacher shortages were likely to occur in the near future;
2. The conditions under which they would accept foreign trained teachers to help fill these gaps; and
3. The degree of English language they require as a condition for employment in those schools/districts/states.

We developed two interview protocols: the first was to gather information from State credentialing agency personnel (Appendix A); the second was to gather information from school district directors of human resources and building principals (Appendix B) in six states. In our initial development phase of the interview protocol, we identified what we considered the most important components of recruitment and employment efforts:

1. The presence of official employment policies and practices;
2. The existence of methods to resolve inconsistencies between state policies and local employment practices;



3. The nature of minimum testing, academic, and experiential requirements for foreign-trained teachers that is not required for those trained in the United States;
4. The roles that local education professionals play in mediating inconsistencies or enforcing state credentialing process and district employment practice; and
5. The existence of reciprocal agreements with teacher certification processes in other states.

Two professors in the College of Education at Arizona State University reviewed the protocol and validated it as appropriate for the purpose of this study.

The interview protocol was designed to obtain general information regarding efforts of state agencies, district personnel, and school principals whose jobs were to recruit teachers. Furthermore, the protocol aimed to obtain answer the following research questions:

1. What official policies or practices exist governing the employment of foreign-trained personnel for public school classrooms?
2. To what extent do State policies on employment of education professionals agree or disagree with local practice, especially with respect to the employment of foreign-trained educators?

3. What requirements, beyond those expected from education professionals trained at U. S. institutions of teacher education, must a foreign-trained teacher satisfy, in order to qualify for a teaching credential?
4. What roles do various offices involved in the recruitment and employment of education professionals, including but not limited to foreign-trained teachers, play in mediating inconsistencies between State policy and local practice?
5. What reciprocal teacher credentialing agreements exist between states in the United States and between states and teacher credentialing agencies outside of the United States?

From responses to this protocol, we intended to extrapolate preliminary conclusions about existing recruitment and employment policies, practices and procedures with regard to the education of language minority students in public schools.

## PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this study consisted of administrative and/or program personnel for teacher certification at State affiliated agencies (offices/departments), school district directors of human resource services, and school principals.

In selecting participants, we decided to focus on the six states with the largest Latino population: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas. The purpose of selecting these states was to find out what state departments of education personnel, school district directors of human services, and principals are doing to combat the teacher shortage problem and to determine if they are involved in, or considering, the recruitment of foreign-trained teachers.

After these states were selected, the largest school districts within these states were chosen. The school districts selected were: Tempe Elementary School District (AZ), Los Angeles Unified School District (CA), Dade County School District (FL), City of Chicago School District (IL), New York City Public Schools (NY), and the Houston Independent School District, (TX). The final process for identifying the sample was to select schools that had the largest Latino population within these five school districts.

We chose to interview state agency personnel, district directors of human resource services, and building principals for the following reasons:

*State departments of education* through their teacher certification offices play an important role in shaping the teaching profession. In the majority of cases, the state agency performs governance and monitoring function in the credentialing process. In addition, state agencies are in the challenging position of attempting to respond to the competing interests of school districts, teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education, superintendents of public instruction, and the state board of education. This institution is also responsible for evaluating transcripts and/or other types of credentials, and facilitates and/or develops reciprocal Teaching Certificate Agreements with other states or other teacher licensing agencies in other countries.

*School district directors of human resource services* play an important role in recruiting and employing teachers by their primary responsibility of accepting, reviewing, and processing the necessary paperwork of individuals aspiring to teach in their districts. One of the major operational functions of the Office of Human Resource Services involves assuring that recruitment and employment processes and procedures are not in violation of national, state, or local legal regulations. The Office of Human Resource Services is obligated to respond to the needs of the district as well as ensure that recruitment and employment procedures and practices are within legal and ethical parameters.

*Building principals* also have an important role in the recruitment efforts of teachers. They are in critical administrative positions from the perspective of having first-hand knowledge of the needs of the school. This includes the demographics of the school, the various instructional programs being implemented at the building level, the professional development needs of the staff, and knowledge of the school-community. Thus, principals play a critical role in the advertisement, recruitment, interviewing, and hiring process. Also, principals interface directly with district-level administrative structures.

The rationale supporting the selection of these particular professional educational administrators assumes that individuals associated with these administrative and/or regulatory functions play a crucial role in developing, establishing, and implementing policy or practice.

## PROCEDURE

The researcher gathered the contact names and phone numbers of appropriate directors and principals to participate in this study. We then called these individuals to enlist their participation in an interview about recruitment and employment of teachers in their culturally diverse schools and districts, and to schedule the interview for a convenient time and date.

Each interview averaged approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The researcher asked participants to respond to the questions in the interview protocol. Additional probing questions were asked as needed to allow participants to elaborate on or clarify their answers. The researchers also asked about the participants' professional experiences and any concerns they may have about the study. All the interviews were audiotaped, except for one participant who did not grant permission; for this participant, the researcher took careful notes throughout the interview.

The audiotapes were later transcribed and all transcripts coded utilizing grounded theoretical, qualitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this approach, the researcher drew themes that emerge from the body of qualitative data in the transcripts. The researcher also relied on theoretical sensitivity, i.e., the professional knowledge derived both via the literature and through professional experience, in deciphering the meaning resident in interview data. Analysis of the encoded data in

this context provided for identification of emergent themes from the data and confirmation of what researchers might intuitively infer from their professional experiences using less systematic methods.

## FINDINGS

**A**nalysis of the responses of the state agency personnel, the directors of human resource, and the building principals are examined below.

### STATE AGENCIES

The general trend was that there was no set state policy for the employment of foreign-trained teachers. Some state agencies did report that, in some cases, individuals who received their training/credentials outside the United States were provided with a "transitional permit." In addition, these individuals have to have a formal evaluation of all transcripts and/or diplomas through agencies such as the Center for Applied Research Evaluation and Education in California or Educational Credential Evaluators in Milwaukee, WI.

The critical role that state offices play in mediating competing interests is illustrated by the following comments:

"It is essential that our office maintain positive relationships with local, state, and national teacher organizations . . . . We are fully aware of the needs (and expectations) of school districts and Colleges of Education. However, we are required to adhere and monitor state regulations. We have to submit reports to appropriate state governing bodies."



OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

The following are the themes derived from interviews conducted with Directors of human resources services:

State certification requirements

A predominant theme among the respondents was that foreign-trained personnel were expected to meet and adhere to state certification requirements expected of all classroom personnel. There was an attempt for state agencies to collaborate with each other in credentialing teachers from other states. This was reflected in the reciprocity agreement between states and agencies. Foreign-trained teachers were expected to meet all state licensing requirements. There was no definitive trend in requiring foreign-trained teachers' credentials to be assessed in additional ways beyond those of U.S.-trained teachers seeking credentials through institutions of higher education.

Professional teacher organizations

A theme that emerged across those interviewed was the importance of establishing and maintaining positive working relationships with teacher associations, especially with regard to their importance as agents of socialization into the profession. A predominant concern was that, at the present time, certain disciplines or content areas had greater shortages than others. Areas experiencing the largest shortages included mathematics, science, bilingual education/English as a second language, and special education. Given this reality, employ-

ing foreign-trained personnel or other non-traditionally trained teachers may be an attractive option. Nonetheless, sufficient support must be available to ensure that foreign-trained and other non-traditionally trained teachers become an integral part of the faculty community.

#### *District and building/central administration*

It was clear that the personnel office played a pivotal role in providing assistance to administrators in the employment of appropriate personnel at both the district and building level. This role includes:

1. Providing a mechanism that ensures that applicants adhere to all application and recruitment procedures.
2. Providing district and/or building personnel the opportunity to identify and highlight areas of high need. This articulation creates and maintains recruitment and screening process, which is more responsive to administrative personnel.
3. Providing assurance that applicants meet expected and/or required qualifications for the position.

#### *Institutions of higher education*

The respondents reported that teacher education programs play a significant role in addressing the need to recruit and employ foreign-trained teachers. There was a positive correlation between the ability of a school district to recruit and employ teachers and its

relationship with teacher education programs. In those cases where school districts had developed and maintained an ongoing collaborative relationship with a College of Education, the need to rely on recruiting foreign-trained personnel was not a high priority area.

It was very clear that these issues were professionally and politically sensitive. Thus, the major responsibility of working out the details was left up to building principals and local needs. At this point, it appears that teacher associations are aware of the situation and it is more a matter of developing and maintaining positive and ongoing communication with professional organizations between and at the building level. However, if the need to hire foreign-trained personnel continues to increase, the tenor of these relationships may change considerably.

#### **BUILDING PRINCIPALS**

Principals report continuing problematic areas. First, there is a clear need for biliterate educators, including those who have received their training from institutions outside the United States. Typically, the major problem that these individuals encounter is that their transcripts must typically be evaluated from a recognized translating agency. This is neither easy nor a trivial expense for foreign-trained teacher candidates. As one respondent indicated, "it is imperative that these individuals are in the country legally and have a work permit. The paperwork involved for all parties is incredible." Several colleges and universities have emerging and/or ongoing teacher exchange or training programs that focus on

*normalistas*. According to one of the administrators interviewed, "These programs provide a wonderful resource and provide excellent training and service."

The hiring of foreign-trained teachers has not really been an issue. It appears that hiring foreign-trained teachers would remain a low priority as long as their number remains relatively minimal, that they are hired on a short-term/emergency basis, or that these individuals would be working toward attaining regular certification requirements. However, the changes that have taken place over the past several years suggest that school people are going to have to be much more creative and aggressive in getting "regularly" certified personnel up to speed if they are going to be able to meet the needs of English language learners.

The type of program implemented has influenced various attitudes and/or perceptions. For example, in school districts implementing a dual language program, attitudes and perceptions related to language acquisition and maintenance seemed quite different from schools implementing bilingual transitional or ESL models of instruction. One of the principals interviewed commented, "The philosophical and operational premise is, and has been, the preservation of native language for our Spanish-speaking students. It is an enrichment program for monolingual English speaking students. Thus, we don't have to hire classroom personnel trained at institutions outside of the United States." One of the advantages of having teachers who are native Spanish speakers is that they are much more

capable of teaching content in Spanish. On the other hand, one major drawback to hiring foreign-trained teachers is that there are, at times, distinct differences in the methodology and pedagogical frameworks used in schools outside of the United States.

Principals also reported that teachers face a real challenge in terms of educational philosophy, academic expectations, and expectations favoring parental involvement. In terms of professional development, there are several areas that need to be addressed. These include issues and/or topics related to class management, behavioral problems, children with special needs (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and improvement of dialogue between monolingual English proficient teachers and Spanish proficient teachers.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the resounding themes in this study was that schools are very conscious of the expected teacher shortage. There was general consensus that there was a shortage of teachers in specific disciplines and/or areas of specialization (i.e., mathematics, chemistry, physics, and special education). School people also reported that:

1. The pool of in-service and pre-service personnel with an academic specialization in bilingual education was extremely small.
2. In general, rural communities are experiencing difficulty in the recruitment of teachers. This endeavor becomes further complicated when it involves the recruitment and employment of teachers.
3. Colleges of Education are not able to prepare sufficient numbers of teachers that are capable of providing instruction in a language other than English. Thus, school districts are faced with the dilemma of recruiting teachers.

What our literature review does not report too clearly is possible relationships between reasons why teachers decide to leave the profession and changes in the student population that may be coincident with teachers' job dissatisfaction. Closer examination of teachers' dissatisfaction with the profession is indicated to determine if interventions to help teachers

develop deeper understandings of their students' cultures are appropriate. However, this may be a long, slow process, and alternatives that will serve the needs of all students currently in school, and especially language minority students, are necessary to ensure that teachers who understand their culture and who can relate to them are currently in the classroom. One of these alternatives is to recruit and employ teachers who were trained in other countries, especially Mexico and Spain.

Consequently, on the basis of the literature and this preliminary study, the following premises appear worthy of further investigation:

1. Colleges of Education should develop creative and proactive recruitment and retention initiatives that will attract prospective teachers, including foreign-trained teachers in discipline areas such as bilingual education, mathematics, special education, early childhood education, and science.
2. Colleges, universities, and school districts should identify and develop a cost-effective way for facilitating the evaluation of official transcripts of teachers.
3. Professionals in school districts, colleges, universities, state agencies, and professional organizations should develop and maintain positive working relationships as they pertain to the recruitment and employment of foreign-trained teachers.

4. Foreign-trained teachers experience more career mobility than their monolingual English-speaking counterparts. Mobility was not limited among or within districts. Often times, foreign-trained teachers moved from one state to another. Thus, additional reciprocity agreements between state departments of education must be developed and existing agreements improved.



## SUMMARY

The teacher shortage is forcing virtually every school district in the United States to rethink its effort in recruiting and retaining its key employees. Among those interviewed, none reported that state agencies have a state policy for the employment of foreign-trained teachers. However, state agencies do evaluate all transcripts and/or diplomas formally. Human resource directors reported, for example, that all foreign-trained teachers were expected to meet all the state licensing requirements, including all the required state exams and teacher training courses required by that state. In addition, the relationship between teacher education programs and school districts was inversely related to the extent to which foreign-trained teachers were recruited and employed. The stronger the relationship, the less likely it was that foreign-trained teachers were recruited. Finally, when it came to working out details about their legal status and teacher training, the building principal was the ultimate decision-maker in hiring the teacher, including the foreign-trained teacher.

Overall, based on these respondents' comments, the hiring of foreign-trained teachers was not a high priority. For instance, the respondents reported a common practice of hiring foreign-trained teachers on a short-term, rather than permanent basis. Also, the respondents reported that many foreign-trained teachers were

working on the attainment of state teacher certification. This information suggests a temporary working arrangement for the teacher.

In a culturally pluralistic United States, it is essential that vibrant multicultural/multiethnic perspectives be developed, embraced, and celebrated. Technological advancements have created a reality by which students can virtually communicate with non-native speakers of English who live abroad. It appears a logical conclusion that foreign-trained teachers in U.S. classrooms can provide a more immediate means for all students to interact with teachers with similar cultural differences. Hence, we urge leadership in school districts, state agencies, professional organizations, and institutions of higher education to work together to bring this possibility into reality.

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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STATE AGENCY PERSONNEL

1. Does your office have an "official policy or practice" governing the employment of foreign-trained personnel for public school classrooms?
2. In cases where there is conflict between State policy and School/District practice, how is the conflict resolved?
3. Does your office have minimum testing academic, or experiential requirement for foreign-trained personnel that are not required of teachers trained at U.S. institutions?
4. What role does your office play in mediating inconsistencies and/or enforcing State credentialing policy and District employment practice?
5. Does your office have reciprocal teaching and/or endorsement agreements with other states?

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT DIRECTORS OF HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES AND BUILDING PRINCIPALS

1. What is the magnitude of the teacher shortage at the district and/or building level?
2. How are schools and/or districts addressing the teacher shortage dilemma?
3. To what extent are school districts employing classroom bilingual personnel?
4. What are the unique challenges, obstacles and opportunities facing school officials, credentialing agencies and professional organizations when individuals who receive their training at institutions outside of the United States are employed as classroom teachers?
5. What are common pedagogical, professional and bureaucratic obstacles that have to be addressed in the employment of bilingual personnel that receive their formal training at institutions outside of the United States?

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## ABOUT CBER

The Center for Bilingual Education and Research (CBER) is part of the College of Education, Arizona State University. CBER was founded in 1980. It is one of several university units that promote scholarship and discourse on issues and opportunities related to language, race, and ethnicity. During its early history, CBER served mainly as a technical assistance unit providing training and assistance to schools in the Southwest. In 1998, CBER shifted its focus and is now concerned with policy analysis and scholarship in bilingual and dual-language education.

CBER collaborates with others who share an interest in contextualizing bilingual and dual-language education in a broader framework of needs involving school restructuring and modernization better to serve all children. CBER's vision is to inform bi-national pedagogy uniquely suited to education in the borderlands.

## ABOUT IDRA

The Intercultural Development Research Association is a vanguard leadership development and research team working with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower *all* children, families and communities. It is an independent, non-profit organization that advocates the right of every child to a quality education. For more than 25 years, IDRA has worked for excellence and equity in education in Texas and across the United States. IDRA conducts research and development activities; creates, implements and administers innovative education programs; provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance; and develops leadership in communities to result in enlightened educational policies that work for *all* children.

## ABOUT MEXICAN AND AMERICAN SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION (FUNDACIÓN SOLIDARIDAD MÉXICO AMERICANA)

The Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation was created to encourage closer ties between Mexicans and the Mexican American and Hispanic community in the United States, as well as to foster collaboration and improve relations between the United States and Mexico. It is a binational, private, non-profit, nonpartisan organization.