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Article

Multilingual Literacy for All? Aligning Clinical Practice of Bilingual Teacher Candidates in California

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Abstract

Literacy is at the core of teaching. Teacher candidates in California need to complete a minimum of 400 hours of clinical practice, the key component for their training. The Teacher Performance Expectations (TPE) standards that guided the evaluation of bilingual teacher candidates have added TPE7 specifically on Literacy. The state evaluation tools for clinical practice—the California Teacher Performance Assessment (CALTPA), the edTPA, and the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST)—are aligned with these TPEs. This ecosystem creates a series of challenges for bilingual candidates who complete their student teaching practices in dual language instruction and/or bilingual classrooms since the Teacher Performance Expectations (BTPEs) are the standards applied to coursework, but not necessarily to Clinical Practice. In this article, we critically analyze these challenges to promote multiliteracy for all, not only from an English Only perspective. In this article, we aim to offer recommendations to a) prepare bilingual teacher candidates, b) scaffold their development as educators, and c) assess their work through student teaching. We also provide support systems to be set in place for to Teacher Preparation Programs (TPPs) to ensure multiliteracy in an equitable, and inclusive framework that should guide the training of bilingual teacher candidates.

Keywords: multiliteracy; bilingual education; clinical practice; TPE-BTPE; teacher education

1. Introduction. Literacy, TPPs and Clinical Practice in the Bilingual Authorization

In a context of teacher shortage nationwide, preparing bilingual teachers has become a priority for many higher education institutions and LEAs (Carver- Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2018; Capdevila-Guiterrez et al., 2021). In California, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) oversees Teacher Preparation Programs (TPPs) at more than 250 institutions, preparing educators to support the state’s diverse plurilingual student population. Of those, approximately 48 are authorized to teach bilingual programs (see Figure 1) in 17 languages other than English. 20 of those institutions are located on CSU campuses (CTC, 2025a). These programs graduate hundreds of bilingual teacher candidates each year, arguably the highest number in any institution in the nation. On a quick review, it appears clear that over the past decade, California has overhauled its licensing and accreditation systems to establish updated standards for teacher preparation and performance, including bilingual programs (Patrick, Darling-Hammond, & Kini, 2023; Author 1 et al., 2021; Author 1 et al, 2024). These updated standards, known as six Teacher Performance Expectations (TPE, 2016) -later expanded to seven -Literacy Standard or TPE-7, (2022)- for beginning teachers. This standard 7 was added to the teaching preparation programs in response to the passing of SB488 in 2021 (CTC, 2023), a policy that wanted to overhaul how literacy in English is taught in the Golden State. In a last installment of California “reading wards”, it produced long-lasting repercussions, including in

Bilingual Teacher preparation and their clinical practice. Additionally, the Bilingual Teacher Performance Expectations (BTPE, 2021) for bilingual teacher candidates are aimed to emphasize the ability of bilingual teachers to implement ambitious student learning expectations, including multilingual instructional strategies that support biliteracy development and academic achievement in multiple languages.



Figure 1. Approved institutions in California for the Added Bilingual Authorization (CTC, 2025a).

In California, teacher candidates need to complete their clinical practice—a minimum of 400 hours—often divided between early field work and student supervision (CTC, 2025b), as well as completing an external evaluation, whether it is the California TPAs, the edTPA, or the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST). Bilingual candidates, the future teachers tasked to teach the Multilingual Learners (MLL) or Emergent Bilinguals (EB) (We may use Emerging Bilinguals EB and Multilingual Leaners MLL interchangeably.) are only required to complete 20 hours of observation.

In the process of preparing future educators, clinical practice is an essential tool that cannot be overlooked. Considered quintessential for teacher candidates to learn from the field (Whitford & Villaume, 2014; Singh, 2017), it is guided by experienced educators and university supervisors that help the future teachers contemporize the theory and practice while absorbing from the real situation in the classroom what it takes to become a teacher today. This is even more important with bilingual programs, where specific and very tailored multiliteracy strategies and practices are involved.

Without question, California is a powerhouse in preparing bilingual teachers in the nation in a time of teacher shortages (NCES, 2025; Author 1 et al., 2024b), where the CSU system alone prepares close to half of the state teacher candidates. However, there is a disconnect between both sets of standards that have been updated at different times and spheres of influence. The main one is that while institutions offering bilingual programs design their coursework based on the new sets of BTPEs, clinical practice is still governed by the TPEs. With the inclusion in 2024 of the 7th TPE, some more layers are brought into the training of literacy. Still, both sets of standards suffer from this alluded misalignment. In the next chapter, we compare the original 1-6 TPEs to the original BTPEs 1-6. Then, we compare the recent TPE 7 to the BTPEs 1-6 to see the alignments and disconnects regarding clinical practice.

California’s Reading Wars and the Evolution of Literacy Policy

The Golden State has long been a laboratory for educational policy and, specifically, literacy instruction given its diverse composition (Author 1 et al., 2024). The history of literacy instruction in California is deeply intertwined with the national “reading wars,” an enduring pedagogical and epistemological dispute regarding how children best learn to read. The conflict between meaning-based approaches (such as whole-language and balanced-literacy) and structured, phonics-based models has shaped both research and policy for decades (Adams, 1990; Pearson, 2004). Whole-language pedagogy, which emphasizes contextual meaning, student agency, and authentic literature, rose to prominence in California during the 1980s and early 1990s but was soon criticized for its limited attention to decoding and phonological skills. Empirical meta-analyses have pointed that systematic phonics instruction significantly improves students’ word recognition and spelling abilities compared to non-systematic or incidental phonics approaches (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001; Foorman et al., 2016). Yet, as Yaden, Reinking, and Smagorinsky (2024) argue, the so-called “science of reading” movement should not be construed as a singular, immutable model but

rather as a complex evidence-informed framework that must remain responsive to linguistic and cultural diversity. However, some researchers have criticized the English Only approach of the Science of reading (Share, 2021). Bilingual advocacy groups also opposed this approach because it is not oriented to Multiliteracy (Mora et al., 2024; Stavely, 2024). Within California, persistent literacy inequities—particularly for multilingual learners and students from historically marginalized groups—have reignited calls for literacy instruction that ensures equitable access to foundational literacy skills in multiple languages. The last iteration of these wars has been the passing of Senate Bill 488 (SB 488), signed into law in 2021. The bill mandated the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to revise literacy standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) so that credential candidates demonstrate competence in evidence-based reading instruction across phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension (CTC, 2023). SB 488 also requires alignment with the state’s English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) Framework and the California Dyslexia Guidelines, thereby embedding attention to diverse learner profiles—including English learners and students with exceptional needs—into credentialing requirements (CTC, 2023). In response, the CTC initiated a multi-year process to develop a new Literacy Performance Assessment (LPA) to replace the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA), which had long been criticized for its misalignment with contemporary literacy research and its lack of equity considerations. Teacher-preparation programs must fully implement the revised literacy standards and TPEs by July 1, 2024, and align with the LPA by July 1, 2025 (CTC, 2023). These reforms may increase the tensions between English- Only and Multilingual approaches to literacy.

Comparing sets of standards: TPEs versus BTPEs.

A quick comparison between TPEs and BTPEs in Table 1 overview as they relate to clinical practice shows a disconnect between what we consider a critical aspect of the training of future bilingual teachers. In Table 1, we are comparing the TPE 1-6 to the BTPEs 1-6, signaling the parallelisms and misalignments. TP7 will be compared separately.

Table 1. TPE 1-6 and BTPE 1-6 comparison table on clinical practice.

TPE Standard	BTPE Standard	Alignments	Disconnects & Misalignments in Clinical Practice
TPE 1.1 Apply knowledge of students, including their prior experiences, interests, and social-emotional learning needs, to engage them in learning. TPE 1.2 Maintain ongoing communication with students and families. TPE 1.3: Connect subject matter to real-life contexts.	BTPE 1.1: Apply knowledge of students’ backgrounds, assets, and learning needs using state-adopted academic standards.	Both emphasize leveraging students’ backgrounds and experiences to engage them in learning.	BTPE places greater emphasis on bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural development, which is not explicitly stated in TPE.
	BTPE 1.5 Collaborate with families and communities as assets in student learning.	Both stress the importance of family and community involvement.	BTPE explicitly integrates family engagement into learning, while TPE primarily focuses on communication.
	BTPE 1.4 Recognize and incorporate students’ transnational educational and cultural experiences.	Both encourage making learning relevant to students’ lives.	BTPE extends this to transnational experiences, a concept not present in TPE.

TPE 2.1: Promote students' social-emotional growth using positive interventions.	BTPE 2.4 Promote social-emotional growth and bilingual development.	Both acknowledge social-emotional development.	BTPE uniquely integrates bilingual identity development, which is absent in TPE.
TPE 3.1 Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter and curriculum frameworks.	BTPE 3.1 Demonstrate knowledge of linguistic repertoires across content areas.	Both focus on subject matter knowledge.	BTPE includes linguistic considerations necessary for bilingual education.
TPE 4.1 Apply knowledge of students' academic status and learning needs for instructional planning. TPE 5.1: Use various assessments to monitor student progress. TPE 5.7 Interpret English learners' assessment data to identify their level of academic proficiency in English as well as in their primary language, as applicable, and use this information in planning instruction. TPE 6.1 Reflect on teaching practices for improvement.	BTPE 4.1: Design learning experiences that develop bilingualism and biliteracy.	Both involve planning based on student needs.	BTPE focuses on dual-language acquisition, while TPE remains general.
	BTPE 5.3: Apply knowledge of different types of language and content assessments.	Both emphasize assessment variety.	BTPE explicitly addresses bilingual assessment, which TPE does not.
	BTPE 5.6: Work with specialists to interpret assessment results to distinguish between English learners, Standard English learners, and students with language or other disabilities.	Both standards emphasize using assessment data to support instructional planning for diverse learners, promoting equity in literacy development	Potential challenges include inconsistent application of assessment results across different educational settings, lack of access to specialists, or inadequate professional development on interpreting multilingual assessment data.
	BTPE 6.1: Identify and mitigate biases to support student biliteracy.	Both stress reflective practice.	BTPE frames reflection in terms of racial and linguistic bias, a layer not present in TPE.
			Disconnects & Misalignments in Clinical Practice
TPE Standard TPE 1.1 Apply knowledge of students, including their prior experiences, interests, and social-emotional learning needs, to engage them in learning.	BTPE Standard BTPE 1.1: Apply knowledge of students' backgrounds, assets, and learning needs using state-adopted academic standards.	Alignments Both emphasize leveraging students' backgrounds and experiences to engage them in learning.	BTPE places greater emphasis on bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural development, which is not explicitly stated in TPE.

As seen in Table 1, the comparison between the Teacher Performance Expectations (TPE 1-6) and the Bilingual Teacher Performance Expectations (BTPE 1-6) reveals both alignment and key differences in their focus areas. While both frameworks emphasize student engagement, inclusive learning environments, subject matter expertise, instructional planning, assessment, and professional development, the BTPEs integrate a bilingual and bicultural lens throughout. For instance, TPE 1.1 focuses on understanding students' backgrounds, whereas BTPE 1.1 extends this to transnational

experiences and dual-language development. Similarly, both TPE 2.1 and BTPE 2.4 emphasize social-emotional growth, but BTPE stresses bilingual development and civic responsibility. The BTPEs consistently highlight translanguaging, bilingual program models, and linguistic transfer, as seen in BTPE 3.1-3.3, which expand on TPE 3.1-3.3 by incorporating bilingual-specific pedagogy. Instructional planning in BTPE 4.1-4.4 prioritizes biliteracy, metacognitive bilingual processes, and research-based bilingual models, whereas TPE 4.1-4.4 remains broadly applicable to diverse learners. Assessment under BTPE 5.1-5.4 includes bilingual proficiency and culturally relevant strategies, building on TPE 5.1-5.8’s general assessment principles. Finally, BTPE 6.1-6.7 deepens TPE 6.1-6.7 by addressing institutional racism, linguistic justice, and bilingual advocacy. The primary disconnect lies in the TPE’s lack of explicit bilingual education support, which the BTPEs correct by embedding multilingual instructional strategies, language equity, and culturally sustaining pedagogy into every standard.

The addition of the Standard Literacy, or TPE 7, in 2022 wanted to cover a lack in addressing the literacy needs of all students in California. In Table 2, we are comparing the newly minted TPE 7, or literacy standard, to the BTPEs 1-6.

Table 2. TPE 7 and BTPE 1-6 comparison table on clinical practice.

TPE 7: Effective Literacy Instruction for All Students	BTPE 1-6	Clinical Practice Implications
7.1 Plan and implement evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with standards.	BTPE 3.1: Apply bilingual instructional models in literacy.	Teachers must integrate bilingual education models into literacy instruction, ensuring that students develop literacy skills in both languages.
7.2 Use UDL, MTSS, and dyslexia guidelines in structured literacy instruction.	BTPE 4.3: Implement structured literacy strategies for bilingual learners.	Educators should apply targeted intervention strategies that support bilingual students, including those at risk for dyslexia.
7.3 Incorporate asset-based, inclusive, and culturally affirming literacy practices.	BTPE 1.1 Recognize students’ linguistic and cultural assets.	Teachers should use translanguaging strategies and culturally responsive texts to affirm students’ identities.
7.4 Provide engaging and developmentally appropriate environments that reflect literacy instruction.	BTPE 2.2 Design learning environments that reflect bilingual students’ needs.	Educators must foster a literacy-rich environment that values students’ home languages and backgrounds.
7.5 Teach phonics, decoding, encoding, and fluency explicitly.	BTPE 3.4 Apply biliteracy and metalinguistic awareness strategies.	Teachers should implement biliteracy-specific strategies to support phonological awareness in both languages.
7.6 Engage students in meaning-making using scaffolding to support complex texts and discussions.	BTPE 3.2 Use bilingual texts and scaffolding to support comprehension.	Clinical practice should include the use of bilingual and cross-comprehension.

			linguistic strategies to support deep comprehension.
7.7 Promote oral and written language development.	BTPE 3.3	Develop students' academic discourse in both languages.	Teachers must create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful, bilingual communication.
7.8. Develop effective expression through writing and development presentations.	BTPE 3.5:	Support writing in bilingual contexts.	Writing instruction should integrate both languages, allowing students to leverage linguistic resources.
7.9 Promote content knowledge through integrated literacy bilingual instruction.	BTPE 4.1	Align instruction with bilingual standards and frameworks.	Teachers should incorporate bilingual instructional frameworks across all subject areas.
7.10 Monitor literacy development assessments.	BTPE 5.1:	Use bilingual assessment tools and practices.	Educators should apply formative and summative assessments that account for bilingual development.
7.11 Provide integrated and designated ELD instruction.	BTPE 6.2:	Advocate for equitable bilingual education policies.	Teachers should ensure that ELD and bilingual instructional strategies align with equity and linguistic justice frameworks.

Table 2 demonstrates the intersection between TPE 7 and BTPE 1-6, emphasizing bilingual and biliteracy-focused instructional strategies. The new literacy standard, or TPE 7, draw heavily on the previous BTPEs in concepts such as translanguaging, resource-based pedagogies, or culturally and linguistically affirming practices. Bilingual candidates during clinical practice must integrate bilingual-specific approaches into literacy instruction, ensuring equitable access to literacy development for multilingual learners. Strategies include asset-based pedagogies, pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013) in literacy interventions, and bilingual assessments to support language proficiency and literacy skills in both languages.

This comparison delineates the difficulty of bringing the theory into practice though clinical practice and aligning different sets of standards in one teacher candidate.

Challenges on Current Practices

In the state of California, bilingual teacher candidates working on their bilingual authorization must complete 20 hours of fieldwork observation in a dual language instruction or bilingual classroom. In 2021, the California Commission on Teaching Credentials approved and adopted the new Bilingual Teacher Performance Expectations (BTPE). Teaching credential programs authorized to offer bilingual authorization courses were required to complete a matrix aligning their course syllabi with the BTPEs. Part of this alignment included how teacher candidates show competency of the BTPEs during their fieldwork hours.

In principle, the completion of these 20 hours is an excellent opportunity for teacher candidates to observe how plurilingual ecosystems work and how experienced bilingual teachers construct linguistically inclusive classrooms (Heineke & Giatsou, 2020; Poveda, Giampapa, & Relano Pastor,

2020; Acosta, Chen, Goltz, Goodson, & Padrón, 2021). The challenge is that these 20 hours are only five percent of the four hundred required by the CTC in terms of student teaching. In other words, bilingual teacher candidates have very limited opportunities to work and examine the BTPEs since their teaching and learning practices during student teaching are aligned with the TPEs.

Adding to these initial challenges, there are others equally important and have a direct impact on how candidates develop their skills to effectively, intentionally, and strategically design, implement, and evaluate linguistically inclusive practices. As we mentioned in the introduction, teacher candidates have to design, submit, and receive a passing score in one of the three approved state assessments—CALTPA, edTPA, or FAST—in order to qualify for a preliminary credential. The challenge in this context is that candidates are placed in DLI or bilingual classrooms where the instruction is conducted in a language other than English (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin). The three aforementioned assessments required candidates to design lesson plans, including differentiated instruction for English learners. We agree on the importance of showing competency in linguistically inclusive unit design; however, we contest that this could be better completed through the lenses of the BTPEs instead of the lenses of the TPEs.

Using TPE 5.7 as an example, candidates need to show competency in “interpreting” English learners’ assessment data to identify their level of academic proficiency in English as well as in their primary language, as applicable, and use this information in planning instruction.” Reading through this TPE, it seems evident that the priority is for the student to acquire levels of language proficiency in English and, “if applicable, on their primary language.” In a DLI classroom, one of the main goals is for the student to acquire high levels of language proficiency in two languages. Thus, focusing on English language proficiency limits the candidate’s opportunities to learn how to design activities such as cross-linguistic comparisons that support the development of metalinguistic awareness for all the students.

Another challenge with the current system based on the TPEs is that candidates complete these assessments almost entirely in English. Without negating the importance of effectively using the pedagogical language knowledge in English, we wonder how bilingual teacher candidates could develop these same skills in the other instructional languages (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin). Author 2 et al. (2016), in their analysis of teaching specific Spanish competencies, state, “The field needs to move from developing (and assessing) general and academic Spanish competencies to facilitating opportunities for teachers to acquire teaching-specific Spanish language competencies needed to teach content-area knowledge in K-12 bilingual schools” (p. 79). The question here is: how can bilingual teacher candidates acquire teaching-specific Spanish language competencies when they design and complete the state assessments in English?

A third challenge emanates from the wording of the TPEs (2016):

“The TPEs explicitly require beginning teachers to know and be able to apply pedagogical theories, principles, and instructional practices for the comprehensive instruction of English learners. They know and can apply theories, principles, and instructional practices for English Language Development to assist students to achieve literacy in English within the content area(s) of their credential(s).” (p. 3)

A final challenge would emanate from the specific training and preparation of clinical educators (also called supervisors) in bilingual Teacher Preparation Programs (TPPs). The necessary link between theory and practice that clinical practice allows is mediated by the roles of clinical educators. Some authors (Driskill, 2018; Singh, 2017) have explored the self-perception of preparedness for these roles. Given the rapid evolution of the bilingual education philosophies in the past 20 years, there might be a disconnect between the younger generation of bilingual teachers, and the more experienced bilingual teachers that are taking upon the clinical educator roles.

The goal of dual language and bilingual programs is for students to become biliterate. To accomplish the latter, teacher candidates must practice how to design, implement, and evaluate lessons that create spaces for students to develop language and literacy skills in different subject areas—mathematics, science, art, and music, among others. Narrowing student teaching and

assessments to the knowledge of English language development deprives candidates of acquiring the necessary skills to “assist students to achieve literacy in languages other than English within content areas.”

In the next section, we introduce some preliminary ideas on how to strengthen the clinical experiences of bilingual teacher candidates. Our arguments validate the content and purpose of the TPEs; however, we see the importance of amplifying the current TPEs with key elements of the BTPEs.

Key Actions for a Bilingual Framework for All Teacher Candidates

In this article, we propose a list of five key actions to align and improve the clinical practice of bilingual teachers based on the TPEs and BTPEs framework. We argue that these recommendations should be applied to monolingual candidates as well. The rationale behind this latter statement is that the majority of emergent plurilingual students are attending either English-Only or English-Medium classrooms.

A. Rethinking Formative Assessments for Bilingual Teacher Candidates (Aligns with TPE 5.7 and BTPE 5)

Develop and implement plurilingual formative assessments that accurately measure bilingual candidates’ pluriliteracy development by fully using their linguistic repertoire during clinical practice. Bilingual candidates possess dynamic and unitary linguistic repertoires that draw from their rich linguistic practices (España, Herrera, and García, 2019). An equitable assessment must provide candidates with the opportunities to critically reflect on how their repertoires are constructed and their use within different contexts and audiences (e.g., with students, at the school, with families, in the classroom, at the community).

Faculty and former bilingual teacher candidates should co-design these formative assessments. Current bilingual teacher candidates could be assessed with these formative assessments as well as visualize how these could be used in their own classrooms. This action will provide bilingual teacher candidates with ongoing training on interpreting assessment data for Emergent Plurilingual students. With this, bilingual teacher candidates will be better equipped to create culturally and linguistically inclusive classrooms where students create their own forms of expression and voices through translanguaging lenses (Helot, 2019). This alignment between assessment practices and bilingual pedagogies will promote more equitable learning outcomes.

B. Integrate “Pedagogical Language knowledge” Instruction with Translanguaging Practices (Aligns with TPE 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7 and BTPE 1 & 2)

Design clinical practice models that incorporate pedagogical language knowledge (Bunch, 2013) while recognizing and leveraging students’ full linguistic repertoires. Train bilingual teacher candidates to assemble reading and writing instruction with translanguaging pedagogies to enhance comprehension and biliteracy development. This ensures plurilingual learners receive explicit foundational biliteracy skills that draw from the richness of their linguistic repertoires. Within this context, students and candidates collectively develop” language practices [that] serve as a counterhegemonic pushback to monolingual and monoglossic norms that have the added benefit of identity expression, intergroup belonging, aesthetics, and linguistic maintenance (Author 2 et al., 2023, citing Martinez, 2013).

C. Enhance Clinical Coaching & Mentorship with Culturally Proficient Practices (Aligns with TPE 2.2, 2.3, 7.3 and BTPE 3 & 6)

One of the biggest challenges when creating culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms is to go beyond the mere *acknowledgement* of the students’ linguistic richness and diversity. As Author 2 et al. (2016), explained when identifying different levels of cultural competence, inclusion calls for not just *acknowledging* but also the commitment to *learn* from the students as well as to design learning practices that embrace, value, and *include* the students’ linguistic richness as part of the curriculum.

Mentorships for beginning teachers are highly impactful (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), especially during clinical practice. Creating opportunities for bilingual teacher candidates to observe and learn

from experienced bilingual educators who a) have a clear and strong stance on language justice, b) are committed to designing linguistically inclusive practices, and c) always look for critical ways to shift their pedagogies and praxis (García, 2018). Such mentorships are hands-on guidance in applying inclusive and culturally sustaining teaching strategies to improve classroom learning environments.

D. Expand Digital Literacy & Assessment for Multilingual Students (Aligns with TPE 5.4, 5.6, 7.9 and BTPE 4 & 5)

Provide clinical practice experiences that include technology-driven assessment tools and digital learning resources designed for multilingual learners. Embrace technology in its full capacity to make the most of its potential in teaching and learning languages and cultures. Ensure that bilingual teacher candidates are trained in interpreting digital instructions and assessment data to personalize instruction. This will empower equitable access to digital literacy skills, improve data-informed instruction, and prepare students to engage with 21st-century learning tools (Author 1 et al., 2021b).

E. Strengthen Family & Community Engagement in Clinical Training (Aligns with TPE 1.2, 7.4, 7.10 and BTPE 6)

Develop partnerships with plurilingual families and communities as part of clinical practice (Casper & Hernandez, 2024). Train bilingual teachers to use linguistically respectful and embracing communication strategies and culturally responsive engagement practices, including home visits, family pluriliteracy nights, and bilingual workshops. Bilingual educators will develop stronger connections with families, fostering a more supportive, inclusive school culture that recognizes and values linguistic and cultural diversity.

With these five key actions, the authors hope they can bridge the existing disconnects between TPEs and BTPEs, ensuring that bilingual teacher candidates are better prepared to support plurilingual students effectively in diverse educational settings. This section is not mandatory but may be added if there are patents resulting from the work reported in this manuscript.

Systems of Support

In this section, we would like to offer three systems of support to enhance clinical practice for Bilingual teachers in the context of California Policy framework and beyond.

1. Mentorship and Coaching for Bilingual Teacher Candidates

Supercharge a structured mentorship program should be implemented to support bilingual teacher candidates during their clinical practice. This system may include:

Pairing with experienced bilingual mentors: Each candidate should be paired with an experienced bilingual teacher who understands bilingual pedagogy and can provide targeted guidance on lesson planning, classroom management, and linguistic equity.

Bilingual University Supervisor Collaboration: Regular meetings between university supervisors and mentor teachers should be established to ensure that bilingual teacher candidates are receiving consistent feedback aligned with both teacher performance expectations (TPEs) and bilingual teacher performance expectations (BTPEs).

Reflective Practice and Feedback Sessions: Candidates should participate in structured reflection sessions where they analyze their instructional decisions, discuss challenges, and refine their practice with guidance from mentors and peers based on the alignment between the TPE and the BTPE.

2. Integrated Bilingual-Specific Professional Development

In an attempt to bridge the current misalignment between TPEs and BTPEs in clinical practice, bilingual teacher candidates should have access to targeted and specialized professional development to bridge the current challenges, including:

Workshops on Translanguaging and Asset-Based Pedagogies: These sessions should focus on instructional strategies that leverage students’ full linguistic repertoires, fostering biliteracy and academic achievement to be applied during clinical practice periods.

Assessment of pluriliteracy for bilingual classrooms: Training should be provided on designing, interpreting, and utilizing plurilingual and formative assessments to inform instruction, ensuring that candidates can effectively assess student progress in both languages.

Instructional Planning for Biliteracy: Candidates should receive guidance on how to align lesson planning with both the TPEs and BTPEs, ensuring that literacy instruction is equitable and developmentally appropriate in multilingual settings and is coherent with their clinical practice hours and context.

3. Expanded Clinical Practice Opportunities in Bilingual Settings

Given that bilingual candidates currently have limited opportunities to engage in bilingual instructional settings due to the constraints of an English-only system, expanded placements should be prioritized through:

Increased Fieldwork Hours in Bilingual Classrooms: Expanding the required fieldwork hours in dual-language immersion or bilingual settings beyond the current 20-hour minimum to ensure meaningful exposure and hands-on experience.

Collaboration Between Universities, LEA, and Local Dual Language Schools and Organizations: Establishing partnerships with dual-language schools to create structured residency and internship programs where candidates can teach alongside experienced bilingual educators throughout their clinical practice

Bilingual Teacher Learning Communities: Facilitating peer support networks where bilingual candidates can collaborate, share experiences, and discuss challenges related to teaching in bilingual settings.

Navigating clinical practice while preparing to become a bilingual teacher becomes a keystone in the training of future bilingual teachers. While developing the skills necessary to create linguistically and culturally inclusive classrooms, bilingual teacher candidates need to juggle multiple added layers that further complicate their early formation. These systems of support will also contribute to closing the gap between TPEs and BTPEs, ensuring that bilingual educators are fully prepared to support their students' academic, cultural, and linguistic development.

Implications for Bilingual and Multilingual Teacher Preparation

The implications of these reforms for bilingual and multilingual teacher education are extensive. California's public-school population includes more than 1.1 million English learners—approximately 19% of total enrollment—underscoring the necessity of preparing teachers who can integrate structured-literacy practices with bilingual pedagogies (Gándara & Santibañez, 2021). Research agrees that explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness and decoding benefits English learners and students from linguistically diverse backgrounds when paired with rich oral-language development (Share, et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2007). However, scholars caution that structured-literacy frameworks derived primarily from English orthography may collide with for multilingual contexts; literacy instruction must attend to cross-linguistic transfer, orthographic variation, and sociocultural identity (Share, 2021; Yaden et al., 2024; Escamilla et al., 2014). Consequently, bilingual-credential programs must expand their curricula to ensure candidates receive systematic training in foundational reading instruction while also developing pedagogical knowledge specific to multilingual or emergent bilingual learners. The revised TPEs explicitly mandate that all teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to teach reading “to all pupils, including English learners” (CTC, 2023), signaling an expectation that bilingual teacher preparation will embody both evidence-based literacy and language-development frameworks, but being respectful to diversity of tis student body. This dual emphasis poses logistical and philosophical challenges for bilingual teacher education programs, which must redesign coursework, field experiences, and assessments to integrate cognitive-linguistic research with culturally proficient pedagogies (Lindsey et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This article has served as the authors’ self-reflection on how bilingual teacher educators can initiate a dialogue on how to rethink the clinical experiences of bilingual teacher candidates and all candidates at large. In a state like California, where more than 40 percent of the TK-12 students in public schools speak a language other than English, all candidates should be prepared to co-construct teaching and learning practices that embrace, value, and include the students’ linguistic and cultural resources. Bilingual teacher candidates should have the opportunity to enact the content of the BTPEs and the pedagogical and methodological elements included in these bilingual expectations to ensure multiliteracy at all levels.

Plurilingualism is a universal factor in all classrooms. Thus, bilingual teacher candidates and students deserve an opportunity to leverage the depth of their linguistic repertoires. As James Baldwin once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” The time to change clinical experiences for bilingual students has arrived. We can either face it or deny it. The latter goes against the idea of just, equitable, and inclusive education for bilingual students. The former opens bilingual teacher education preparation to a present and future where education using bell hooks words is a practice of freedom rather than a process of English-only domestication.

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