Coaching Teachers of Multilingual Learners using the REAMS Framework

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This article presents a framework for coaching teachers of multilingual learners, focusing on a three-year professional development project in a linguistically diverse high school. The author introduces the REAMS (Recognition, Engagement, Action, Means, Support) framework, adapted from the ProSci ADKAR® change management model, to guide individualized teacher coaching. The study employs practitioner action research methodology, involving collaboration between a university researcher, classroom teachers, and the school principal. The project aims to prepare teachers to understand and address the needs of immigrant students learning English as an additional language. The article discusses emergent findings from the first year, highlighting the experiences of two teachers with contrasting backgrounds and approaches. Key outcomes include increased teacher awareness of multilingual students' needs, improved instructional strategies, and enhanced self-reflection. The author emphasizes the importance of sustained, context-specific professional development in supporting teachers of multilingual learners. The REAMS framework is presented as a systematic approach to fostering change and empowerment in educational settings, with potential implications for improving academic outcomes and cultural integration for immigrant students.

Keywords: multilingual learners, teacher coaching, professional development, sheltered english instruction, immigrant education.

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This article presents a framework for coaching teachers of multilingual learners, focusing on a three-year professional development project in a linguistically diverse high school. The author introduces the REAMS (Recognition, Engagement, Action, Means, Support) framework, adapted from the ProSci ADKAR® change management model, to guide individualized teacher coaching. The study employs practitioner action research methodology, involving collaboration between a university researcher, classroom teachers, and the school principal. The project aims to prepare teachers to understand and address the needs of immigrant students learning English as an additional language. The article discusses emergent findings from the first year, highlighting the experiences of two teachers with contrasting backgrounds and approaches. Key outcomes include increased teacher awareness of multilingual students' needs, improved instructional strategies, and enhanced self-reflection. The author emphasizes the importance of sustained, context-specific professional development in supporting teachers of multilingual learners. The REAMS framework is presented as a systematic approach to fostering change and empowerment in educational settings, with potential implications for improving academic outcomes and cultural integration for immigrant students.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a fundamental aspect of human history, with individuals and groups continuously seeking new places to settle and call home. References to people migrating can be found as early as in the 13th Century BCE in the biblical image of an Exodus to characterize the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. Migration, in that sense, is associated with liberation. Throughout history, we find examples of populations moving in search of freedom and a better life. This search can be voluntary when groups decide their own fate, but, in some cases, migration is not as an option, but a survival strategy, as many populations have been displaced or forced to migrate throughout history due to persecutions, intolerance, famine, disease, war, poverty, and hopelessness.

In the United States, migration is tightly associated with the development of the country itself. Immigration is part of the fabric and the soul of American society. People saw the new world as the land of opportunity where socioeconomic mobility and the vision for a more socially just society could be achieved.

This idea seems to still be part of the so-called American Dream, as it is estimated that more than one million immigrants arrive in the United States each year (Budiman, 2020). In fact, the U.S. is host to more immigrants than any other country in the world (Bolter, 2022). Immigration has truly and deeply shaped the history and the culture of the country and the contributions of these immigrants to American society can be seen in all realms of society – from its economic growth to its cultural and artistic expressions. There is ample evidence to suggest that immigrants contribute enormously to the development of a society and that their presence translates into wealth and opportunity (Naiditch,

2022). Immigration fuels the economy, improves the labor market, and diversifies the skills and the ways of knowing a society. The diversity of languages and cultures represented in the immigrants that arrive to the United States also contribute to making American society more pluralistic and inclusive.

Despite being a historical reality and a human rights issue, the subject of immigration has always been part of a fiercely contested territory. The discourse surrounding immigration is filled with examples of discriminatory language and xenophobic arguments that reflect the fear of the unknown and the rejection of anything which is perceived as not only unfamiliar or strange, but a threat to a country's national identity.

Schools always become part of the controversy surrounding immigration. This happens because they are seen as the nerve center of society. A school is the place where we educate our youth and expose them to the values and systems of beliefs that serve as the foundations of our society. In addition, schools are socialization centers where our children will learn the social and ethical rules that regulate society and the interactions among its members. Moreover, schools represent the official knowledge of a society (Apple, 2014). In the schooling process, we share the knowledge and the information we consider essential in the preparation of future citizens.

In the United States, there is an additional element that has become a bone of contention in schools: language. We have already established that the U.S. is a multilingual and multicultural society, but this notion does not always transpose well into the work being done in many school districts across the country.

Although the United States does not have an official language, English is considered the de facto primary language of the country, since it is used for communication in the media, businesses, and government agencies, including schools. In a nation of immigrants, it is not unrealistic to expect bilingualism or multilingualism to be the norm, particularly given the principles of free speech and civil rights that guide societal norms.

However, language diversity has always been a controversial issue when it comes to policies and protocols (Garcia, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Some states have designated English as their official language. These local state policies often use data from the U.S. Census Bureau to justify their choice (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022) and argue that "making English the official language would encourage new migrants to learn the language of the country they have adopted as theirs" (Brice, 2014). Language, in this sense, is used as a symbol of nationalism and unity, which translates into an idea of community and social cohesion.

There is also the economic argument. Billions in federal dollars are directed towards translation and interpretation services. The city of Los Angeles, for example, spent 15 million dollars to print ballots in seven languages and to hire bilingual poll workers in 2002 (Brice, 2014). Large urban areas that usually have the largest multilingual and immigrant population do in fact spend millions of dollars in creating systems of communication in various languages and dedicate large percentages of their budgets for that purpose.

All these arguments are hiding the real reasons why people resist multilingualism. This is part of a larger anti-immigration discourse that intentionally neglects the societal benefits associated with being bi or multilingual. Language diversity is a fact of life both in the US and around the world. In the United States, hundreds of world languages and indigenous tongues have coexisted with English for centuries and this has not affected the status of English as the primary language of the nation (Crawford, 2008).

Language, thus, is another aspect of life that has become politicized in society. English is still the most common language spoken at home in the United States, with 78 percent of the U.S. population speaking only English (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022), and although bilingual education in its various iterations and approaches is still widely used as a form of instruction throughout the country, English is still the language needed for participating in the teaching

and learning process, as well as the language used in standardized national assessments.

The work described in this article focuses on the language of schooling, also referred to as academic language. Learning to communicate in English, to understand textbooks and teachers and to be understood by teachers, classmates and school staff is one of the biggest challenges immigrant and refugee students face when they enroll in an American school. The same is true for the teachers who also face the challenge of learning to teach across the lines of language and culture. While immigrant students go through the language and culture socialization processes, everyone in the school building also needs to learn new skills and ways of teaching, interacting and communicating.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics' The Condition of Education report (NCES, 2020), 26.6 million out of the 50.7 million students enrolled in American public schools in 2017 were ethnic minorities. 10% of these students were classified as English learners (ELs).

While more than half of the total student population is made up of ethnic minorities, the teacher demographics is still mostly white and monolingual: about 79 percent of American public-school teachers are white compared to 44 percent of students (Egalite, 2024) and only 13 percent of them report speaking a language other than English at home (Williams, 2023).

The numbers mirror the reality we find ourselves in the field of teacher education and teacher development. There is an urgent need to prepare and qualify educators who can understand the meaning of this change in student demographics and who can become more culturally and linguistically responsive to address this change.

II. BACKGROUND

Language is at the center of everything we do in schools. Whether we are learning how to calculate in mathematics, how to distinguish between a fact and an opinion, or how to describe the layers of the earth, we need language to perform all of the above. Language is the vehicle through which we communicate our meanings and understand the world around us.

The language used in the context of schooling differs dramatically from the language we use to interact with our friends and family. This distinction between the social and the academic uses of language has been well documented in the literature of second language acquisition (Cummins, 2000). Through his BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) acronyms, Cummins (2008) has been able to describe what it takes to learn and acquire a language both in social and in academic contexts and the challenges that this may present, particularly to immigrant students who are in the process of learning English as an additional language.

In order to fully engage with the language of schooling, students need to understand that there are different language registers, different features used in the various content areas and discourses, and the metalanguage associated with the awareness of the ways English is used in classroom tasks and texts (Schleppegrell, 2020).

In sum, students will not succeed academically if they do not learn the language of schooling. For multilingual learners (MLs), the challenge is even greater. When they start their schooling in the United States, multilingual learners are basically multitasking, going through the process of language and culture socialization and having to learn content through the new language while still learning the language itself.

Their teachers also need to engage in this multitasking effort, after all they need to learn to teach their content along with the language while also trying to understand the culture of their students and use their funds of knowledge (Moll et. al., 1992) as part of the school curriculum. Many teachers report not feeling prepared to teach across the lines of language and culture (Naiditch, 2022; Coady, 2020) and do not necessarily know how to adapt or modify their teaching to accommodate the needs of

multilingual multicultural learners (Gibbons, 2014).

The project described in this article is a result of our efforts to address this exact issue. Our focus is on supporting the work of teachers, as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to succeed in multicultural multilingual classrooms. The project is being developed in a high school in a very culturally and linguistically diverse school district in the state of New Jersey on the northeast coast of the United States. We will refer to the school as Multilingual High School (MSH) hereafter.

MHS is situated in a large urban district. Data from the state department of education describes MHS as a minority-serving institution. Minority students comprise 99.5% of the total student population with 95.8% of them being categorized as Hispanic. Even the students who were born in the United States still go back to homes where English is not the primary language or where Spanish is the only language spoken. Spanish is also the language of the community where the school is located. MHS is in an ethnic enclave (Edin, Fredriksson. & Aslund. 2003) which is host to a large number of immigrants from South and Central America as well as the Caribbean. Additionally, the school serves a predominantly low-income student population, with 99.35% of the students qualifying to receive free lunch at the school. Many students need to work after school and need additional academic support and tutoring to keep up with schoolwork. The reality of MHS is not much different from the reality of other schools located in similar large urban environments that house large immigrant populations: low academic performance as measured by standardized tests, low graduation rates, and high absenteeism.

While ethnic enclaves provide a safe space for immigrants in terms of support systems such as a common language, networking and childcare, they can also limit the opportunities immigrants may have outside of their community. This geographical cluster ends up also becoming a socioeconomic cluster.

In the academic year 2022–2023, 29.8% of the students at MHS were classified as English learners. The number does not reflect the reality of this bilingual school environment. Many students who have passed their English requirements to be placed in mainstream classes could still profit from receiving additional language support in the form of English as a second language (ESL) class. However, there is a push towards mainstreaming students and creating a more linguistically inclusive environment by teaching multilingual learners in the content areas. This is where our project started.

The three-year project is still ongoing and aims at preparing teachers to understand the needs of immigrant students as they learn English as an additional language and to support them in transforming this understanding into pedagogy. Following a recommendation from the state Department of Education, school districts in New Jersey are developing professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers of all grade levels and content areas. The assumption is that all content area teachers are also going to become language teachers. As mentioned before, language is part of everything that we do in schools and teachers need to understand how language is used in their specific content areas and grade levels. Teachers also need to understand the discourse used in their respective disciplines and develop a linguistically responsive pedagogical approach that connects multilingual learners to the subject matter while they are still in the process of learning the language.

Teaching language along with content is also the premise of an instructional model known as sheltered instruction (Krashen, 1982) or sheltered English instruction (SEI). In this approach, language and content are intentionally integrated in the classroom and teachers make use of a number of strategies to provide multilingual learners access to grade-level content while also promoting English language development and proficiency (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008).

Sheltered English Instruction has been used by content area teachers since the 1980s to help

make content comprehensible for English learners (ELs). Because ELs are placed with native English-speaking children in mainstream classes, the need to support their learning with a well-designed framework for teachers to prepare and deliver sheltered lessons in all content areas is even more critical. SEI encompasses instructional practices and pedagogical dispositions that help teachers address the needs of ELs in terms of content and literacy skills while at the same time providing academic support for emerging multilingual students to learn content in English.

School success lies in the development of academic literacy in English (Cummins, 2000). Students need to develop appropriate language skills to achieve the goals of every grade and to perform according to state standards in terms of content and knowledge. Short (2002) describes three knowledge bases as the major components of academic literacy:

- Knowledge of English
- Knowledge of the content topic, and
- Knowledge of how classroom tasks are to be accomplished

Because academic language is cognitively demanding and highly specialized (Cummins, 2000), teachers need to develop a deep understanding of language acquisition processes and the connections between literacy and content area knowledge so they can plan and implement a sound support system and adequate services for ELs to succeed academically.

Moving from BICS to CALP takes time and learners need exposure to language that is not only contextually academic, but that also offers exposure to rich literacy uses and practices; after all academic discourse is not only highly specific, but also technical, abstract, and even impersonal (Gibbons, 2014). Language only makes sense when contextualized and academic language in particular needs to be explicitly taught so that students can focus their attention on the specific features of the academic discourse.

Based on Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, sheltered instruction emphasizes this intrinsic connection between content and language by having teachers focus on form and function in the content area classroom. Content area teachers are not expected to be linguists, but they need to learn to identify and engage in discourse that reflects their knowledge of the specific characteristics of the language used in their subject areas and be able to convey this knowledge and understanding on to their students.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is part of a larger project which is planned to last for three years and focuses on providing individualized professional development (PD) for teachers at Multilingual High School. The novelty of our approach is on PD that is truly personalized based on the individual needs of the teachers and the makeup of their classrooms. The way we are developing the project is by working with each department within the school. The findings described in this article reflect the work done in the first year of the project. We started the work with the Social Studies/History Department. The choice was made by the school principal.

This is a collaborative study between a university researcher, the classroom teachers, and the school principal. Practitioner action research (PAR) is being used as both the data gathering technique and the method of inquiry to engage all stakeholders to examine their practice critically and to improve it (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007). PAR engages the teachers in the project through a collaborative inquiry process. While teachers implement sheltered instruction and scaffolding strategies to support the learning of their MLs, they also engage in self-reflection and adapt or modify their teaching as they keep receiving additional coaching.

PAR is an ongoing form of professional learning, which allows teachers to reflect on their practice regularly, to assess it systematically, and to transform it as they identify aspects that need to be changed and improved. This developmental approach to PD empowers teachers to become accountable for their teaching and for the learning outcomes in their classrooms.

The university researcher engages in PAR as a participant observer (DeWalt, 2015) and comes to the school once a week. During classroom visits, modeling and even co-teaching strategies were used when both the teacher and the coach deemed necessary.

The data collected is being registered through field notes (Fawcett & Watson, 2016), and teachers are encouraged to keep a diary where they can reflect on their journey. The conversations and interactions throughout the coaching process are also being recorded and analyzed as part of the data set.

IV.   COACHING TEACHERS: FROM ADKAR TO THE REAMS FRAMEWORK

The idea of using coaching as the model for this project on professional development is because coaching allows teachers to become accountable for their own learning (Knight, 2021). As an instructional coach, my job is to create the conditions for teachers to grow and opportunities for them to reflect and assess their teaching, so we can jointly think of ways and strategies to improve teaching and learning. This happens when you create a partnership where both the coach and the teacher take responsibility for their professional learning. After all, I am also an educator, and I am also growing professionally as I engage in the PD with the teachers. The way I presented myself as a coach was first as a teacher myself. I have taught in public schools and have had a vast experience both in and outside the United States as a bilingual and ESL teacher.

A coach is a more seasoned professional who deeply understands classroom dynamics and who can observe a lesson to identify aspects of the teaching and learning processes and the classroom itself that need to be refocused or improved. This is not a top-down approach where a coach tells teachers what to do in their classroom. Sometimes teachers do need to learn about a novel method or approach, or how to implement a particular instructional strategy – and the coach can teach them or even model it in the classroom. This is part of the process, but every time a teacher tries a different or a new

procedure in their classrooms, they always end up owning the way they go about implementing it.

Hess (2023) argues that instructional coaching is developed through highly focused and structured conversations that ensure teachers:

- Get a clear picture of reality in their classrooms,
- Identify powerful, measurable student-focused goals,
- Identify and learn high-impact teaching strategies that they can implement to hit those goals, and
- Make adaptations to their teaching until it is so effective that the goals are hit.

When I thought about creating a systematic and focused coaching model to work with the teachers at MHS, I wanted to develop a structure that would allow me to be consistent, so I could help teachers identify goals, implement new instructional practices, assess them, monitor progress and reflect.

This led me to another important methodological aspect of this project. My work is inspired by the ADKAR Model of change management (Ball, 2024), a widely used framework in corporate America for promoting organizational change.

ADKAR is an acronym that stands for the five components or stages of the model: awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement. The reason the model has been used successfully with a large number of companies (Ball, 2024) is because it is a model of change that focuses on the individual participants with the premise that change only occurs when people change. That was the first reason I wanted to explore the model further.

The other reason is that the ADKAR Model is an outcome-oriented change management method that aims to limit resistance to organizational change (Malhotra, 2024). Each of its steps represents a necessary condition for change to be effective and successful.

Let us look at the model the way it is implemented in the corporate world and then I will describe

how I adapted it to develop my own framework to be used as professional development for teachers and school staff as well as the immigrant student population.

When a company recognizes that change is needed, its leaders must go about it in a systematic way that will involve all stakeholders and that will consider everyone part of the whole process from brainstorming new ideas to eventually implementing them.

The first step, awareness, refers to the reason or reasons why change is necessary. A company will not have the buy-in of its employees without making sure everyone recognizes that change is needed. Awareness is the stage that involves the 'why.' People will not engage in the process of change without justification. Change needs to be implemented with transparent reasons and a coherent rationale.

The next step, desire, refers to the participants' willingness to actively take part in the process of change. Desire involves engagement and motivation. This can be a convoluted stage, particularly in organizations where members feel alienated and not listened to when it comes to the decision-making process. This is why it is important to consider every member of the organization and to ensure everyone has a voice and an opportunity to participate in the conversation about the change. Desire and engagement increase when there is clear communication among participants.

When awareness is created and desire is achieved, participants need to focus on the knowledge needed in order to promote change. Because change usually brings new ways of doing and understanding, it may also require new knowledge and skills that participants may not yet have. Developing new knowledge means learning about innovative ways and novel ideas, reading about current research and engaging in an inquiry process. Participants become learners and researchers. Whether the organization decides to design specific training or organize workshops and create study groups, the important part of this stage is the commitment to identify the knowledge

needed and what it is that each member must learn to be part of the change in an informed and educated way. This is, ultimately, an opportunity for professional development.

The ability step is a natural subsequent stage. As people acquire new knowledge and skills, they will likely identify barriers and will need to overcome roadblocks. Ability, then, refers to the conditions given for people to engage in the process. Members need to be given the appropriate conditions to engage in the work and that means sufficient time during work hours to meet with colleagues, practice newly acquired skills, develop in-depth knowledge, and prioritize tasks. This is why it is necessary to create a realistic timeline, so that change becomes apparent, and the process has a beginning and an expected end. Members will also require specific tools or equipment, and even some structural changes in the organization to facilitate the work.

The last step is reinforcement. Since we are describing a change management model, accountability towards change is required. This means that once changes are implemented, they need to be followed and achieved. They may need to be adapted to specific circumstances or even require some flexibility in their implementation. People react differently to change and have their own timing to experience it. In the desire step, we already got the buy-in from participants. In the reinforcement stage, change needs to be assessed and sustained. In order to do so, a company needs regular check-in points with every member and the continuity of open communication, so people can discuss their progress, potential limitations, challenges and successes. Reinforcement is an assessment that needs to be constantly put in place, so that when new knowledge is required or additional training is needed, the organization can plan accordingly.

The ADKAR model's strength lies in its practicality and focus on measurable outcomes. Its iterative nature, allowing for constant assessment, review, and repetition of stages, keeps the model dynamic and adaptable.

Change in any setting always brings resistance, but what we learn with ADKAR is that by making sure every member has a role, a task, a voice , a purpose and equal status, change can be a cooperatively achieved goal that can truly create innovative learning spaces and collaborative communities.

Building on ADKAR, I developed the REAMS Model for this research project. REAMS stands for Recognition, Engagement, Action, Means, and Support, adapting change management principles to educational settings.

When I was tasked with creating a district-wide professional development opportunity that would eventually involve all teachers from the high school, I saw in this framework the answer I was looking for in terms of internal consistency and coherence for my project. I have adapted it for the educational setting and tested it out this first year at MHS.

The first stage, recognition, also involves awareness. Teachers do need to develop an awareness of their student population, who the students are, their families, their funds of knowledge, the literacy levels of the students and their families in both their home language and in English as well as an awareness of the community where the school is embedded. Teachers also need to recognize their own preparation, their strengths and weaknesses in terms of what they feel prepared to do in the classroom with multilingual learners as well as what they need to learn and to develop professionally to meet the needs of this new student population. The reason I chose the work recognition is because I want teachers to transform the awareness into a more palpable actionable task. Recognition implies that you acknowledge yourself and others. In the recognition stage, teachers identify the knowledge of the immigrant families, their ways of knowing and doing, and recognize their own ability to work with multilingual students and their families. In this sense, the recognition stage is also a diagnostic stage.

Once teachers recognize their and their students' needs, they need to engage in the process of changing pedagogy and attitudes. In the engagement stage, we discuss the work that we are about to start, the commitment it requires and the expected benefits. We weigh the pros and cons, but always with an eye on the prize, i.e., even if there are obstacles on the way, we want teachers to keep their attention and motivation towards what we are trying to achieve, which is support our multilingual students, socialize them culturally and linguistically and improve our ways of doing so. Teacher engagement is necessary because resistance is always part of implementing something new or different. People tend to respond with statements such as, "change is hard" or "I have always done it this way," but when people recognize that in teaching, one size does not fit all, they become more engaged in the process of change.

We then move to the action stage. This is the central stage of the project because here is where new knowledge is acquired and put to practice. It is not just about learning what sheltered instruction is or learning about new strategies to use in the classroom. This is what I refer to as living knowledge, knowledge that is practical and focused on each context. Because this is an individualized form of PD, each teacher will go through the stages with different levels of understanding, preparedness, and response. There are no ready recipes, and each teacher will have different gaps in their knowledge that need to be addressed. The action stage allows teachers to look at what they identified as knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to work with multilingual learners that they do not yet possess and work towards developing this knowledge, the skills and the dispositions. This is about acquiring new knowledge and putting it into action. It is applied, actionable knowledge. Teachers decide what actions need to be taken to achieve their goals.

In the means stage, we identify all the elements that are needed to complement and facilitate the work. Most of the time, this is beyond the scope of the teacher and requires the coach, the principal, and other school staff to contribute to the process. Means refers to the appropriate conditions for the work to be developed. In an individualized PD, teachers need to be given time to work one-on-

one with the coach and the principal may need to select and hire several substitute teachers to cover the classes while participant teachers are in the PD session. Time is always an issue in the busy daily schedule of a school and finding time during the day that allows for the kind of embedded PD we are developing can be challenging. Means also refers to materials needed, and supplies teachers may want to improve their teaching or classrooms. As they learn new instructional strategies, teachers want to make sure they can have access to additional teaching resources, such as posters, realia, flashcards, and even books that will help them further their knowledge of sheltered instruction and immigration issues. Some teachers may choose to attend a conference, participate in a seminar or even enroll in a university class. This is the stage where all these tools are identified and provided to the teachers, so the work can be done adequately.

The final stage is the support stage. The first level of support comes from the coach. It is part of the coach's job to ensure the process runs smoothly and that teachers can navigate all the stages without complication. Any obstacle identified along the way needs to be discussed at this stage so we can address it and fix it. In this sense, support also involves assessment. This is the moment when teachers use their self-reflection to determine how much progress has been made, weigh all the variables that affected the work, and identify aspects that need to be further developed. The support stage is a checkpoint. Both teachers and coach evaluate their goals and establish new ones. This type of professional development is very personal and intense, so roles may need to be discussed and negotiated at this stage.

It is also important to note that teachers in each department will join the project for the period of a year. After that, they can and should continue working on these stages, but they may not have the classroom observation anymore. The coach will be at the school building and will be available for consultation, but, if implemented successfully, all these stages should provide teachers with what they need to continue the work on their own, in inquiry groups, or through professional learning communities. The reason we use action research

as a method of inquiry is because of its cyclical nature, which is exactly the way I developed the REAMS framework. Teachers can go back to the recognition stage once they recognize new skills or knowledge that needs to be developed or when they encounter students with issues they have not dealt with previously. After participating in the project for a full year, we expect teachers to become accountable and empowered to be able to continue the work following REAMS on their own terms.

V. EMERGENT FINDINGS

As mentioned earlier, the decision to start the work with the social studies department was made by the school's principal. His rationale was that the department is home to the most senior teacher in the building as well as the newest hire. Moreover, the courses offered in the department attract many multilingual students interested in learning about world history.

For the discussion of findings from the first year of the project, I am going to focus on those two teachers: Jon, the most senior tenured faculty member, who has been teaching at MHS for 30 years, and Ana, the department's newest hire who has been at the school for a year and is still untenured. They both participated as part of the first cohort of the project. The analysis follows the REAMS framework.

In the recognition stage, we find Jon, a seasoned educator who is also a former MHS student and lives in the community. The teachers that come from the community are usually seen as a positive influence on students because they live in the area, grew up there and even went to the school in their youth. Because they understand the community, its families and their funds of knowledge, they seem to already have skills that will help them relate to the students on a more personal level and develop rapport. This is the case with Jon. However, it is also important to understand that coming from the community may also be a negative factor when the teacher embodies a localized perspective and is not able to envision a future of possibilities for students outside that community. Some teachers end up

internalizing the deficit thinking that students are not achieving academically because they reflect the community they come from with all the socioeconomic issues they face, which prevents them from succeeding. This is not the case with our project. Ours is an asset-based perspective that looks at the contributions that families have made to the community and that imagines a possible future for their children. Jon is somehow in between these two perspectives. He wants his students to succeed academically but thinks that all the external societal pressures are going to move them away from the academic work. In this stage, he not only recognized his position, but also the fact that being in the same school for so many years may have clouded his judgment and may have made him more skeptical. The other aspect we see in Jon is the recognition of his resistance to change. He has been teaching the same way for years and has not always been open to changes in the way we teach and learn. He makes use of technology and has embraced the digital world, but is still more comfortable lecturing students and engaging in more traditional top-down approaches to teaching.

Ana, on the other hand, just finished her teacher education program. She is full of ideas that were taught at school that she now wants to implement. She does recognize that being a new teacher is very challenging because the lack of experience can translate into lack of respect from the students or poor classroom management skills. However, her enthusiasm and readiness speak louder and she engages in the project with lots of expectations. Ana is bilingual in English and Spanish. In fact, the principal has been intentionally hiring more bilingual teachers who can relate to the students and their families both linguistically and culturally. Ana may not come from that community, but she can speak to the students in their home language, and she also understands their life circumstances, as she comes from a similar immigrant background. She recognizes that she is still in the period of trial and error, as the knowledge acquired at the university is still more theoretical than practical and she is juggling a lot of new responsibilities as the teacher of record for the first time.

During the engagement stage, each teacher worked with the coach separately to establish goals based on their identified needs and those of their students. We focused on developing sheltered English instruction to promote both language and content learning for multilingual students. Teachers were encouraged to reflect deeply on the rationale behind this approach and how to implement it effectively.

In the engagement stage, we need to take into consideration the pedagogical expertise that teachers bring, but also their personalities, which is why this is also an individualized form of PD. Dispositions also play an important role in this project. Once teachers recognize they need to learn more about their students, the families, and the community, we need to think of ways of engaging them in the community. Engagement, thus, serves this dual purpose of motivating teachers to do the work inside the schools but also outside MHS. This was the case with Ana. Her level of engagement was so high that she wanted to learn about the community, the places to visit, where to have a meal, speak with community members and learn about their lived experiences. We discussed possible ways she could get more engaged in the life of the community, and even volunteer at the community center. Jon had a different perspective. As someone who had lived in the community for years, he understood its dynamics. However, because he sees himself at the end of his career, his level of engagement was not as high. The way we approached it was by discussing the changes in the neighborhood and the effects of that change. Jon is not bilingual and does not live close to the ethnic enclave. His feeling is that the community is segregated into cultural and linguistic groups that are not always welcoming of one another. As someone who went to school and college and even furthered his education by pursuing a master's degree, Jon eventually understood how important it is to motivate himself to also be able to motivate the students. After the initial reluctance, he showed more openness to working collaboratively and to developing ways to learn to listen to his students, not only about the content area, but about their lives before coming to the U.S. and acclimating to

the country. The more one learns about their students' backgrounds, the more prepared they become to engage in social and pedagogical endeavors that can support learning while also addressing the well-being of the students.

The Action stage is the core of our individualized professional development work. Jon and Ana each met with me weekly, allowing for consistent, personalized support. Each meeting consisted of a pre-class conference where we discussed the lesson of the day, the activities, strategies, assessment, and more importantly, how the teacher was going to ensure that the content was being made comprehensible for multilingual learners. This was followed by the class itself. The coach joins the lesson as both an observer and a participant when needed. Many times, as a coach, I found myself modeling strategies, monitoring student work and walking around the room observing pair and group work. After the class we have another conference. This time, the focus is on assessment and reflection. Teacher and coach discuss all the elements of the lesson, students' response to the lesson and the activities, and identify what went well and what needs to be modified. Every post-class conference is also an opportunity to review goals and establish new ones based on the progress being made. Teachers have both short and long-term goals for themselves and their students. Jon tended to set more short-term goals. He had a difficult time dealing with change and needed to do so in incremental steps, so we decided that we would identify one aspect at a time to focus on. In this kind of discrete-item approach, we chose a different element of the class to work on each observation. One day we worked on classroom handouts, then scaffolds used during PowerPoint presentations and even the questions the teacher needed to ask to check for comprehension. For a teacher who is more reluctant to engage in this kind of PD, establishing these short-term goals is actually a productive strategy because the teacher works on isolated items that they can manage and it is easier to visualize and assess change. Ana had a more holistic approach to her teaching and set long-term goals. Her energy and motivation made her want to tackle too much at a time sometimes,

so some guidance was needed. Her enthusiasm as a new teacher was visible and her willingness to try different strategies and ideas at the same time made her open to experimenting in her classroom without the fear of failure or at least with the understanding that things do not always go according to plan. As a teacher who had long-term goals, she felt comfortable not getting the kind of immediate feedback that Jon wanted. As a bilingual teacher and the daughter of immigrants who also grew up speaking Spanish, she understood that it takes time to learn a language, especially the language of schooling, and used her lived experiences as a way of connecting to students and implementing different strategies at once. There is no right way of engaging in the work. Each teacher needs to find what they are comfortable with, their strengths and their limits. Progress looks different for each teacher. This is what makes the PD contextual and individualized.

In the means stage, there was a common thread across all teachers participating in the project. They all needed more time to engage with all the aspects of the project: from learning more about SEI, to implementing the newly acquired strategies and practicing skills, to being able to reflect and assess and think of new ways of implementing SEI in their lessons. Teachers also identified a problem that has to do with curriculum and pace. Most schools have a pacing guide, which tells teachers what to cover within a specific timeframe. These pacing guides tend to require teachers to teach a lot of content in a short period of time. Teachers feel that they are just moving through the motions or teaching to the test. The project made them reflect on what teaching truly entails and the negative consequences of pressuring students into passing standardized tests. It takes time to learn a language and even more so to learn its academic uses, so multilingual learners need to be given more time to process information and practice language skills in the classroom. The same is true for teachers who felt that they also needed more time to hone their newly acquired skills.

Teachers primarily requested classroom resources, such as example activities for practicing academic vocabulary and sample

lessons. These materials served as models as they learned to develop new, tailored lesson plans.

Because we spent a lot of time talking about instructional strategies that are considered best practices in classes with multilingual learners, teachers also asked for different templates of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers help MLs to think visually as they have to put concepts into words. They are great for helping establish relationships between facts, ideas, storylines and help learners construct and organize their ideas before speaking or writing. Teachers in the project started making use of these graphic organizers regularly to support the learning of multilingual students. The different types of graphic organizers were very successful and the MLs enjoyed working with them as a support system.

Teachers responded differently to the Support stage. Jon felt relieved to complete the process, while Ana eagerly anticipated continuing the work in the following year. Ana managed to look back at the initial goals she had established for herself and her students and pinpoint aspects of her teaching that her helpful for multilingual learners as well as areas that she recognizes she needs additional work, specifically in the way she provides feedback to the students and how she can organize her classroom management more efficiently to maximize student participation and language production.

The process of self-reflection was extremely useful in helping teachers organize their thinking process. It was an extremely valuable tool for them to assess their pedagogy and develop critical lenses in the work with the coach. This could be seen in a teacher like Ana who had established clear goals from the very beginning of the project and who was focused throughout the year. Her ability to serve multilingual student populations evolved rapidly and consistently. Her growth as a teacher can also be linked to her engagement and attitude. She was able to systematize the way she approached certain tasks in the classroom and her self-reflections echoed her evolving thinking process. Jon, on the other hand, was always tentative. He seems to have developed the attitude of a teacher who needs constant approval. Even

though he is an experienced teacher, he was not used to being part of a project that is so intense and requires a deep level of trust and openness. This does not mean that he does not possess those characteristics. It just shows that throughout his career he was not challenged enough or even asked to self-reflect or question his choices in the classroom. He may not have grown as a teacher as much as Ana did, but he became more aware of his multilingual students and their needs and more open to talking about them with the coach to discuss ways of serving his students more effectively.

When Jon mentioned that he was relieved to get to the end of the journey, I had to remind him that there is no end to this journey. Even though I may not be working as directly with the social studies department as we continue the project at MHS, this is an ongoing process that needs to be sustainable.

The knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers developed as they went through the stages of REAMS are parallel to the stages one goes through when engaging in participatory action research. Through this type of PD, teachers were given the opportunity to look deeply at their daily work and to confront their practices, beliefs and attitudes towards multilingual learners. As they implemented sheltered English instruction, they developed the tools that should allow them to continue the cyclical process of REAMS and PAR.

VI. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Around the world, we are witnessing a referendum on human migration. The role of host countries in providing support for immigrants, especially in their socialization process, is being questioned from different viewpoints. The conflict is far from over, but so is the reality of migration. Learning to maneuver policy and action is a balancing act, but one that needs to recognize the humanity that makes us who we are.

As educators, we do not get to pick the students we teach. Once we commit to this profession, it is essential to recognize our roles and responsibility in serving all the children in our classrooms and

school buildings, irrespective of their backgrounds or the language they speak.

Schools are the bastion of society. We will always welcome and embrace everyone and do our best to ensure that all the needs of our students are being met, including learning content and language, which is the aim of the project I described here.

Many teachers in the United States report that they do not feel prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. Despite the increasing diversity in American society, teacher education programs do not seem to have caught up with the changes in demographics and in the culture. This is why projects like the one described in this paper are necessary and essential for the academic achievement of immigrant and multilingual students.

The kind of individualized PD that we are developing at MHS is not common. This is only possible when a school district is fully committed to providing teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach multilingual students adequately and effectively. MHS has created the time, space and conditions for this labor-intensive project.

Success hinges on actively involving teachers in their own learning process. By fostering accountability in the coach-teacher partnership, we ensure that goals are collaboratively set, pursued, monitored, and achieved.

To promote change, we need to believe that change is possible and necessary. It is crucial to view change as an ongoing process rather than a finite product. The REAMS framework provides a systematic and consistent approach to this time-intensive, dedicated process of change.

As the project progresses, I anticipate additional validation of REAMS and this embedded professional development (PD) model. A key lesson learned during the initial year of the project centers around empowerment. REAMS has empowered teachers by equipping them with the tools to empower themselves. Furthermore, the cyclical nature of our project is impacting multilingual learners in various dimensions, extending beyond academics. Their languages and cultures are gaining visibility, and as they navigate the halls of MHS, they are also experiencing increased empowerment.

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