Culturally and Linguistically Diverse School Environments – Exploring the Unknown

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Abstract: Australian education policies aspire to meet the unique needs of all students including those from linguistically diverse backgrounds; however, a first step in achieving this aim is clear identification of such students. Many children from previous migrant families and new arrivals to Australia come from homes where at least one parent speaks a language other than English. This exploratory research utilises survey and interview responses from students and staff in five Queensland state high schools. Results showed that 79.5% of the 2,484 students surveyed were from English-only homes with only 10.5% classified as having English as Another Language/Dialect. The remaining 10% were also from bi/multilingual homes. While early identification of bi/multilingual students allows for appropriate assessment and strategic support, staff responses highlighted limited preservice training and/or understanding of how to support these students. Only 4.7% of staff surveyed had received any academic training, and 10.4% professional development, about teaching students from diverse backgrounds who, in the surveyed schools, accounted for 20.5% of the student cohort.

Introduction

The face of the average Australian is changing from monolingual English speaker of British heritage to one more multicultural and diverse in heritage and home language as a result of increasing migration to Australia of people from non-English speaking backgrounds (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2017; Queensland Government, 2013). The 2013 census data (ABS, 2013) showed that 47% of Australians were either migrants or were the first-generation children of migrants (5.3m [27%] born overseas; 4.1m [20%] one parent born overseas). By 2016 nearly half (49%) of all Australians were born overseas or had one parent born overseas, and 28% were first generation (born overseas) of migrants (ABS, 2017). Further, the data showed that over 300 languages are now spoken throughout the country with more than one in five Australians (21%) speaking a language besides English at home, evidence that Australia is continuing to grow as a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) nation. This migration to Australia, as well as the children of established migrants, brings with it increasing numbers of students in Australian schools for whom English is not their first language (Adoniou, 2013; Hammond, 2014). This situation places additional pressures on these students' learning in the English-speaking classroom and may lead to their not developing the appropriate skills, such as reading (Haager & Windmueller, 2001), that are needed throughout their school life. The implications of such constraints, in lesser outcomes and thus in limitations on lifelong outcomes, are also well known.

The eight states and territories in Australia are primarily responsible for the education of the population. Education Queensland employs more than 36,000 teachers and caters for over 480,000 students (around 70% of all students eligible for education in Queensland) in 1,250 schools (Queensland Government, 2016), the remainder attending church-based or independent schools. Education Queensland's Strategic Plan 2013-17 states goals of "Engaging minds. Empowering futures" which have a focus on "lifelong learning and global citizenship" through developing "creative thinkers shaped by inspiring and challenging learning experiences" (Queensland Government, 2012, p. 2). This focus suggests that there will be "improved outcomes for all students" (Queensland Government, 2012, p. 2). Further, "the unique needs of each student will be recognised to ensure their successful transition through each phase of schooling and to further study and work" (p. 6).

Literature Review

The following section reviews some of the literature from the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand (NZ), and Australia because these countries have cultural and educational similarities. This narrower focus has been selected because of the similarities of policies and procedures constraining the discussion around the research area focus. One focus is on students from bi/multilingual homes and their characteristics, and the other is on teacher preparedness for multicultural classes.

Students from Bi/multilingual Homes

A person's literacy level, as well as their ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), and first language, may influence their educational and employment opportunities (Au, 2006; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012; Murnane, Sawhill, & Snow, 2012). For many immigrants, their children are spoken to in the parents' native tongue from birth (Hernandez, Macartney, & Denton, 2010). These languages influence children's learning, particularly when the home language is different from the language of school.

Many parents want their children accepted as part of the majority group and do not identify their children's cultural and linguistic heritages when enrolling at school. This was evidenced in the work of Dobrenov-Major, Kearney, Birch, and Cowley (2004) when researching the ties between Samoan communities and schools in Logan City, Queensland. When questioned, one Samoan mother said that English was spoken in their home and that "Samoan is a small language, not that important at all. It is important only to us… English is more important. Just look at how many people speak English!" (p. 16). This suggests a limited understanding of the impact that their child's other home language may have on their learning and the importance of the school having this knowledge. van Leent and Exley (2013), when researching the role of a literacy coach in a large multicultural primary school south of Brisbane, Queensland, found what they termed "hidden ESL/ESD students" (p. 23). They noted that these students were primarily from English as a second language/dialect (ESL/ESD) Pasifika families, and were hidden as they had not identified another home language besides English on enrolment. Pasifika families in Australia are one example of migrant families with Australian-born children. Samu (2006) suggested that many Pasifika peoples move to Western countries to enhance the quality of life and expand outcomes for their families. Some of these students struggle with English being the language of instruction as they have difficulty equating their Pasifika or Maori home languages with standard Australian English (SAE) (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009).

Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002), from their research into American long-term English language learners (LTELLs), related that some were not being identified as having a language background other than English, others were only attending standard classes, and the only assistance they received was from mainstream classroom teachers. Many of these teachers, they found, "plan and deliver instruction as if everyone in the classroom has reached the level of English language proficiency that is needed to master the instructional content" (p. 20). Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri's (2002) research showed that many LTELLs appeared to be performing well in schools, but many others were falling behind in reading and writing. These LTELLs often displayed oral proficiency; however, their ability to produce appropriate year-level academic work to achieve mainstream proficiency and success was often found lacking (Menken et al., 2012). Menken et al. also found that many students self-reported that they spoke both English and their other language well; however, when questioned further, both teachers and students identified that English literacy was the challenge for many. Luster (2011) suggested that LTELLs "are the forgotten population of non-proficient English students making up more than 30 percent of school populations" (p. 71) in America. This issue was further discussed when Menken et al. (2012) voiced concerns that many of these students have "until now, largely remained invisible in research and practice nationally" (p. 122). They reported that if a bilingual student was not competent in reading and writing in both languages, then their overall school results tended to be lower than those of mainstream students.

In an Australian study, Miller, Keary, and Windle (2012) found that for students in three secondary English as another language/ dialect (EAL/D) classes in Victoria, literacy levels ranged from lower primary to junior secondary levels, demonstrating literacy capability well below that of their peers. Hakuta (2011) argued, "English language development takes time – we can be more focussed and direct, but it still takes time ... long-term English learners demand particular attention" (p. 171). Further, J. Brown and Doolittle (2008) proposed that administrators and educators must rise to and accept the challenge brought about by the CALD student population because,

> *our future rests on the promise of the next generation. Accordingly, we must develop the capacity to respond to an increasingly diverse student population and ensure that these and all children develop to their fullest potential. By building on the cultural wisdom and linguistic knowledge students bring with them, we can help all children succeed. (p. 71)*

Teacher Preparation for Working in CALD Classes

Given this classroom complexity, teachers must face the challenge of learning about students from diverse backgrounds and how to engage them and then "see them as capable learners" (Villegas & Lucas, 2007, p. 1). M. Brown (2007) argued that teachers must believe that students in minority groups want to learn, and must move from the deficit model that many hold. To be able to respond appropriately to this growing diversity within classrooms, staff require appropriate preservice training and ongoing professional development.

Teaching in CALD classrooms can be difficult for some teachers particularly when, as M. Brown (2007) reported, too many teachers are neither prepared nor qualified for this change. In their research on culturally diverse students in mainstream classes in the USA, Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) found that the majority of English language learners (ELLs) were being taught by teachers who "had no specialised training in this area" (p. 3). These concerns were also raised by Harper and de Jong (2004). They found that most

teachers needed to have an understanding of this second language acquisition process which would then assist them to look at how they used language in their classrooms.

In USA research about teacher preparation for ELLs' academic development, Verdugo and Flores (2007) found that few teachers had appropriate training for this diversity and most of the teachers were native monolingual English speakers. They further suggested that there needed to be staff training that must be linked to students' needs and specific programs. From his research in teaching ELLs in middle and secondary schools in the USA, Luster (2011) highlighted that most teachers are trained only for mainstream teaching, which may lead to a lack of skills and responsiveness towards the cultural needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

In Australian research on preparing preservice teachers for CALD classrooms, Premier and Miller (2010) found that secondary preservice teachers felt that "their teacher education courses lack[ed] a focus on cultural and linguistic diversity in schools" (p. 35). They further suggested that this preservice education "[does] not effectively prepare teachers to meet the needs of CALD students. Consequently, many preservice teachers do not have the relevant skills or confidence in their ability to teach CALD students" (p. 47). Further research by Miller (2015) highlighted this concern in Australia in relation to preservice teacher training when she suggested that the system does "not train primary or secondary teachers in these language focussed skills, understandings and competencies, or in the cultural and social aspects of highly diverse classrooms" (p. 118). Moloney and Saltmarsh's research in 2016, which assessed the teacher education preservice practice of one university in Australia and its preparation of preservice teachers for teaching in a CALD school community, also found such preparations were lacking. From interviews with the preservice teachers, they found that "more than half of the cohort expressed anxiety in feeling unprepared to teach in a CALD classroom" (p. 88). An understanding of the students in their classes is critical if teachers seek to help all students reach their potential.

From her research in England exploring monolingual and multilingual pedagogy, Flynn (2015) expressed concern that universities are not teaching about ELLs in their curriculum subjects for preservice teachers. In her view, teachers are responsible for "delivering successful teaching and learning for children with EAL [English as Another Language]" (p. 23) concluding that "teachers are perhaps unaware of how much they should understand about second language acquisition and how much they don't know" (p. 23). Similarly, Hélot and Ó Laoire (2011) had found that many teachers "easily underestimate the complexities of the multilingual classroom and on the other hand, even if they are aware of such complexities, they might not always know how to best exploit the potential of plurilingual students" (p. ix). Culturally responsive teachers should have the appropriate knowledge and be able to provide "assistance with the language of classroom discourse and small group participation" (Harper & de Jong, 2004, p. 154) as needed.

The linguistic and cultural diversity within classrooms adds challenges for students and teachers alike. For the students, the acquiring of the ability to speak, read, and write at native-speaker level is paramount and, for the teachers, becoming culturally responsive without the appropriate knowledge or training presents further challenges within these CALD classes. Because there is limited research in this area, this exploratory study has two foci as outlined in the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics and scope of students, in Queensland state high schools, who are from bi/multilingual homes?
2. What are staff perceptions in relation to some school processes?

Methodology

To gain a broad perspective of this issue, this research adopted a mixed-methods approach. Initial surveys of students were undertaken to gain a better understanding of the cultural and linguistic mix of some state schools cohorts. These data were further enhanced by interviews with a sub-set of the students. Staff participated in the completion of self-reporting surveys and through semi-structured interviews. Griffith University Human Research Ethics (EDN/21/14/HREC) and Education Queensland (Ref: 550/27/1509) gave ethical approvals for this research.

Settings and Participants

Five state high schools in Queensland were the settings for this research. The use of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), developed by ACARA, helped to select participating high schools that were situated in diverse communities. This Index facilitates comparisons amongst schools that have similar populations and gives an indication of the socioeducational backgrounds of students (ACARA, 2015). Education Queensland schools were chosen as all operate under the same policy and procedural guidelines. Participating school communities provided diversity in size and student groups and came from a mix of socio-educational statuses as reported by ICSEA (see Table 1).

Schools*	Approx. school population	ICSEA score**	Potential student population	Potential staff population
Brightwell	1,020	920	418	61
Idstone	1,095	910	622	111
Aston	1,390	995	619	110
Chinnor	1,360	1,010	718	117
Henley	490	1,045	247	51
Total			2,624	450

Table 1: Characteristics of Selected Schools

*Pseudonyms
** ICSEA scores are from 2013 as 2014 scores were not available at the start of research.
Average ICSEA = 1000

These schools show a diversity of both size and socio-educational status with ICSEA scores ranging from a very low of 910 (Idstone) to a high of 1,045 (Henley). The potential student population numbered 2,624 with 37.2% from Year 7, 25.9% from Year 8, and 36.9% from Year 9. Males represented 53.6% and females 46.4% of the population. The staff participants were drawn from 450 members across the five schools with all administration, teaching, and support personnel invited to participate.

Surveys, Interviews and School Data

A self-reporting survey was used to access a range of information from students. This used simple SAE, with no technical jargon, as appropriate for this demographic. It requested demographic details and linguistic information about students. A sub-set of students were interviewed to gain more detailed information about their experiences in education. Data received from each school included details of students classified as EAL/D, and four semesters of results for subjects English, Mathematics, and Science. Staff also completed

surveys and several participated in interviews focusing on their preparedness for teaching in CALD classrooms. In both the survey and interview, staff were specifically asked if they had attended any professional development (PD) about teaching in CALD environments, what sorts of material they would like to be given at an appropriate PD session, and what, if any, preservice training they had received in this area. A pilot of the staff and student survey forms was undertaken at Brightwell School before the commencement of data collection, and from the resultant information, only minor changes were made to both survey forms.

Data Collection and Analysis

All Years 7 – 9 school families received information about the research in school newsletters, by individual emails, or through provided Information Sheets. Student surveys were completed in class over a given week; staff at the beginning of a staff meeting. Interviews were arranged to minimise disruption to the schools' daily routines. Data analysis was undertaken using SPSS v 24. Following initial descriptive statistics, split-file analysis provided across-group comparisons of students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. NVivo 10 was utilised to undertake a thematic analysis of the interview data. Analysis of staff data was carried out in a similar manner to that of the students.

In keeping with the terminology of the Queensland education system, this paper uses the term EAL/D (Queensland Government, 2013) when students are thus classified. The term English Only (EO) is used to describe students from monolingual English-speaking homes. Students who reported that they are from bi/multilingual homes but are not classified as EAL/D by their schools are termed Undefined.

Results

This section firstly reports on the responses from 2,484 students in the five school communities about the scope and some of the characteristics of students from bi/multilingual homes. For students, data collected about regions of birth and years in Australia, and competencies and skills in any other home language, are explored. Further, this paper then profiles two students from the Undefined group by utilising information gained from their self-completed surveys, semi-structured interviews, and school academic results. Staff (n=337) were invited to nominate, in the survey, if they had undertaken any preservice or PD in relation to teaching in CALD school environments. Further, those who were interviewed (n=21) were asked to expand on these initial responses in the surveys.
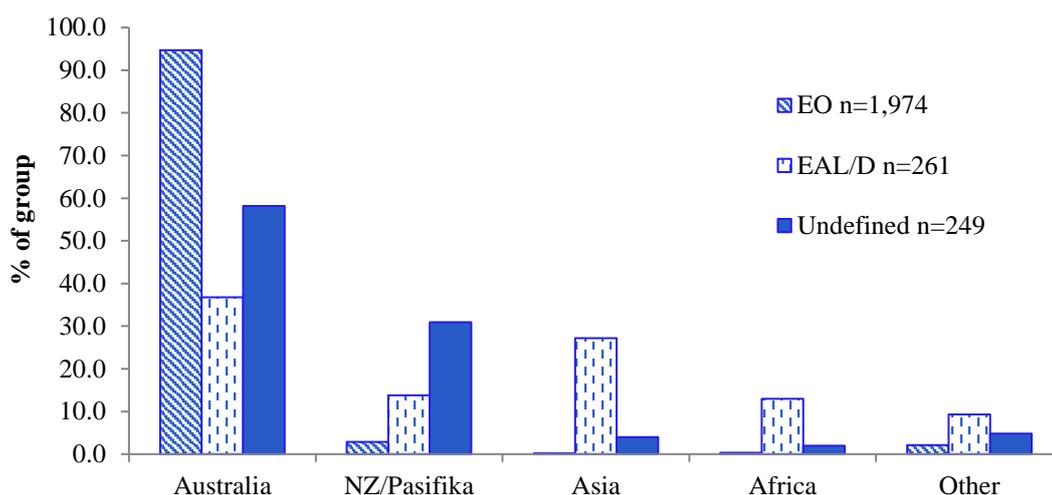
Students

Students' indications of a language besides English spoken at home allowed the population to be separated into EO, EAL/D, and Undefined groups as shown in Table 2.

	% of school by language group						
Language group	Bright well	one	Idst ton	As nor	Chin nley	He	% of total
EO 1,974	69.5	79.5	86.2	81.9		71.3	79.5
EAL/D 261	13.5	10.0	3.7		12.3	18.7	10.5
Undefined 249	16.9	10.4	10.1	10	5.8	10.0	10.0
n	384	557	601	702	240		2,484

Note. 88 males and 52 females did not participate either because of lack of consent from parents (n= 48) or absence (n= 92) thus giving a 94.7% participation rate by students.

Table 2: Students' Language Groups by Schools

The majority (79.5%) of the students' homes were EO, and a further 10.5% were classified as EAL/D students. The remaining students from bi/multilingual homes are termed as Undefined and this 20.5% of the student cohort confirms the diversity within these schools. Students nominated the countries where they were born, and these 52 countries of birth were sorted into regions of birth – Australia, NZ and Pasifika, Asia, Africa, and other regions. This information, presented by percentage of each group by regions of birth, is shown in Figure 1.


Figure 1. Regions of birth of all students by language groups.

The majority of students (84.9%) were born in Australia with another 6.8% born in NZ and Pasifika nations. Within the EAL/D group, 27.2% were born in Asian countries with another 13.8% born in NZ and Pasifika nations. A further 13.0% of the EAL/D students were born in Africa; however, 36.8% of the EAL/D group were born in Australia. For those students in the Undefined group, the majority (58.2%) were born in Australia, and a further 30.9% were born in NZ or Pasifika nations, these data showing the cultural diversity of the groups. Some 36.8% of the EAL/D group and 56.2% in the Undefined group had lived in Australia all of their lives with only 22.2% of the EAL/D group and 16.9% of the Undefined groups having lived in Australia for fewer than five years.

Other Home Languages besides English

When students self-assessed their English language competencies, there was very little reported difference between the groups. Participants were then asked to nominate any other language besides English spoken in the home. The 74 reported languages and dialects were then collated into several language areas -- Maori, Pasifika, Asian, European, African, and Other Language Areas, as summarised in Figure 2.
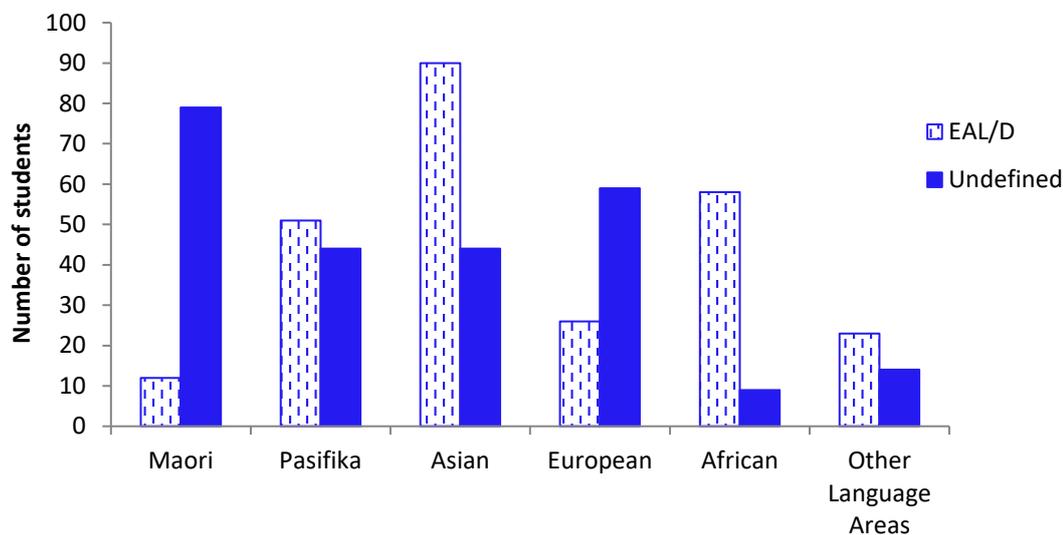
Figure 2. Home language groups of students.

Languages from Asia, Africa, and the Pasifika regions were those most identified in the EAL/D group. Though a reasonable number of students speaking Pasifika languages (n=53) was recorded, those in the EAL/D group who spoke the Maori language (n=12) were less than in the Undefined group, while more Pacific Islanders (n=51) had nominated their other language. In the Undefined group, students' homes where the Maori language (n=79) and Pasifika languages (n=44) were spoken were the least identified. These 74 reported other home languages confirm the linguistic diversity of these groups. Students self-assessed their speaking, reading, and writing skills in their nominated language, with these results reported in Figure 3.
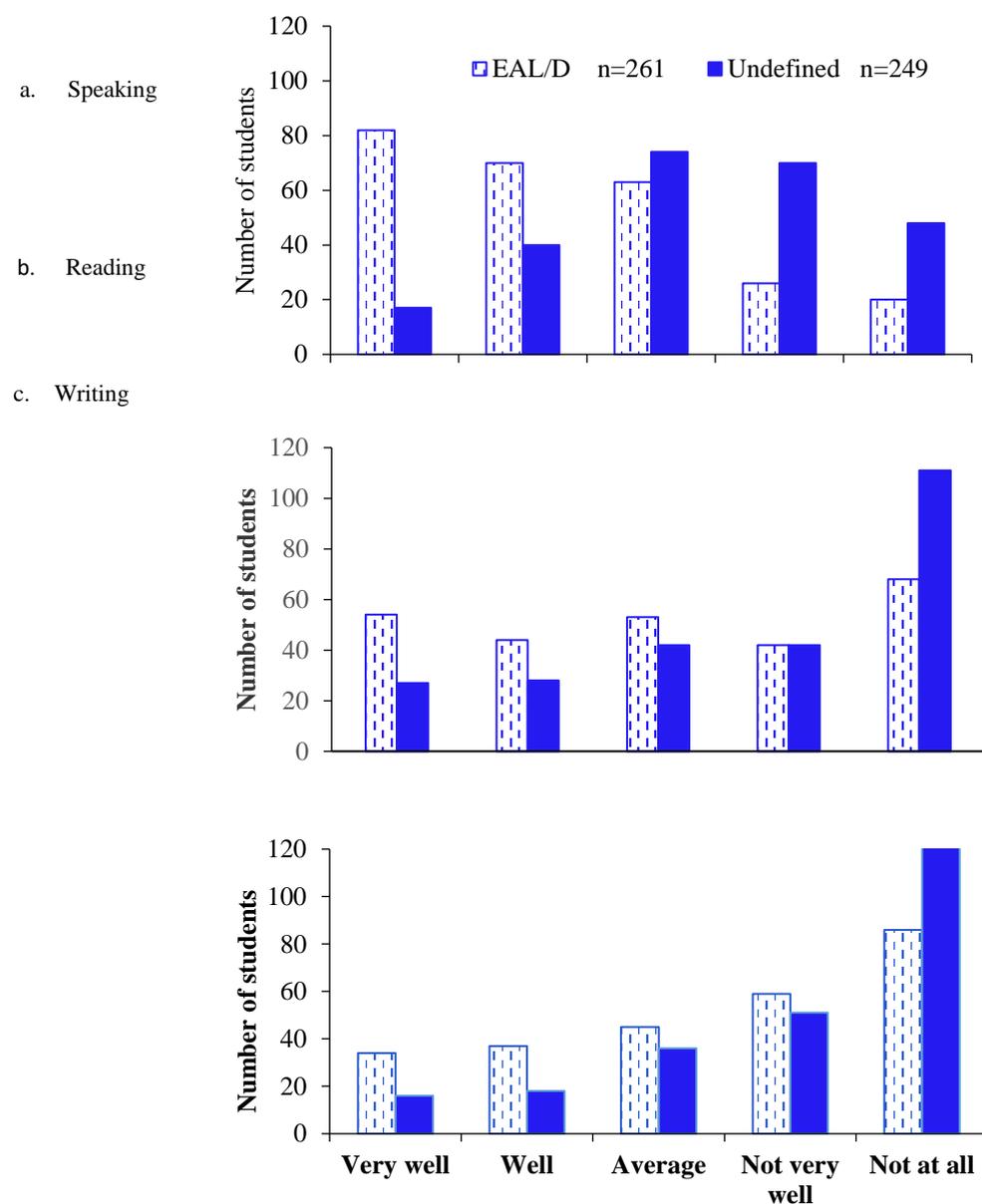
Figure 3. Students' self-assessment of speaking (a), reading (b), and writing (c) competencies in other language.

Interestingly while a relatively small number of students did not speak their other language (20 or 7.6% EAL/D and 48 or 19.3% Undefined), the number who did not read or write this language was far higher in both groups. EAL/D students indicated greater competence across speaking, reading, and writing than did the Undefined group. For example, comparing those that rated themselves at Very Well or Well on speaking, 58.2% (n=152) of the EAL/D were at this level compared to a far lesser 22.9% (n=57) from the Undefined group.

It is clear that there is great diversity in stated language confidence and achievement in both groups, highlighting the complexity of this issue. No simple classification will capture the situation of all these students in either the EAL/D or the Undefined groups. What is clear from their reporting is that, from both groups, there is great diversity in not only the language groups used at home but also in the capacity of the students to speak, read, and write their other home language.

Two Cases Studies of Students in the Undefined Group

The above information shows much diversity within the cohort. To better understand the different types of students classified as Undefined, the following section profiles two students using information from their surveys, interviews, and some school academic results. Eli was a Year 7 student when interviewed. Born in NZ of Tongan-born parents, Eli said they had only been in Australia for 2 years as his parents "thought we might have a better life here".

Eli – ID 312

"Our mum wants us to show respect to our elders and to speak in Tongan to them. This is important. It is about where I come from and my culture and being proud of it". At school "we speak Tongan. It is about embracing our culture and being proud of it…. Most of the kids are better at Tongan than at English." He has received no additional English language support since starting school in Australia. About the Tongan language, he says, "sometimes it confuses me, the words. I speak alright in English and Tongan; my writing in English is not good and I am bad in writing in Tongan too. Maybe my other language confuses me".

Self-assessment

	English	Tongan
Speak	VW	W
Read	W	Av
Write	W	NVW

School academic results

	English	Maths	Science
Yr 7 Sem 2	C	B	C
Yr 7 Sem 1	C	C	C
Yr 6 Sem 2	D	D	B
Yr 6 Sem 1	C	D	C

Eli's parents filled in an enrolment form for the school; he did not know why they did not say they spoke Tongan. His favourite subject is rugby as "it is physical and I like running"; he likes Maths and Science. Maths is a favourite because he finds it interesting; his Maths teacher is helpful because he breaks things down for him and makes sure he understands. English is a challenge, particularly in writing.

"I think it is the way I write it down and it may not make sense. I think in English but I might get mixed up". Further, he said, "I make punctuation errors and I can't spell and my grammar could be better". When asked about his self-assessment in English, "I am OK at English, sort of. I got a C minus last term but failed before that. I have to keep working on it. I speak it OK. Maybe the others are a bit high – I am OK". "English," he wrote "is just writing and pretty boring" but he sees it now as his main language as he uses it at school and with friends.

Eli would like to teach, "a helper in some way – it would make my family proud".

Eli is extremely proud of his culture and all it offers him. His family speaks Tongan about 80% of the time in his home. However, he said he is "using English more now" and knows he has "to become better at it to improve my school results". He appears to have improved his results a little from Year 6 to Year 7 though there has been no improvement in his English results.

The second student, Anna, was a Year 9 student when interviewed. Born in Australia, of a Greek migrant father and an Australian Greek-heritage mother, Anna has lived here all of her life. She is proud of her cultural and linguistic heritage and attends Greek school at the weekend to maintain her heritage language.

Anna – ID 1879

English and Greek are spoken about 50% each in the home. Anna said that occasionally her two languages "get mixed up. Sometimes, the sentence structures get mixed up but it is good having 2 languages … it is an important part of who I am".

Self-assessment　　　　　　　*School academic results*

	English	Greek			English	Maths	Science
Speak	VW	W		Yr 9 Sem 2	C	C	C
Read	VW	W		Yr 9 Sem 1	C	C	B
Write	VW	W		Yr 8 Sem 2	C	C	B
				Yr 8 Sem 1	C	C	B

The family attended an enrolment interview and no questions were asked about an additional home language. Anna enjoys schooling, loves cooking and learning about nutrition but sometimes "finds the writing of theory difficult". Science, she noted, "was becoming harder with the writing".

English assessments are challenging and Anna starts them early and tries to work on them at home and do a draft for the teacher to see. "I usually do heaps but my marks still stay the same. I don't know what else I can do. I know I have to keep working at it". She said that she worked best "if there was only me it would be quiet and I can concentrate and that is a good thing for me". When asked about her self-assessment, she replied, "I think I am OK at English but maybe not the VW I put in the survey for writing and reading".

Anna has hopes of working in "hospitality or childcare. My teachers say I would be a good teacher as I like to take charge. My parents will help me and support me."

Anna has spoken both Greek and English for as long as she can remember. Like Eli, she has received no additional English language support throughout her schooling. Anna appears to work diligently on her schoolwork, but her results have not improved, with this pattern seen across all three reported subjects. Her comments about her self-reporting suggest that her command of English is not very high, perhaps not surprising for a student where the main language of the home is not English.

Staff Preparedness for Teaching in CALD Classrooms

Male and female staff (n=337) from all teaching departments participated in the completion of surveys. From these, 21 participated in the interviews, and their comments offered more details about PD and preservice training in preparation for teaching in CALD classrooms. From the total staff involved, only 44 (13.1%) of them reported that they were not monolingual English speakers. Staff were deidentified by using coding in the following manner: gender M-male, F-female; school name; main subject area taught; identification number -ID1234.

Professional Development

Professional development is a school-organised process. Only 35 (10.4%) of the 337 staff reported that they had undertaken any PD about teaching in the multicultural environment. Most of the comments about PD suggested that appropriate ongoing sessions on classroom strategies are now necessary because of the cultural and linguistic diversity within

most classrooms. One Brightwell staff member (F, Humanities, ID 33), suggested that teachers needed "specific strategies for teaching EAL/D students"; another (F, Chinnor, Mathematics, ID 339) said, "all staff should do cross-cultural training and ESL in the mainstream", and a third (F, Henley, English, ID 356) said, "yes, we have multicultural students so any strategies would be good". Further, a female deputy principal from Idstone suggested,

> PD should be offered in schools that reflect the "how to do" in multicultural classrooms. It needs to be school-based and tailor-made. This will still not be completely effective because you need to consider the cultural biases and understandings of your teacher base, which cannot be done based purely on quant data. Continue to up-skill staff in their subject area in teaching practices and tested strategies that can be adapted for the classroom. (ID 113)

Others suggested "training should be provided to those in classroom and support roles who are not teachers" (F, Idstone, Aide, ID 124) and another said, "while all teachers should have appropriate PD, new teachers to a school with multicultural diversity should be offered specific courses" (M, Idstone, Science, ID 43). Comments by staff in the surveys showed similar concerns while acknowledging, "the teacher's role continues to grow in complexity. Appropriate PD to enhance skills is needed" (F, Chinnor, Special Education, ID 293) and "support, through PD and training must be provided to teachers" (F, Brightwell, English, ID 24). A mathematics teacher (F, ID 49) from Idstone concluded, "Queensland has always had diversity; what is changing is the awareness of this and the need to address the issues through appropriate PD and other education". This other education could commence in the initial preservice training of those wishing to become teachers.

Preservice Teacher Training

Most of the interviewed teachers' comments about preservice teacher training related to the changing composition of the modern classroom and its importance "because we are a multicultural nation and promote equality" (F, Idstone, English, ID 133). Others suggested, "all teachers should be trained to teach all students" (F, Idstone, Special Education, ID 116) and, "I think teacher training needs more strategies for and practise with diverse learners" (F, Idstone, Deputy Principal [DP], ID 113).

Other opinions highlighted some areas of concern.

> There are more and more EAL/D learners in schools. There are a lot of different cultures in Australian schools. We are a multicultural country. We need training in how to teach multicultural students. We get training on teaching Indigenous and SEP students; we should also get training for multicultural students. (F, Chinnor, English, ID 338)
>
> We live in a multicultural society. It is a disgrace that there isn't better prep for teachers. I thank God that I voluntarily participated in a program at uni because my first placement was with a mixed group of students. (F, Aston, English, ID 347)

Of the staff surveyed, 16 (4.7%) had completed either undergraduate or postgraduate study about teaching students from diverse backgrounds. Notably, in their current schools, 20.5% of students are from bi/multilingual homes. Teachers offered further comments about appropriate training for this diversity within the classrooms when they completed the surveys.

> *Many Qld teachers do not know/understand their own language to an appropriate level. Train teachers better; require them to know and use the language properly themselves so they can teach students. (F, Idstone, DP, ID113)*
>
> *Many students are living in households where language education is lacking. Unfortunately, so are too many of our teachers who need more rigorous English language training and skills to present the language across all subject areas. (F, Idstone, Head of Department Spec Ed ID 116)*

The teachers in this study acknowledged that they needed to expand their pedagogical practices to include those that are suitable for CALD classes of students and that this should be undertaken, initially, in preservice teacher training and then through ongoing PD in schools.

Discussion
Students

The student information demonstrates the cultural and linguistic diversity within these classrooms with 20.5% of students coming from bi/multilingual homes. English language skills reported by the Undefined students are diverse, reflecting not only their capabilities but also their backgrounds and the home language influence. This diversity is similar to that seen in students identified as EAL/D. Across these students, there clearly are different needs for support to achieve their full potential -- from broad strategic support strategies, for all bi/multilingual students, to more intensive support for a small number of students.

The consideration of specific student situations helps to answer this question for individual students and thus supports a greater appreciation of the overall issue. The two profiled students have had some exposure to the English language all their lives, and Anna has undertaken all of her schooling in Queensland state schools. However, English is not the main language spoken at home, and there was no indication that their respective school communities were aware of these students' actual bilingual status. The question raised then is whether parents want their children to be identified as bi/multilingual or whether they feel it is more important for them to fit in as part of the mainstream group (Dobrenov-Major et al., 2004; van Leent & Exley, 2013).

For Anna and her family, nothing was asked during the enrolment interview about any other language besides English being spoken at home. Eli's family dropped his enrolment form into the school office, and no communication occurred with the office staff. Neither family completed the section on the enrolment form relating to speaking another language besides English. Neither student could explain why this omission occurred. Perhaps this lack of inquiry on original enrolment at the schools has resulted in the unique needs (Queensland Government, 2012) of both of these students not being identified.

Looking at educational achievements, Eli and Anna have been assessed at a pass level (mostly "C") in their key learning areas. Villegas and Lucas (2007) encouraged teachers to see the students from diverse backgrounds as competent learners. Are Eli and Anna perceived by their schools as competent learners? When their cultural and linguistic heritages are considered alongside their different ethnic and socioeducational backgrounds, there could be an impact, as Waldfogel (2012) suggested, on their learning that has stopped them reaching their full potential.

Menken et al. (2012) suggested that bilingual students needed to be competent in reading and writing in both languages to achieve well at school. In line with their findings, this research has identified that Eli's academic results are not improving. Further, his

assessments of his English language skills do not match those of his academic results, as Miller et al. (2012) noted in their research. Anna self-rated all her English and Greek language skills at very high levels but her marks are not high and have not improved over 3 years. If she had been given the opportunity to receive additional support to improve her English literacy skills, focussed around her cultural and linguistic background, would this have changed her situation? Is the lack of content knowledge, as well as lower literacy skills, responsible for her results being static? If she had been identified, assessed, and strategically supported, could she have achieved her personal, academic excellence, or is she performing at her appropriate level?

From the data presented, it appears that Fletcher et al'.s (2009) results may be relevant to Eli, whose cultural and linguistic heritage presents a challenge for him when equating the Tongan language with SAE. Samu (2006) reported that many Pasifika families move to Australia for the betterment of their families, as did Eli's family 2 years ago. Should Eli have had his English language skills assessed when he arrived from New Zealand? Would assessment of Eli's continuing academic progress, as the academic demands in reading and writing increase, prevent him from becoming what Freeman et al. (2002) and Menken et al. (2012) call LTELLs, and set him on a more positive academic trajectory?

The question needs to be asked whether these students are being shaped by "inspiring and challenging learning experiences" (Queensland Government, 2012, p. 2) or if they and those like them are being viewed through a deficit model approach (M. Brown, 2007). Some of these Undefined students, like Eli and Anna, will remain, as Luster (2011) suggested, forgotten, because in the classroom they are performing adequately and do not present as needing remedial support.

Staff

Reflections from teachers on their preparation, through both preservice training and ongoing school organized PD, provided a valuable insight into areas that they believe would have enhanced their preparation to teach in CALD environments. Carrasquillo and Rodríguez (2002) found that the majority of ELLs in the USA were being taught by staff with no specialised training to cater for the changing CALD student body. Similarly, in this study, the low percentage of appropriately trained teachers (4.7% in preservice and 10.5% in PD) was surprising. The findings from this study align with that of Verdugo and Flores (2007) who had noted that most staff had limited understanding of the students' cultural backgrounds or their cultures, as several suggested that they needed a better understanding of the predominant cultures within their respective schools. Similar to the findings of Luster (2011), most of the teachers in this study were only trained for the mainstream classroom and had little knowledge about the cultures of the students within the broader school environment. Miller's (2015) research found that in Australian universities there was a lack of appropriate preservice training available to prepare future teachers for the CALD classroom – this was also highlighted from evidence in this research.

Teachers also acknowledged that not only did they not have the specialised training needed for these classes but they also did not understand the challenges these students faced. Hélot and Ó Laoire (2011) found in their research that teachers did not understand the complexities of teaching a CALD class and this issue was acknowledged by most teachers in this study. This may be compounded by the fact that the majority of the teachers (86.9%) in this study are monolingual English speakers, similar to Verdugo and Flores's 2007 findings, who have lived the majority of their lives in Australia. Teacher responses, in this study, indicated that most could see the need to become aware of the changing cultural and

linguistic diversity within schools. Further, they acknowledged that this would require them to undertaken further training that would help them become culturally responsive teachers (M. Brown, 2007).

Many teachers in this study suggested, as had Flynn (2015) in discussing preservice training in England, that there should be some definite curriculum subjects about understanding the ELL. Similar to what Villegas and Lucas (2007) had previously reported, many teachers in this study thought it essential to include subjects in preservice training that enabled staff to gain an understanding of these diverse learners. One teacher suggested the value of cross-cultural training, an approach also raised by Moloney and Saltmarsh (2016) in their research when they assessed an Australian university's preparation of preservice teachers for teaching in a CALD school community. Responses from staff about topics for PD were similar. They reported that the preservice training should give them the basics required to work in CALD environments and then the ongoing school PD should enhance that preparation, building on the topics that were started in preservice (Premier & Miller, 2010). Some placed emphasis on the PD being specific to the cultural and linguistic composition of their school communities. For the majority of teaching staff, the emphasis was on the "how to do" – How do I teach well in a culturally and linguistically diverse school community?

Conclusion

With all the other pressures in today's classrooms, students from bi/multilingual homes can be easily forgotten; however, with the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in all schools, it is imperative that time is taken to identify these students properly. This exploratory research has confirmed the cultural and linguistic diversity of students within Queensland junior secondary classes -- some 20.5% of students in this study came from bi/multilingual homes, and of this group, 10.5% are classified by their schools as EAL/D. This research has raised many questions, with implications for policy and practice, in particular about enrolment practices, identification of students from bi/multilingual homes, and the strategic support that comes from the appropriate identification for such students. Without addressing these students' needs, we are at risk of failing to implement the policy and guidelines of the curriculum and missing the full contribution of education to one group of students.

Staff recognised their limited cultural awareness and its associated constraints on teaching in a CALD classroom. They also identified limitations in their preparation and indicated a need for greater preparation for this situation and the need for further ongoing, appropriate PD within their schools to address such a need. It further raises questions about the knowledge of those who plan university teacher training courses and whether or not they are cognizant of the rapidly changing CALD of students within classrooms. Finally, school administrations organise the PD for their staff; perhaps consideration needs to be given in preparing teachers to ensure all are appropriately trained for our changing societal demands in the classroom. How then are teachers and support staff enhancing their knowledge about these CALD students? What roles are universities, education departments, and schools taking in ensuring their potential teachers and employed teachers are trained to support these diverse student groups?

Hakuta's (2011) acknowledgement that this will take time, money, and effort is of relevance to administrators. There is a need to identify these students, properly assess their English language needs, and then allocate strategic support. The growing "forgotten population of non-proficient English students" (p. 71) in America, as revealed by Luster (2011), may easily occur in Queensland if the research reported here is an indication of the

cultural and linguistic diversity within state schools. Is it worth considering what future contribution from these students is being foregone?

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