PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES:
THE CASE OF A
DUAL LANGUAGE BILINGUAL PROGRAM

By

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ABSTRACT

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These can be the brightest of days or not-so-bright days for learners and

educators as they deal with a rapidly changing education environment. Access,

equity, quality, and accountability have become buzz words in debates on how to

prepare a diverse generation within a climate of constant change. Language as a

medium of learning, through which exchange and transfer of ideas, skills, and

knowledge take place, is central to these debates; and so are educators who use that

language to facilitate learning. However, school educators tend to get the short end

of the stick when it comes to preparation and learning to meet the demands of

diversity. Disparities exist in emphasis between student learning and teacher

learning in the current education environment. The gaps in professional learning

are especially significant for bilingual education teachers who face challenges

functioning within unique institutional conditions and a complex education system.

Using a case study, I explore how teachers perceive available professional

development opportunities in light of their identified instructional challenges in a

dual language environment; and how such perceptions can affect a school's and a

district's approach to professional development design. The study sheds light on

how differences in individual backgrounds and prior professional and personal

experiences influences a professional's perceptions of the value, challenges and approaches involved in dual language bilingual education.

The study also raises questions about how the surrounding contextual complexities—institutional goals, policy structures, and actor perceptions and relationships within an institutional structure—affect the learning experiences of teachers in a dual language environment. These questions highlight the disparities around bilingual education at different levels of the learning system—between school and district level goals and expectations about learning and instruction; between teachers' and administrators' perceived instructional goals, challenges and need for professional support; and between envisioned and implemented roles of professional development providers.

Despite wide variations in the forms and structure of existing dual language bilingual programs in the United States, the study confirms the universality of certain issues around biliteracy and biculturalism in the monolingual national education environment. A unique contribution of this study to the field is in helping understand how the relevance of teacher support in a dual language environment tends to get defined primarily by the issue of language, rather than the format or source of the support system. Additionally, the findings indicate the importance of alignment between program goals and program elements (such as the standards, curriculum, student and teacher assessments, and instructional support framework) in forming the basis of a coherent professional support system to enhance the possibilities of student achievement.

*In memory of my late father Baidyanath Bhattacharya, and
for my mother, Dali Bhattacharya*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AP: Assistant Principal

BELA: Bilingual Educators Language Acquisition cohort

CLC: Collaborative Learning Cycle

DLES: Dove Lane Elementary School

ELL: English language learner

EngageNY: Engage New York Math Curriculum

ESL: English as a second language

IC: Instructional Coach

ILC: Individual Learning Cycle

OLL: District Office of Language Learning

MC: Math Consultant

CPDO: District Central PD Office

PD: Professional Development

PLD: Professional learning designer at the District Central PD Office

P&M: Phonics and Morphology

RWW: Reader's and Writer's Workshop

SLL: Spanish language learner

SM: Singapore Math Curriculum

SVES: Spring Valley Elementary School

SVDL: Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary School

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Problem Statement and Literature Review

The student demography in U.S. schools has changed significantly over the years demanding major transformations in approaches to education across the nation, especially in relation to expectations on learning, instruction, and preparation of teachers. The unique competencies and backgrounds that students and teachers bring to schools affect the ways learning occurs in a classroom. Additionally, the institutional conditions, like cultural and systemic environments of the school that are shaped by its greater community at the district, state, national and global levels, also have a ripple effect on the practices at the classroom level. For instance, changes in the nation's demography due to immigration trends have not only affected the content, values and approaches in education, but have emphasized the need to include linguistic and cultural issues in educational discourse. However, research indicates that the impact of interventions in addressing such drastic shifts in the multi-cultural and multilingual aspects of education have been weak (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Due to a dramatic increase in the number of school-aged English language learners (ELLs) in the U.S., teachers in more than 50% of U.S. public schools have at least one English language learner in their class (Tellez & Waxman, 2006). Over time, states and districts across the nation have adopted various language-based education models aiming to improve student outcomes among English language learners. Most of these models are founded on ideologies about the use of second language vis-à-vis English as a medium of instruction. Depending on their respective

stances, some of the models promote English proficiency as a priority skill in achieving academic excellence, while others emphasize the significance of biculturalism and biliteracy in the context of an increasingly global world. For instance, the priority of the English as a second language (or ESL, also known as English immersion programs) and transitional bilingual programs is to enhance English proficiency for all students. Contrarily, the goal of the dual language (or two-way immersion or TWI) models is to promote bilingualism, biliteracy and multicultural competence among both native and non-native English-speaking students.

Despite such measures undertaken to address students' diverse linguistic needs bilingual programs within the U.S. continue to exist within a primarily monolingual atmosphere that greatly shapes how terms like "academic success" and "effective instructional practices" are defined. Many TWI programs have experienced setbacks due to statutory measures against bilingual education, such as California's Proposition 227 (Crawford, 1997; McField, 2008) and high-stakes assessment/ accountability demands of NCLB (Baker, 2006). Education policies and mandates within the United States continue to exert pressure on bilingual programs to conform to notions that emphasize monolingualism, in the form of English proficiency, as the key to academic success. Given such circumstances, preparing and providing for good instruction in dual language bilingual programs has become especially challenging because of their added goals of promoting bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence.

Existing research shows how factors originating at the meso (institutional) and macro (school system) contexts cumulatively influence the quality of student learning and instruction at the micro or the classroom level (Bore & Wright, 2009; Bottery & Wright, 1996). The complexity of context-based factors and agents adds to the difficulty of defining teacher learning generally because the nature of learning depends on the uniqueness of the context and the person involved (Blackman et al, 2006; Bore & Wright, 2009; Briggs, 2007). In a study, Newmann, King and Youngs (2000) recognized that teachers' instructional practices (that affect student learning) are largely dependent on the school's and the district's capacity to provide equitable support or sponsor relevant policies and programs in curriculum and assessment standards; teacher certification, hiring and retention; school size; school governance procedures; and professional development. They argued that teacher learning and professional development should be designed to fit the specific capacity needs of a school at a particular point of time. Teachers in bilingual schools are found to be largely unprepared due to a lack of adequate professional support system (Lewis et al, 1999; August & Shanahan, 2006).

Despite increased interest in improving instructional quality and evaluating instructional effectiveness of teachers in bilingual education settings, research and policy initiatives in this area have been slow. In a comprehensive investigation of research in the field of professional development needs of teachers of ELLs, August and Hakuta (1997) identified the marked mismatch between "what we know about effective professional development and what is actually available to most teachers" (p. 255). Research in the field of bilingual instruction call for a paradigm shift in staff

development and preservice programs, which August and Hakuta (ibid) claim, are not well established in practice. In a large-scale study of over 5,000 teachers in California, Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) found that teachers had few professional development opportunities targeted to help them work effectively with ELLs. Many other researchers (Migliacci & Verplaetse, 2008; Walqui, 2008) have also noted the unpreparedness of teachers when it comes to meeting the needs of second language learners (Li & Protacio, 2010).

Moreover, despite the fact that need for substantial professional development for teachers is recognized widely and valued (OECD, 2004), studies have indicated that there are often considerable gaps between optimal conditions for professional learning indicated by research evidence and those that are actually provided (Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005). Research on standards-based reform in the USA has also specified extended time as the crucial element in determining positive relationships between teacher learning and pedagogy (Snow- Renner & Lauer, 2006).

Due to the general gaps in the conditions for professional learning, which are especially significant in the case of bilingual education teachers, these teachers continue to face challenges while functioning within their unique programmatic conditions. While the TWI dual language programs promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism, they often function under the constraints of a largely monolingual educational culture. This dissertation attempts to address the need for research in this area.

Using the case study of a dual language education program, I explore how teachers perceive the professional development opportunities that are available to them in light of the instructional challenges they encounter and the program goals they strive to attain in a dual language environment. I also investigate how perceptions about teacher learning needs and opportunities can affect a school's and a district's approach to professional development design in the context of a dual language bilingual program. The study takes place at an urban school that has adopted a 50/50 dual language (DL) education model. The school serves a culturally and linguistically diverse student population predominantly coming from low-socioeconomic family backgrounds. The diagram below conceptualizes the core issue at the heart of the study, where the question I ask is: "how do teachers perceive the professional development opportunities that are available to them as a capacity-building tool?"
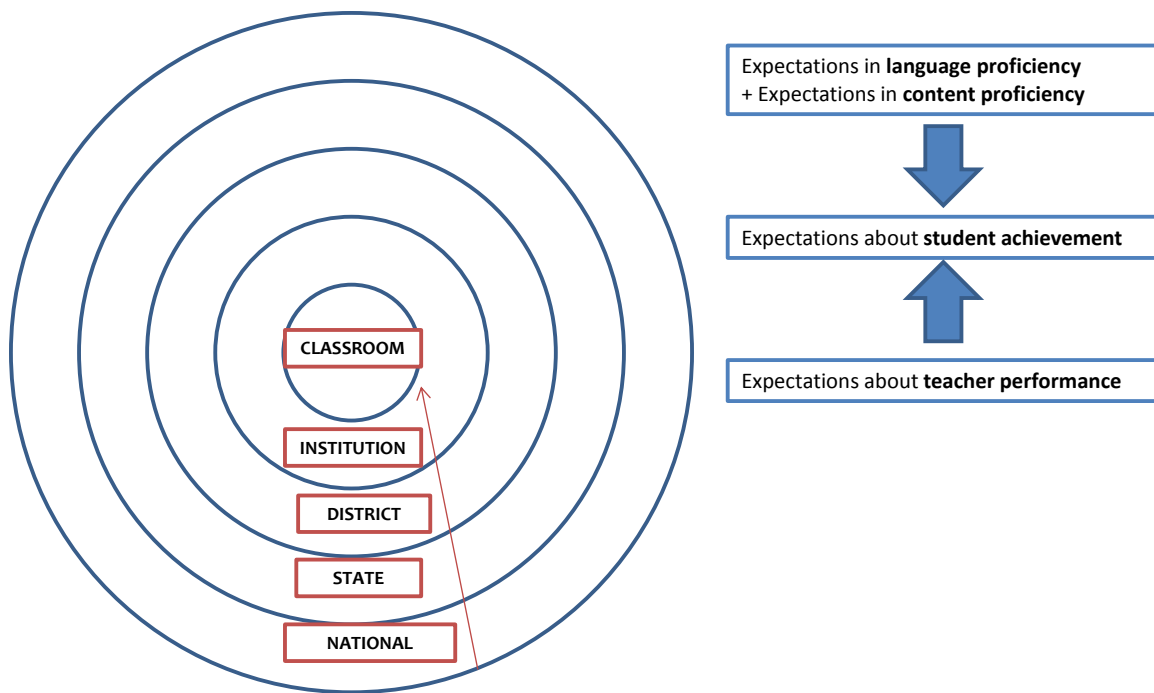
Figure 1: Mapping the context

I introduce this chapter with a brief overview of the problem I seek to address. The literature review that follows focuses on the trends in bilingual education in the U.S., instructional practices and challenges associated with dual language settings, and finally the state of teacher preparedness in dual language classrooms. Finally, I state how this study addresses a critical gap in the field of research on dual language education.

Review of the Literature

Trends in dual language bilingual education. The population of school-aged English language learners (ELLs) in the U.S. has significantly increased over the years. Research estimates indicate that by the end of 2015, 30% of the school-age population will consist of language minority students due to increased immigration rates (Kindler, 2002). Despite this shift in student demography, the discourse

practices in most educational learning environments today are representative of the mainstream society. Such trends often have negative impacts for nonmainstream students belonging to cultural and linguistic minority groups (Cazden, 1988; Gee, 1990). Language-minority students often do not prosper academically in such contexts because the discursive practices of their homes do not match that of the school environment (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010).

The education of language-minority students is dependent on the degree to which they have access to instruction that is challenging, yet comprehensible. They need an accepting school and social environment, which promotes academic achievement and values cultural and language diversity (Calderon & Carreon, 2000). In the U.S., the Lau v. Nichols decision of 1974 affirmed a student's right to educational opportunity via appropriate instructional services. To this day the search for the most effective means of accomplishing this goal for language-minority students continues. On the one hand, earlier studies by Hakuta (1990), Cummins (1981), Krashen (1982), Ramirez (1992), and Collier (1995) conclude that long-term primary language instruction complemented with quality instruction in English is the most effective means for language-minority students to attain academic success. Later studies by August and Hakuta (1997), Calderon, Hertz-Lazarowitz and Slavin (1997), and Slavin and Madden (1996) find that a comprehensive approach to school reform is necessary to implement quality bilingual or English-as-a-Second-Language programs for language-minority students.

Within the U.S. public education system, there are different educational programs used in schools for working with English learner populations. These programs range from an English as a second language (ESL) submersion instructional model, ESL pull out model, ESL push-in model, structured immersion or sheltered English, content-based model, transitional or early-exit bilingual education model, developmental or late-exit bilingual model, two-way immersion or dual language model, and dynamic bi/plurilingual education model. Each model has unique ways of using language in instruction, different duration of instruction, and distinct instructional components and goals (Refer to the table from Garcia and Kleifgen, 2010 "Types of Educational Programs for Emergent Bilinguals" in the appendix for an outline of the different types of language-based educational programs designed for English learners).

Preliminary studies on the outcomes of two-way immersion (TWI) or dual-language (DL) programs (Christian & Whitcher, 1995; Collier, 1994) showed great promise. In dual language programs, students from language majority and language minority backgrounds are brought together with the common goals of attaining a high level of proficiency in both languages, meeting academic standards, and developing cross-cultural understanding (Bikle, Hakuta, & Billings, 2004). Students enrolled in these programs learn content through two languages, developing both language skills and academic competencies simultaneously. Since lessons are not translated and students are encouraged to use the language of instruction, students have the opportunity to serve both as language models (during instruction in their native language) and as language learners (during instruction in their second

language). Native English speakers are integrated with speakers of a minority language to draw on the combined linguistic resources of the two language groups (ibid).

As a developing pedagogical approach to language and content area education, the definition of TWI/ DL education model continues to evolve. Initially, a range of programs that offered an enriched environment for language education were considered as two-way approaches. Later, the Center for Applied Linguistics or CAL (2001) proposed three criteria for officially designating programs as TWI:

1.   *Integration*: where language-minority and language-majority students must be integrated for at least 50 percent of the day at all grade levels;

2.   *Instruction*: wherein content and literacy instruction in both languages is provided to all students; and

3.   *Population*: within the program there has to be a balance of language-minority and language-majority students, with each group making up between one-third and two-thirds of the total student population.

The TWI/ DL programs are often thought to serve students from poor Hispanic backgrounds and middle-class English-speaking students, although variations exist regarding such trends (Bikle, Hakuta, & Billings, 2004). It has also been noted that a vast majority of these programs exist at the elementary school level, beginning in kindergarten or first grade and ending through fifth grade. However, recently there has been a growth in the number of such programs offered at the middle and high school levels (Christian, 1994).

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There are several program models within the TWI/DL framework that differ in the time allocated for the use of the two minority and majority languages in instruction. The two common ones are the "90/10" model and the "80/20" models, where "90" and "80" refer to the percentage of instructional time in kindergarten conducted in the minority language and the numbers "10" and "20" indicate the percentage of instructional time in English. As students progress through the grades, the ratio of language changes until it reaches "50/50" usually by the fourth grade (Lindholm, 1997). Other programs are "balanced," maintaining an equal split between the two languages throughout the program (CAL, 2001). The choice of program mainly rests on the community's beliefs about language education (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Those who choose 90/10 or 80/20 may believe that more Spanish instruction is necessary since students in an English-dominated socio-linguistic environment tend to have extensive exposure to English; however, native English speakers do not have similar exposure to the use and application of Spanish language outside of school. Whereas, those choosing the 50/50 model may do so out of a desire to promote equity between the two languages throughout the program, fear of lower academic outcomes in English, or lack of staffing capacity for a 90/10 program (Bikle, Hakuta, & Billings, 2004).

Language of instruction can be allocated by time, content area, or person, or a combination of all three (Christian, 1994). If allocated by time, language of instruction is changed on a schedule that can alternate (half-day or roller-coaster plan; every-other-day/ whole day plan; and every-two-day plan). In a half-day (roller-coaster) model, the instructional day is divided with morning in one

language and the afternoon in the other language. In the whole day plan, if English were the language of the day today, then tomorrow the partner language would be the language of the day. The every-two-day model is usually appropriate for upper grades, when students are more proficient in the two languages. This model separates the languages of instruction by alternating the language every two days (Thomas & Collier, 2012).

If altered by content area, decisions are made as to the language of instruction in content areas such as science, math, and social studies. One consistent language is used for each specific area. Finally, if altered by person, students have two teachers, one of whom provides instruction in the minority language and the other in the majority language (Bikle, Hakuta, & Billings, 2004).

Instructional practices in dual language bilingual programs. Existing research in education indicates a strong correlation between good instructional practices and higher student outcomes, regardless of the type of educational model that is used (Levine & Lezotte, 1995; Marzano, 2003;Wenglinsky, 2000). This association between quality instruction and student learning is also evident in studies with ELL or high-risk students (Berman et al, 1995; Doherty et al, 2003; Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2003; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Ramirez, 1992; Sloan, 2001). In fact, Wenglinsky (2000) found that the strongest effect on student achievement measured in terms of eighth grade math achievement, after taking into consideration the students' social class, was classroom practice. However, good instruction in dual language programs involves a complex process because of the additional goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence, and the

constant need to integrate and balance the needs of the student groups (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary,& Rogers, 2007). Hence, it is even more important for teachers to use a variety of techniques that respond to different learning styles (Berman et al, 1995; Doherty et al, 2003; Sloan, 2001) and language proficiency levels (Berman et al, 1995; Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002).

Positive teacher-learner interactions are an important instructional objective (Levine & Lezotte, 1995) in effective dual language classrooms. Studies have shown that teachers' equitable use of positive social and instructional interactions with both ELLs and proficient English speakers result in improved academic performance of both groups (California State Department of Education, 1982;

Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal & Tharp, 2003). In addition, research suggests that a reciprocal interaction model of teaching is more beneficial to students than the traditional teacher-centered transmission model of teaching (Cummins, 2000; Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal & Tharp, 2003; Tikunoff, 1986). While the basic premise of the transmission model is for the teacher to impart knowledge or skills to students who do not yet have these abilities, the reciprocal interaction approach encourages participation in genuine dialogue with pupils. This model encourages the development of higher-level cognitive skills (Berman et al, 1995; Cummins, 1986; Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal & Tharp, 2003; Wenglinsky, 2000) and is associated with higher student achievement in more effective schools (Levine & Lezotte, 1995).

A number of strategies under the rubric of cooperative learning have been developed that appear to optimize student interactions and shared work

experiences (e.g., Cohen, 1994). Studies suggest that when ethnically and linguistically diverse students work interdependently on school tasks with common objectives, students' expectations and attitudes toward each other become more positive, and their academic achievement improves (Berman et al, 1995; Cohen, 1994; Edwinson & Edwinson, 1990; Edwinson, Edwinson, & Holubec, 1986; Qin, Edwinson & Edwinson, 1995; Slavin, 1995). Besides, extensive interactions among native and nonnative speakers also result in language development (Long & Porter, 1985).

Here, it is important to point out that many years of research on cooperative learning show that for cooperative learning to produce positive outcomes, the grouping must be based on particular operating principles. Saunders (2006) reported that successful interactive activities require careful design of task considering language proficiency level of the ELL students and adequate training of the English proficient students in working with and promoting the language development of ELLs. Research also shows that successful schools emphasize on helping low achievers by accelerating instruction, rather than slowing it down. Finally, researchers advise educators to be cautious about successful grouping, allowing students to work interdependently, with clearly conceived individual and group accountability for all group members, and social equity in the group and in the classroom (Cohen, 2002; Cohen & Lotan, 1995; Edwinson, Edwinson, & Holubec, 1986; Qin, Edwinson & Edwinson, 1995; Slavin, 1994).

Significance of language input. Lindholm-Leary (2001) points out that optimal language input in the classroom has four characteristics: it is adjusted to the

comprehension level of the learner, it is interesting and relevant, there is sufficient quantity, and it is challenging. Accomplishing this objective involves careful planning in the integration of language instruction and subject matter presentation to ensure ELL students access to the core curriculum (Berman et al 1995). In the early stages of second language acquisition, input is made more comprehensible though the use of:

1. Slower, more expanded, simplified, and repetitive speech oriented to the "here and now"(Krashen, 1981; Long, 1980),

2. Highly contextualized language and gestures (Long, 1980; Saville-Troike, 1987),

3. Comprehension and confirmation checks (Long, 1980), and

4. Communication structured to provide scaffolding for the negotiation of meaning by second language students by constraining possible interpretations of sequence, role, and intent (Saville-Troike, 1987).

Echevarria and Short and their colleagues (e.g., Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2003; Short, 2002; Short & Echevarria, 1999) built on this base of research on sheltered instruction to develop the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP), which provides a lesson planning and delivery approach. The SIOP model comprises 30 items that are grouped into eight components for making content comprehensible for ELLs. These sheltering techniques occur in the context of a reciprocal interactive exchange and include various activities as alternatives to the traditional transmission approach. Sheltered techniques include:

1. The use of visual aids such as pictures, charts, graphs, and semantic mapping,

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2.   Modeling of instruction, allowing students to negotiate meaning and make connections between course content and prior knowledge,

3.   Allowing students to act as mediators and facilitators,

4.   The use of alternative assessments to check comprehension, such as portfolios,

5.   Use of comprehensible input, scaffolding, and supplemental materials, and

6.   A wide range of presentation strategies.

Echevarria et al (2002) reported that students, who were provided with sheltered instruction, using the SIOP model, scored significantly higher and made greater gains on an English writing task compared to ELLs who had not been exposed to instruction via the SIOP model. While this model was developed for use by ESL teachers with ELL students, the concepts are clearly applicable to second language development for all students.

Balanced with the need to make the second language more comprehensible is the necessity for providing stimulating language input (Kowal & Swain, 1997; Swain, 1987), particularly for the native speakers of each language (Valdés, 1996). There are two main reasons why students need stimulating language input. First, it facilitates continued development of language structures and skills. Second, when students are instructed in their first language, the content of their lessons becomes more comprehensible when they are then presented with similar content in the second language. Immersion students often have difficulty in producing native-like speech in the second language. Part of this difficulty stems from an absence of the opportunity to speak with fluent speakers in the language they are learning.

According to classroom research, immersion students get few opportunities to produce extended discourse in which they are forced to make their language coherent, accurate, and sociolinguistically appropriate (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Swain, 1985, 1987). This is even true in dual language programs in which teachers do not require students to use the language of instruction during group work. Thus, promoting highly proficient oral language skills necessitates providing both structured and unstructured opportunities for oral production (Saunders, in press). It also necessitates establishing and enforcing a strong language policy in the classroom that encourages students to use the instructional language and discourages students from speaking the non-instructional language (Lindholm-Leary & Molina, 2000; Panel of Experts).

Considerable controversy exists about the importance of explicit second language instruction in the process of second language learning (Long, 1983; Swain, 1987). Because many immersion programs were grounded in the natural approach, which eschews formal skills instruction in the immersion language, two important but incorrect assumptions were made. The first assumption was that students would simply learn the language through subject matter instruction, and the second was that students would achieve more native-like proficiency if they received the kind of language exposure that is similar to first language learning (see Swain, 1987).

As some immersion researchers have discovered (e.g., Harley, 1984, 1996; Lyster, 1987; Swain, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1986), the fluency and grammar ability of most immersion students is not native like and there is a need for formal

instruction in the second language. However, this does not mean traditional translation and memorization of grammar and phrases. It is important to utilize a language arts curriculum that specifies which linguistic structures should be mastered (e.g., conditional verb forms) and how these linguistic structures should be incorporated into the academic content (e.g., including preterite[i] and imperfect forms of verbs in history subject matter and conditional, future, and subjunctive tenses of verbs in mathematics and science content).

Monolingual lesson delivery (i.e., different periods of time devoted to instruction in and through each of the two languages respectively) seems to be superior to designs that rely on language mixing during a single lesson or time frame (Dulay & Burt, 1978; Legaretta, 1979,1981; Swain, 1983). This is not to say that language mixing itself is harmful; clearly, the sociolinguistic skill of language mixing or code switching is important in bilingual communities. Rather, it appears that sustained periods of monolingual instruction in each language help to promote adequate language development. Because teachers need to refrain from language switching, they must have high proficiency levels in the language for the content in which they are instructing. Teachers, instructional assistants and others who help in the classroom should not translate for children in the classroom. Some children in partial immersion programs have developed the strategy of looking confused when they have to respond in the second language because they have been reinforced for their confusion with some well-meaning adult who translates for the "poor child". Instructors who react in this manner discourage students from developing listening strategies in the second language.

Instructional challenges in dual language bilingual programs.

Researchers have noted that in many key states (e.g., California, Arizona, Massachusetts) across the nation restrictive language policies have left many bilingual teachers feeling ineffective, unable to provide their students with appropriate, high-quality language instruction (de Jong, Arias, & Sanchez, 2010). They further suggest that bilingual teachers have become demoralized as a result of English-only laws (cf. Proposition 227) and are now forced to offer a counterfeit education of language instruction, a condition that will naturally cause professional anxiety, burnout, and, in some cases, a retreat from teaching altogether. Katz (2004) pointed out these tensions, as well. Cahnmann and Varghese (2006), Cervantes-Soon and Valenzuela (2011), Dubetz and deJong (2011), and Varghese (2006), suggested that in the current US political climate, bilingual teachers must enlarge their roles as community and school advocates. The volume edited by Brutt-Griffler and Varghese (2004) contains several works linking bilingual teacher identity to acts of resistance towards debilitating language policies.

Working in an English monolingual national education environment, many teachers express concern about the reduced instructional time for the minority language and the increased use of English in DL programs in order to perform better on standardized tests. Teachers in a study conducted by Lindholm-Leary and Genesee (2010) expressed concern about how the district's push for increased English instruction at the expense of Spanish instructional time in TWI/DL programs had adverse results on biliteracy. The study indicated that more English "time-on task" does not necessarily expedite the acquisition of English for ELs or

improve their test scores. On the contrary, it was found that higher level of native language proficiency enhances English language acquisition and facilitates learning in a second language (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; and Thomas & Collier, 2002).

In a study on teachers in a TWI/dual language program, Hernandez (2011) identified several instructional challenges that teachers in these programs deal with every day. Teachers in this study identified lack of adequate time for instructional planning as a major impediment. They stated that well-developed lessons in a TWI program required time to find or develop the appropriate materials, translate resources and augment the plans in their teachers' editions. Additionally, teachers need time to develop skills in their own professional practice on determining which lessons needed supplementary materials in order to ensure success. Teachers felt challenged by the amount of material they needed to cover within the limited period of time whereby they had to provide in-depth instruction for the entire curriculum in two languages. They lacked sufficient time to review and re-teach lessons which were compounded by constraints in adhering to their daily schedules, pacing guides, and benchmark assessment timelines.

Teachers in Hernandez's (ibid) study also reported challenges to vocabulary instruction due to complexity in the Spanish instructional materials in science and social studies, especially in upper-grade levels. Readability levels and complexity in vocabulary seemed to be too demanding for students to be able to access information on their own. Teachers also indicated the lack of access to appropriate resources needed to effectively provide instruction to dual language students while using district- and state-recommended curriculum. Similar challenges are also

reported by Howard and colleagues (2003) where teachers perceived teaching in two languages to be particularly challenging since equitable materials may not be readily available to meet the demands of TWI programs. To address the goal of cross-cultural competency literature in the dual language education model recommends programs to consider high-quality materials for both languages that reflect a multicultural curriculum (Cloud et al, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Sugarman & Howard, 2001). Teachers in Hernandez's (2011) study demonstrated how state- or district-adopted programs may be supplemented with readers' and writers' workshop approaches, literature circles, reading fluency strategies, leveled readers, Guided Language Acquisition Design (GOLL) strategies, grammar journals, thinking maps, and graphic organizers.

Generally speaking, teachers described challenges related to the district's emphasis to expedite the acquisition of English Language Development (ELD) standards and enhance the performance of ELs on standardized tests. Such pressures from the district had adverse effects on teachers' articulation, planning, and development of lessons within the already complex instructional scenario of the TWI model. Teachers reported having to dedicate extra time for coordinating efforts to meet the needs of English Proficient students while focusing on levels of acquisition of students with limited English proficiency (LEP).

The literature also demonstrates the struggle TWI teachers sometimes face in balancing linguistic and cultural appreciation during student engagement. Even in an integrated setting, De Jong (2006) found that students self-selected identity groups by status; whereas Fitts' (2006) study indicated the stigmatization and

subordination faced by bilingual students in dual language classrooms as they were

marginalized by language majority students in the classrooms. Palmer's (2008)

study revealed how English-dominant students disrespected the academic spaces of

ELs during oral discussions. Similarly, upper-grade teachers in Hernandez's (2011)

study experienced challenges in maintaining social equity in the classroom,

particularly during engagement in small groups.

Issues in teacher preparation for bilingual education programs. Studies

have shown that teacher preparation and certification are the strongest correlates

of student achievement in reading and mathematics (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

Studies on value-added assessment in Tennessee have shown that students who

have high-quality teachers over a period of 3 years achieve, on average, 50

percentile points more on standardized tests than those who have low-quality

teachers (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Despite such findings, studies have shown that

bilinguals are often excluded from meaningful educational programs and rigorous

instruction and their teachers are often poorly prepared (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010).

There has also been a lack of research on teachers' knowledge and perceptions

along with professional development practices for teachers in second language

programs.

Many researchers have indicated the under-preparedness of the teaching

force to meet the demands of a rapidly growing ELL population (Gonzalez, Yawkey,

& Minaya-Rowe, 2006; Gutierrez, 2002; Migliacci & Verplaetse, 2008; Walqui, 2008).

In a survey conducted in California on the needs of teachers of ELLs, Gandara,

Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) found that many teachers have had little or no

professional development to help them teach their ELL students. According to a national survey of K-12 public school teachers conducted by the National Center for Education Information in 2005, 85% of the teaching force consists of White, middle-class, monolingual teachers. Among them 87% have limited multicultural and multilingual competencies and experiences in an educational setting (NCELA, Newsline Bulletin, 2005).

Quality of teachers and school administrators are considered to be the two most important factors in determining school effectiveness and, ultimately, student achievement (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Clewell & Campbell, 2004). But as indicated above, few school leaders and teachers are well-versed in issues surrounding bilingualism. Additionally, due to a high turnover rate among both administrators and teachers of language minority students, it becomes difficult to staff bilingual schools who are adequately trained (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010).

Principals and teachers at schools with large number of English learners are more likely to be Latino or Asian (De Cohen, Deterding, Clewell, 2005). These Latino and Asian teachers and principals are more likely to be bilingual and knowledgeable of the cultures of the students they teach, which enables the support of the students languages and identities. But these professionals tend to be less experienced in the classroom than their White counterparts. De Cohen's (ibid) study also indicates that schools with high concentration of English learners, including bilingual programs, have more difficulties filling teaching vacancies compared to other roles; they are more likely to hire unqualified teachers and rely on substitutes. The General Accounting Office (GAO) report of 2006 reports that only 11% of teachers of English

learners are certified in bilingual education, whereas 18% are certified in ESL. And although being bilingual is an important asset for teachers in a bilingual setting, only 15% are fluent in a language other than English (LOTE) (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

Beyond teacher certification in specialized areas, most teachers in the United States lack preparation in how to teach English learners or how to teach in a bilingual education environment (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). The GAO report (2009) indicates that nationwide, less than 20% of teacher education programs required at least one course focused on English learners and bilingualism, and less than a third exposed their students to any fieldwork experience in bilingual environments. Thus, when candidates graduating from these programs are placed in dual language bilingual environments the quality and approach of their instruction often fail to meet the instructional expectations in these schools calling for further teacher learning in the form of job-embedded professional development.

Place of Professional development in improving teaching and learning.

Every modern educational reform proposal emphasizes professional development as a primary vehicle in bringing about necessary change (Guskey, 1995). Professional development for teachers is often recommended as a strategy for school improvement (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000). Traditionally, in-service professional development typically consisted of short, stand-alone workshops on topics selected by schools and districts (often without consulting teachers), as well as college and university courses (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Collinson & Ono, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Schwille & Dembélé, 2007;

Villegas-Reimers, 2003). These efforts have been criticized by many researchers as being brief, fragmented, incoherent encounters that are decontextualized and isolated from real classroom situations (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Collinson & Ono, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; OECD, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Later research on professional development identifies the importance of high-intensity, job-embedded, collaborative learning environments (Hirsh, 2009) as characteristics of "high-quality" PD programs (Darling-Hammond et al, 2009; Desimone et al, 2002; Hawli & Valli, 2001).

Research has indicated that the kind of teacher learning that improves teaching focuses on instruction and student outcomes considering the specific school contexts; provides opportunities for collegial inquiry, help, and feedback; and connects teachers to external expertise while also respecting teachers' discretion and creativity through sustained and continuous support (Newmann et al, 2000). The 2013 report of the Center for Public Education supports prior research regarding the characteristics of effective professional development in arguing that it includes:

1. The duration of professional development must be significant and ongoing to allow time for teachers to learn a new strategy and grapple with the implementation problem.

2. There must be support for a teacher during the implementation stage that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice.

3. Teachers' initial exposure to a concept should not be passive, but rather should engage teachers through varied approaches so they can participate actively in making sense of a new practice.

4. Modeling has been found to be a highly effective way to introduce a new concept and help teachers understand a new practice.

5. The content presented to teachers shouldn't be generic, but instead grounded in the teacher's discipline (for middle school and high school teachers) or grade-level (for elementary school teachers).

Although most schools, districts and states use professional development as an important strategy for improving teaching, the quality and impact of professional development great vary (Sun et al, 2013). A majority of teachers who report to having participated in district provided professional development often consider that they lack relevance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). An analysis of 1,300 studies on the professional development landscape indicated that PD programs that were lengthy and intensive impacted student achievement in positive ways (Yoon et al., 2007). It revealed that workshop-style PD that were shorter than 14 hours failed to change teaching practices, and consequently, failed to improve student learning.

The Center for American Progress 2013 report highlighted what research indicates as the most commonly cited drawbacks of professional development. For instance:

1. It is usually disconnected from the everyday practice of teaching

2. It is too generic and unrelated to the curriculum or to the specific instructional problems teachers face.

3.	It is infrequent and implemented as a one-shot event or led by an outside consultant who drops in to conduct a workshop and never returns to the school or district. [Hill, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009]

Every school has a unique mix of teachers and students whose competencies, attitudes, and social, cultural and political value sets vary to a great extent, which in turn affects the nature of student-teacher interactions in the building (Newmann et al., 2000) Thus, researchers have argued in support of situating the content of professional learning in the practice of teaching and focusing professional development on student learning (Borko, Jacobs, Koellner, 2010) instead of designing generic and fragmented professional learning opportunities.

To understand learning in school settings, researchers analyzed the conditions under which successful participation in one type of situation facilitates successful participation in other settings, and they explore the processes of recontextualizing resources and discourses in new situations (Adler and Reed 2002; Ensor 2001). With respect to teacher learning, it is particularly relevant to consider how practices learned in a professional development setting can be recontextualized in elementary and secondary school classrooms. A situative perspective of studying professional development programs supports the growing consensus regarding the value of creating opportunities for teachers to work together on improving their practice, and of locating these learning opportunities in their everyday classroom activities (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

Professional development as a way of building school capacity. Since student achievement is affected most directly by the quality of instruction, it is important to consider the factors that affect the quality of instruction. These factors include the school's capacity or infrastructural ability to fulfill its intended function, and actors who are involved with policy or program development in various areas such as curriculum, assessment standards, teacher certification, hiring and promotion, school size, school governance and professional development (Newman et al, 2000).

Literature on school reform and organizational change has identified different interpretations of school capacity. Some view school capacity in terms of the staff's professional competence in instruction and assessment centered on curriculum appropriate for their particular students, for whom they hold high learning expectations (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Cohen and Hill, 1998; Kennedy, 1998). Some (Louis et al. 1996; Lee and Smith 1996; Louis and Marks 1998) have argued about the importance of social resources in the school identified as schoolwide professional community and consisting of: (a) the staff sharing clear goals for student learning, (b) collaboration and collective responsibility among staff to achieve the goals, (c) professional inquiry by the staff to address the challenges they face, and (d) opportunities for staff to influence the school's activities and policies. A third dimension of school capacity has been identified as "program coherence," which Newmann et al (2000) define as the extent to which the school's programs for student and staff learning are coordinated, focused on clear learning goals, and sustained over a period of time. More recent research (DeMonte, 2013)

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confirmed Newman et al's earlier findings regarding quality of professional learning

that improves organizational capacity emphasizing the importance of the following:

1.   Professional development aligned with school goals, state and district

        standards and assessments, and other professional-learning activities

2.   Professional development focused on core content and modeling of teaching

        strategies for the content

3.   Professional development including opportunities for active learning of new

        teaching strategies

4.   Professional development providing the chance for teachers to collaborate

5.   Professional development include follow-up and continuous feedback

        Professional development for teachers of second language learners.

Although researchers have explored various ways in which specialized training for

teachers could be best conducted to improve student outcomes, professional

development continues to be "fragmented, intellectually superficial" (Borko, 2004,

p. 3) without consideration for what teacher learn or need to learn. The

unpreparedness of teachers who to teach culturally and linguistically diverse

students has resulted from a lack of guidance and research in effective ways of

helping content-area teachers meet the academic needs of ELLs (Short &

Fitzsimmons, 2007). Working with culturally and linguistically diverse students

requires a different set of knowledge, skills, tools, dispositions, and abilities. These

include sound knowledge bases in first- and second-language acquisition theory,

ESL and sheltered instructional methodologies, content-area language an discourse,

linguistic and cross cultural contexts, curriculum development, and assessment (Li

and Protacio, 2010). As de Jong & Harper (2005) point out, although good teaching practices for native English speakers are often relevant for ELLs, they are insufficient to meet their specific linguistic and cultural needs. Therefore professional development for teachers of ELLs must attend to the specific knowledge and skills needed to teach ELLs, in addition to the general principles of effective practices for all teachers in mainstream classrooms (Li & Protacio, 2007).

Tinajero and Spencer (2002) note that professional development for teachers of ELLs should include an understanding of the basics of language (its nature and how it operates), language acquisition and how language works in written form to communicate (Krashen & Biber, 1988; Snow & Tabors, 1993). Moreover, what a student brings to the classroom in terms of previous learning is a crucial staring point for the teacher to build a meaningful learning context (Robson, 1995). This means that before presenting any curriculum task to students a teacher needs to consider:

1. The cognitive demands inherent in the task and the 'entry skills' that it requires;

2. The degree of context embeddedness or context reduction (use of visual aids; demonstrations; modeling; technological support; oral and written instructions; and teacher assistance);

3. The child's language proficiencies;

4. The child's previous cultural and educational experience and knowledge, individual learning style and learning strategies; expectations and attitudes, confidence and initiative; the child's familiarity with the type of task;

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5. What is acceptable as evidence of successful learning; what constitutes mastery or a sufficient approximation; an appropriate form of 'formative' and 'summative' assessment (Robson, 1995).

In a study to identify common criteria for effective professional development Guskey (2003) examined 13 different lists of characteristics drawn from several publications. Although there was no consensus regarding the "best practices" in professional development, the characteristics most frequently cited in the lists were:

1. Enhancement of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge (particularly in mathematics and science)

2. Sufficient time and resources

3. Promotion of collegiality and collaborative exchange

4. Inclusion of evaluation procedures to gather data to guide improvement efforts

5. Alignment of PD activities with other reform initiatives and high-quality instruction models

6. Carefully organized collaboration between school- or site-based educators and district-level personnel

7. Professional development activities guided by student learning data

8. PD based on the best available research evidence

Findings from the study, however, indicated little agreement among PD researchers and/ or practitioners about the criteria for "best practices" in teacher professional development. Guskey concluded that such disagreements and

ambiguity about effectiveness represent the fact that most professional

development efforts occur in real-world contexts comprised of a web of complex

factors. The contextual nuances, he observed, are often difficult to recognize within

the confines of a single (one-size-fits all) program; hence programs that appear

quite similar may produce different results for subtle and unanticipated reasons.

Guskey's claims about the contextual factors determining the effectiveness of

professional development programs is significant in examining the nature and

quality of professional development provided to teachers in bilingual programs.

This is not only because of the differences between bilingual and mainstream

English or ESL instructional models, but also due to inherent differences in program

goals and structure among different models bilingual instruction. As discussed

above, each bilingual instructional model is founded upon specific ideological

premises and identified community needs. Despite the general focus on improving

student-learning outcomes, the issue of language as the medium of teaching and

learning and language proficiency as a desired skill often present unique

instructional challenges and hence, a need for unique professional support.

Issues in professional development for teachers in bilingual education

programs. As mentioned above, teachers working with English learners in U.S.

schools continue to struggle with establishing communication with students and

their families, insufficient time to teach the required content, difficulty associated

with the varying academic levels of students in the classrooms, and lack of tools,

resources and support available for teachers to use in classrooms with bilingual

students. Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) claim that these challenges

largely originated from the quality of professional development opportunities teachers of ELs receive, often comprising of poorly planned and executed programs offered by uninformed presenters that eventually fail to meet teachers' needs and needs of the students they serve.

   Finding the root problem for teachers in bilingual setting. Twenty years ago, Alma Flor Ada (1995) criticized the practices of preparing bilingual teachers and their professional treatment. After listening to the experiences of several bilingual teachers, she argued that bilingual teachers need to understand the societal forces that have influenced their cultural and linguistic identity so that they can stop passively accepting their circumstances and become not only agents of their own transformation but also leaders in the world around them. Teacher professional organizations in the United States have largely ignored the education of language learners and preparation of teachers in bilingual programs despite advocating for the rights of multicultural learners and the need to prepare their teachers for decades (Téllez & Waxman, 2006), thus revealing the general neglect of language issues.

   Certain instructional conditions and practices require certain pedagogical approaches to generate high student achievement. Leighton (1995) observes that in some settings special adaptations are necessary to bridge students' existing resources and student abilities that are taken for granted in mainstream English-only classrooms. In other cases, competing values tend to dictate different choices among otherwise equally defensible educational goals. Instructional models that have proven to be productive for students with limited English proficiency (LEP)

may share some qualities that are productive for all students; however, bilingual instructional models are often distinguished by additional features that address learners' linguistic and social resources and requirements. The four dimensions Leighton (ibid) identified as directly influencing success among students with LEP are:

1. The quality of lesson content;

2. Extent of students' productive engagement;

3. Accessibility of the curriculum (the degree to which students are able to relate to what is being taught);

4. The whole-school environment (hospitable social environment)

(Nelson-LeGall, 1990)

Research indicates that teachers who are successful in two-way immersion bilingual programs often possess a sound knowledge base in language, literacy, and learning that goes beyond that of traditional mainstream teachers (de Jong & Evans, 2008). Besides, they also have a passionate belief in the importance of bilingualism for all students—both English learners and native English speakers (ibid.). Their knowledge base includes strategies for native language and literacy teaching, second language and literacy teachings, teaching for bilingualism, integrating language and content, and differentiated instruction. An understanding of the fundamental nature of bilingualism and biliteracy as distinct from monolingualism and literacy development in two separate languages is essential. This sociocultural nature of two groups of learners co-constructing knowledge of two languages,

literacy and cultural systems is a process typically absent from teachers'

experiences in a mainstream English-based classroom (Dworin, 2003).

Franco-Fuenmayor (2013) conducted a study of Bilingual and ESL teachers'

knowledge of research on bilingual programs, instructional issues for ELLs, general

instructional strategies, and second language development. The results of the study

indicated significant differences among teachers in their knowledge and perceptions

of second language learners and of various language-based instructional programs.

Such differences among teachers can become a major impediment in preparing

teachers to deliver transformative/ intercultural and collaborative pedagogies that

are considered crucial in building ethnolinguistic identities of language minority

students (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). Such findings emphasize the need for districts

and program administrators to design support systems that can assist teachers

placed in various bilingual programs to develop their knowledge and expand their

instructional practices aligned to their specific program needs and goals (de Jong &

Evans, 2008).

Need for professional support. The literature on professional development for

general teachers highlights what is known as the best practices in teacher

knowledge and growth. Research in this field universally suggests the importance of

teachers' agency or autonomy in making way for genuine growth in pedagogical

knowledge and skills. For example, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995)

suggested that strong professional development programs (a) engage teachers in

concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminates

learning and development; (b) use inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are

participant-driven; (c) are collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than on individual teachers; (d) connect to and derives from teachers' work with their students; (e) are sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of problems of practice; and (f) connect to other aspects of school change. While reflecting on these general principles Tellez and Verghese (2013) add that the work on professional development for bilingual teachers must also emphasize promoting collective growth and knowledge. In a study reporting the results from a national survey of 100 bilingual teachers regarding their specific professional concerns, Calderón (2002) noted that (a) teachers not trained on second language learning tend to have misconceptions about bilingual programs; (b) bilingual teachers are often given second preferences in relation professional support; and that (c) each year there are "silent and not so silent battles" over resources between bilingual and mainstream teachers.

Studies have also found that the professional development specifically aimed at bilingual learners is often not highly regarded by most bilingual teachers, who tend to report that the conferences they attended and the PD offered by the school district are often redundant and fail to provide a forum for their genuine professional concerns (Calderon, 2002; Varghese, 2006). Calderon's (2002) work suggests bilingual teachers need two kinds of collective spaces: one for themselves and one with their non-bilingual counterparts. Similarly, Dalton and Moir (1996) shared the design of a project providing professional development experiences for

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novice bilingual teachers and suggested that PD for bilingual teachers must be interactive, contextualized, and co-constructed.

The emphasis on collective PD might invite a comparison to recent nationwide efforts in the United States. In their study, Tellez and Verghese (2013 argue that many of the contemporary PD efforts offered by for-profit companies (such as Solution Tree) serve as a counterexample to the type of professional development that is envisioned for bilingual teachers. Although these programs claim to be based on teacher empowerment and research-based practices, Tellez and Verghese (ibid) believe that they often focus narrowly on standards-driven instruction and provide generalized trainings to groups or teams of teachers. Criticizing the corporate approach, other researchers (Talbert, 2009) have argued that such approaches tend to perpetuate disempowerment of bilingual teachers in the absence of differentiating their unique instructional challenges and needs. Despite such findings, PD offered by for-profit companies continues to be the dominant mode of teacher learning in the United States.

Additionally, Cahnmann and Varghese (2006) recognize the significance of developing support networks as part of teacher's professional development in bilingual environments where collegial support and collaboration play a vital role in helping teachers advocate for the rights of socially and economically marginalized populations. In order for bilingual education to exist and for bilingual educators to thrive the researchers emphasize the need for wider school, community and national support for teachers in bilingual schools irrespective of their experience and training in the field. Such support systems can help teachers fight ideological

and political antagonism both outside and within their own school environment and potentially slow the burn-out rate. Support programs in the U.S. that facilitate the formation of bilingual teacher networks, such as the BUENO center at the University of Colorado (Baca, Bransford, Nelson, & Ortiz, 1994) and TELL (Teachers for Language Learners) at the University of Georgia (Cahnmann, Rymes, & Souto Manning, 2005), have been key to the development and retention of bilingual teacher leadership in education.

In a different approach Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy (2008) highlighted the role of professional learning communities in improving the quality of professional development of teachers of English learner through the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. In order that teachers can engage fully with these data, the researchers believe that teachers need to be trained on sorting and interpreting data. This is expected to help teachers identify students' language proficiency levels and understand the ways of using assessments to inform and improve instruction.

Summarizing Findings from Existing Research in Dual Language PD

The complex set of instructional attributes associated with linguistic, academic and cultural needs of English language learners, when added to the characteristics of effective schools in general, is related to a higher level of achievement for English learners (Gold, 2006). Consequently, the success of dual language programs is also dependent on educators and staff having these additional skills and knowledge (Cloud et al, 2000; Day & Shapson, 1996; Met & Lorenz, 1997; Montecel & Cortez, 2002). This has serious implications in planning for teacher

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recruitment and professional development. Despite a lot of attention drawn towards ELLs' achievement crisis, little guidance or effort in research has been offered to address effective professional development practices to help teachers meet the varied and challenging academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of ELLs (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). These teachers need preparation in differentiating instruction for all students in classrooms. The literature above suggests that the identified instructional challenges in dual language programs can affect the overall implementation of these programs.

Teachers in dual language programs commonly face the challenges arising from the constant need to integrate and balance the needs of student groups using two languages (Howard et al, 2007). In these programs, teachers are expected to teach and validate both English and a minority language as legitimate media for content instruction and for communication among peers and with adults inside and outside of school (Cummings, 2009). In a study on challenges faced by teachers in two-way bilingual instructional programs, Howard and colleagues (2003) reported that teachers perceived teaching in a dual language setting as highly demanding in the absence of adequate resources; as a highly complex linguistic endeavor; as fraught with tensions among teachers coming from various backgrounds with varying degrees of knowledge in bilingual education; and as lacking in adequate training on the use of appropriate instructional strategies and materials.

The lack of preparedness of teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse students suggests that there is an urgent need to prepare teachers of second language learners both in mainstream and bilingual education settings, especially in

low-income and urban areas. Such research findings emphasizes the need for further research investigating the needs of (second) language learners, relevant professional development programs for their teachers, and increased support through state, district and school-implemented programs in developing instructional resources for teachers (Education Week Research Center, 2014).

However, research also indicates that teachers' success and satisfaction in dual language settings is often related to the school's capacity to support teachers in meeting students' learning needs through administrative and community support and through teachers' active participation in program planning (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Newmann et al, 2000). Therefore, there is a need for inquiry-based research that would document narratives around instructional needs and challenges educators encounter in dual language programs and approaches in professional development that are in place to address such needs.

Filling the Gap

The review of literature in the field of dual language education indicates the richness of scholarship in this field of study. Researchers have extensively looked at the different models of dual language education, and also at instructional practices, instructional challenges and teachers' perceptions of the needs and gaps in professional development in dual language settings. Despite the existence of such well-developed knowledge in this area, teachers in dual language classrooms continue to struggle with challenges stemming from the mixed educational and experiential backgrounds they have. The diversity among teachers' educational, professional, linguistic and cultural experiences often determines the lens through

which they perceive dual language education—the value of bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism; the challenges associated with learning and instruction; the relevance of strategies they adopt or abandon; and the support networks they form and value. However, existing literature in professional development of teachers in dual language programs indicate a gap in the professional development design process, which largely ignores teachers' perceived needs and ways of accessing professional support. In this study, I examine the perceptions of actors involved in the process of professional development as designers, implementers or recipients at both the school and district levels to understand how teachers situate their professional learning within the PD continuum. Due to the small scale of the study, its findings are not expected to be use in generalizing professional development experiences, trends and practices. However, the value of the study rests in its ability to start an analytical conversation about the agency of dual language teachers as distinct individuals and their unique professional needs, expectations and perceptions about bilingual education that have significant implications for the effectiveness, relevance and "situatedness" of teacher learning.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. The first (present) chapter tries to locate the problem that the study seeks to address within the context of a rich review of literature in the field of dual language bilingual education and teacher professional development. Chapter 2 provides information on the methods adopted to conduct the study and also sets up the theoretical foundation for the work. The chapters that follow makes way for understanding the greater context within which

dual language instruction and learning occurs in the particular program that is being studied. Chapter 3 highlights the institutional mission, vision and goals, on one level; and at another level, it introduces us to the curricular and instructional approaches adopted by the school within the educational policy framework of the district. Chapter 4 digs into the instructional goals, strategies and challenges teachers at the school perceive as part of dual language instruction, which leads us towards the next two chapters that investigate how the professional support systems seek to address those challenges. While Chapter 5 focuses on the district's professional development framework that is available for the teachers in this program, Chapter 6 is mostly about the school's approach to its internal professional support system. In the final chapter, Chapter 7, I summarize my findings and explore the implications of the study for professional development design and practices in a dual language bilingual educational setting.

CHAPTER TWO

Situating the Study: Context, Methodology, and Theoretical Framework

This study looks into the case of a program that has a 50/50 dual language immersion model operating within the context of an urban school district in the United States. It examines the perceptions of actors involved as designers, implementers or recipients of the process of professional development. This includes administrators, professional developers and teachers. It particularly focuses on the PD experiences of the Spanish and English partner teachers two different grade levels at the school and investigates how they maneuver the school's mission of promoting bilingualism and biliteracy within the English-focused, skills-based conditions of the district policies. These perceptions are then analyzed with respect to the envisioned and implemented frameworks of professional support offered at the district and the program levels. I ask the research questions:

> (1) How do teachers in a dual language program perceive their instructional
> challenges and professional development opportunities available to them?
> And,
>
> (2) How do the school and the district approach capacity building needs of
> teachers in a dual language program?

My exploration of the layers of experiences and perceptions of the actors associated with the process of professional development will be based on the following guiding questions:

> - What are the origins of and perceptions around the school's mission,
>   vision and program goals? How do they drive program development?

- How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences in light of the challenges they encounter and the program goals they strive to attain?

- How does the school facilitate professional support to its teachers to attain the goals? How does the school's professional development efforts complement that of the district?

In this chapter I present the methodology and research design for the study, which includes the data sources that informs the study and data collection procedures that have been adopted to gain in-depth understanding of the context and the problems. The chapter also includes a detailed description of the setting and the analytical approach for the study. The methodological procedures are based on an understanding of the theoretical frameworks used in this study, which are also discussed here. The chapter ends with the researcher's positionality and credibility in respect to the study.

Methodology and Research Design

Methodological perspective. Since dual language bilingual education is conceived and provided through various models, it is not always possible to compare findings from studies that look at the practices and experiences in these programs. Studies may approach issues in dual language education in the context of one of its many forms (transitional, developmental, two-way immersion/ dual language, dynamic); extent of their native and English language use (90/10, 80/20, 50/50); or instructional allocation by time, content area or person (roller-coaster, every-other-day model, strand, or whole school models). Additionally, contextual

differences between dual language programs (due to student demography, teacher backgrounds, and the school's instructional approach to dual language bilingual model, among other things) can lead to findings that may not be applicable in a different setting. Hence, I adopted a case study approach for conducting my research. For the last 20 years this methodology has been widely used by researchers studying dual language programs owing to an appreciation for the depth of understanding offered in rich, detailed accounts (CAL, 2012). It has been used in studying the value of professional development in improving bilingual programs (Gandara et al, 2005) and in examining the nature of effective PD for bilingual programs (Gandara, 1997; Molle, 2013).

Creswell (2007) outlined five methodological approaches to qualitative inquiry: narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research, and case study research. Eisenhardt (1989) views case study approach as a useful strategy in the development of theory. In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008; Yin, 2009). The exploratory nature of the questions asked in this study with an emphasis on "how," has led to this methodology. The case study approach is appropriate when questions deal with operational links that need to be traced over time, rather than frequencies or incidence (Yin, 2009). Since this study seeks to explore the contextual nature of the teachers' experiences in a particular dual language program, I chose a case study design.

Case study research can be positivist, interpretive, or critical, depending upon the philosophical assumptions of the researcher (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). An interpretive case study is used to understand the meaning of a process or experience, whereby the researcher(s) start out with the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. For this case study I have adopted an interpretive paradigm. It is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case based themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2001). This is a type of qualitative research design, that is often descriptive in nature, has been deemed highly suitable for studies whereby the researcher aims at investigating specific issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002). This approach to research design allows the researcher to observe development, to help understand processes of events, projects and programs to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object (Merriam, 2001).

Data sources and data collection procedures. I collected interview and document-based data during the 2013-2014 school year (IRB Approval# IRB# x13-1187e) and analyzed it retrospectively. This was the (1) first year when the school piloted the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)[ii] tests to align with the district's newly adopted Common Core Standards; (2) the second year of the school's newly implemented dual language time schedule (every-other-day plan); (3) the first year when the school implemented a revised literacy and mathematics curriculum to align with the new district standards; and

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also (4) the first year of the school's acquired autonomy from the district's professional development requirement based on student performance levels. Although I did not choose the timing of the study to deliberately coincide with these changes, the program shifts taking place at the school and district levels at that time proved relevant in exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions.

My choice of data sources is based on the research questions I seek to address: the school's vision, mission and goals; curricular and instructional goals and challenges; and teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the nature of professional support teachers receive. To get an understanding of the school's vision, mission and goals—their origins embedded in the school's historical context—I used data retrieved from archival school documents, the school's official website, grant applications and interviews with the administrators. The analysis focuses on actors and their roles in determining the school's strategic and programmatic directions, in determining the values associated with bilingual education, and shifts in professional development design. Next, to get an understanding of the school's curricular and instructional goals, I analyzed interviews of school personnel that includes: the Principal, the Assistant Principal of Literacy (who previously served as the school's literacy coach), teachers (two pairs of partner teachers from English and Spanish classrooms) at the third and fifth grade levels, the in-house instructional coach in literacy and in mathematics (both of whom are district-appointed officials) and finally the school's appointed professional development consultant in literacy. I also examine the literacy and mathematics curriculum from the curriculum vendors' websites (namely, Singapore

Math and Engage New York in mathematics, the Reader's and Writer's Workshop in literacy, Fundations/ Wilson Foundations, and Dictado) and curriculum materials and texts shared by instructional coaches and teachers. For the instructional goals I mostly relied on the interviews of the school personnel mentioned above.

Finally, to address the questions related to internal and district-provided professional development experiences, I relied heavily on the interviews with teachers and administrators, follow-up e-mail communications, and professional development workshop schedules and plans. For additional input on district-provided professional support I referred to interviews with a professional learning designer at the district's central PD office and dual language planner at the district's Office of Language Learning. Insights provided by one of the district teacher evaluators assigned to several of the district's dual language schools, including the one I am studying, were also considered. I also analyzed documents on PD workshops, and PD planning and designs for the district's dual language schools. The exclusive focus on interviews and documents, with marginal use of observation as sources of data was a result of feasibility issue. Although I was able to observe some of the learning cycle sessions of the instructional coaches, and one of the literacy workshops conducted by the consultant, observation of the math workshops was not feasible. The analysis takes into consideration the agency of each of the actors I interviewed based on their involvement in or contribution to the process of conceptualizing, planning, facilitating or receiving the professional development program(s) in one way or another.

Individual interviews were conducted with four teachers – a pair of Spanish and English partner teachers from the third grade and a similar pair from the fifth grade level—who agreed to participate in the study. I spoke with **Santiago Romero[iii]**, the Spanish classroom teacher at third grade and his English classroom partner teacher, **Emily Miller**. The other pair of teachers was **Sylvia Sanchez**, the fifth grade Spanish classroom teacher and her English classroom partner, **Edwin Wilson**. Teachers at other (K, 1, 2, 4) grade levels who were contacted for the study were either reluctant, or non-responsive to the call, or could not convince their language partners to participate. For the purpose of my study it was important to get the views of both partner teachers at a particular grade level for an understanding of how (1) the language of instruction affected their perceptions about instructional strategies, challenges, and need for professional support; (2) how their pre-service preparation, certification requirements, or in-service support affected their approach to second language instruction in a bilingual setting; (3) how being a Spanish or an English classroom teacher affected their access to resources and support.

Interviews were also arranged with the members of the school's leadership team who were involved in the process of professional development design. These included the Principal (Dr. Alba Moreno), the Assistant Principal (Alyson Garcia), the literacy instructional coach (Sonia Diaz), and the mathematics instructional coach (Salma Abadi). The external consultant (Freda Vasquez) who provided professional development to teachers on literacy instruction was also interviewed.

At the district level, I interviewed the officials who were responsible for designing and facilitating professional development training to teachers in the district's bilingual schools, particularly to teachers at the school that I study here – one at the district's central office and the other from the district's Office of Language Learning. Additionally, the district's "teacher evaluator[iv]," who primarily conducts teacher evaluation using district rubrics at dual language schools, was also interviewed. The reason for interviewing the teacher evaluator here was to understand how the input from teacher evaluations is used to inform the district's PD design. Written observations of coaching sessions and workshops that I attended, documents that I gathered from the school and district personnel, and recorded interviews that I transcribed myself are used in exploring the relation of participants' perceptions and the professional development framework for the teachers in the dual language program. The following chart shows the distribution of the participants I interviewed at the school and district level.

Research Participant Description

Table 1

Research Participant Description [Pseudo names are used for all participants. For ease of identifying Spanish and English teachers, the names of Spanish teachers start with "S" and those of English teachers start with "E"]

Institution Level	Research Participant	Participant Selection Criteria	Identifiers/ Pseudonym
School	Principal	1. Headed school leadership team	Alba Moreno
	Assistant Principal	1. School leadership team 2. School program (PD) designer	Alyson Garcia

Table 1 (cont'd)

Institution Level	Research Participant	Participant Selection Criteria	Identifiers/ Pseudonym
	Literacy Coach	1. School leadership team 2. School program (PD) designer 3. Provider of in-house professional support	Sonia Diaz
	Mathematics Coach	1. School leadership team 2. School program (PD) designer 3. Provider of in-house professional support	Salma Abadi
	Literacy Consultant	1. Advisor to leadership team 2. PD facilitator	Freda Vasquez
	Teacher- 3rd Gr Spanish	Recipient of PD	Santiago Romero
	Teacher- 3rd Gr English	Recipient of PD	Emily Miller
	Teacher- 5th Gr Spanish	Recipient of PD	Sylvia Sanchez
	Teacher- 5rd Gr English	Recipient of PD	Edwin Wilson
District	Professional learning designer at the Central PD Office	Designs, develops, and supports initial and continuing professional learning activities for instructional staff, school administrators, coaches, related-service providers, and Central Office based on expressed needs and outcomes of program evaluations.	Andrea Knapp
	Dual Language Planner at Office of Language Learning	Provides technical support, guidance, and training to dual language administrators and educators in the district	Olivia Nunez
	Teacher evaluator	Serves as an impartial evaluator & conducts observations of all district teachers. Following each observation, teacher evaluators conduct a one-on-one conference with each teacher to dialogue about specific areas of development. They also provide targeted, content-specific feedback and resources to help improve effectiveness of classroom instruction.	Xavier Avila

This interpretive case study is intended to provide a rich, narrative description of individual perceptions of the professional development structures of the district and of the dual language program using multiple sources of information. I conducted an inductive analysis to interpret the perceptions of actors involved in the process of professional development as designers, implementers or recipients at both the school and district levels to understand how teachers situate their professional learning within the PD continuum using the data collected from multiple sources.

Setting. This study was conducted in the 2013-2014 school year in a Pre K-5th grade dual language bilingual school in an urban school district in the United States, with a student size between 30,000 and 50,000 students attending more than 100 schools. The school and the district demographic information comes from the year of the study (2013-2014).

The dual language school, which I am calling Spring Valley Dove Lane (SVDL) Elementary, exists as a result of the merger of two schools in the district, namely the Spring Valley Elementary and the Dove Lane Elementary. The dual language program that exists at SVDL today is a legacy of the dual language program that was established at Spring Valley Elementary during the 2003-2004 school year in response to a changing demographic of the school population. The goal was to provide the same benefits of bilingual education to both native and non-native English speaking students in the school. It was first introduced at the Pre-Kindergarten level in 2003 and a grade was added each year. At the time of the

school's closure in 2007-2008 the program had been implemented from the Headstart through the fourth grade.

The Spring Valley Elementary School (SVES) building was closed down by the school district after the 2007-2008 school year, citing the need for repair and reconstruction. At that time, SVES had a strand bilingual program within a mainstream English-only setting. It was relocated to the Dove Lane Elementary School (DLES) building during the 2008-2009 school year as a temporary measure. At that time DLES was also at the verge of closing due to low student performance and was housing very few students and teachers. As noted on a 2014 grant document that the school's Assistant Principal shared during this study, the achievement rates of SVES's mostly Hispanic student population at that time were significantly higher than the DLES students, who were mostly African-American students previously learning in an English-only context. At the start of the 2008-2009 school year, the two school populations were merged into one school and became Spring Valley Dove Lane (SVDL) Elementary, referred to as SVDL in this study.

As a result of the merger, the school leaders of the newly merged school in interviews reported facing major challenges in unifying the school communities and increasing the achievement levels of students who had vastly different educational experiences. The administrators continued with the bilingual strand program that they had adopted in Spring Valley, but also created an "English-only strand" for the students from the Dove Lane Elementary. After the last cohort of the English-only

students from Dove Lane had graduated later, in 2009-2010, a whole-school bilingual program replaced the strand programs.

Teachers at Spring Valley received professional development from *Teaching for Change* (TFC), a non-profit organization that provides school personnel and community members with professional development and resources focused on social justice. After the school relocated and merged to form SVDL, *Teaching for Change* was replaced by Singapore Math and the Reader's and Writer's Workshop, which followed a different approach to curriculum and instruction considering the heterogeneous group of students of the new school. During this time of change, the Principal entrusted the math coach and the literacy coach (who is presently serving as the Assistant Principal of Literacy at the school) with decision-making powers about revising the school's curricular and instructional frameworks. Additionally, the Principal established a "dual language steering committee," which consisted of an "organic group of teachers who came together to advocate for the needs of the program" (Assistant Principal). The committee identified the need to secure the district's support in the program development of the new school and placed a demand before the district to fund a school-based professional development program. As a result of that effort, Spring Valley Dove Lane was able to secure funds to adopt the Reader's and Writer's Workshop and to bring in a literacy consultant who could provide support in implementing that program. The same literacy consultant, to this day, continues to be a vital piece of the school's literacy instruction support. An external consultant was also brought in to provide support

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with the implementation of Singapore Math. However, unlike the literacy consultant, the math consultants have changed over time.

At the time of the study, the school had 465 students among which 23% were African-American, 75% Hispanic/ Latino, and 1% White. 99% of these students were from low-income family as determined by the percentage of students qualified for free and reduced-price lunch. 66% of the students were identified as English language learners; 40% of students scored at or above proficiency level on the 2012-2013 district reading proficiency test and 56% scored at or above proficiency level on the 2012-2013 district math test. It was recognized as a "Reward School" based on its students' 2012-2013 academic performance. According to ESEA Classifications[v], a Reward School is one with outstanding student achievement or growth over the past three years. Among the two types of Reward Schools (highest performing and highest progress), the school I am studying was identified as among those showing top 5% growth and thus qualified under the second category.

According to the 2012-2013 district's Equity Report, the school had a 95% attendance rate and a 0% mobility rate. The principal, Dr. Alba Moreno, has been leading the dual language program since it was introduced as a strand at Spring Valley Elementary School, prior to the school's merger in 2008-2009. Just like Dr. Moreno, the assistant principal, Alyson Garcia, had been the literacy coach at Spring Valley Elementary School before 2008-2009 and had just undertaken her administrative role.

Analysis. Qualitative analysis is an iterative process that involves revisiting, repositioning and questioning the data that has been gathered. While analyzing data, a researcher engages in a process of systematically combing out information gathered from interview transcripts, field notes, reflective journals and institutional documents to arrange them under categories and themes. The purpose of the endeavor is to improve the understanding of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Transcripts provided chance for preliminary analysis. In my case, the process of data analysis began following each interview I conducted with participants at the school and the district levels. I took notes of the observations I made during the conversations and wrote reflective pieces on the ideas shared during each interview session. My notes helped me keep track of my thought processes while I heard the interviewees speak—thoughts about possible triggers that might have prompted the interviewee to make a certain observation or comment, which in turn helped me come up with follow-up questions for clarifications. Sometimes, while writing the reflective pieces on a particular interview, I would come up with a series of questions. Clarifications were sought via e-mails, phone-calls (which, with participant permission, were recorded and transcribed as well) or follow-up meetings. Sometimes interviewees would share certain documents with me that would address many of the questions I posed, which saved time and offered concrete and well-documented evidence on school or district policies and/or data.

I transcribed each taped interview within two or three days of conducting them. The process helped me internalize the information very well as it required multiple re-runs, which gave me an opportunity to go through the data several

times. Sometimes, I would stop in the middle of transcribing and try to look up a piece of information or clarification on a particular issue on the Internet. I would also take notes on impressions, hunches and similarities among participants' viewpoints. I gathered all the supplemental information together and included them as addendums or footnotes on the transcript. They helped me organize the data systematically for easy reference, later on. These transcriptions were then uploaded on Dedoose—a software tool that I used to sort the data to find codes and themes.

The purpose of doing an immediate analysis after each interview was to make the themes and categories from preceding interviews available for comment and critique in subsequent interviews. I used the themes and categories to frame questions for other participants as I sought further clarifications. For instance, if a teacher perceived lack of support with Spanish resources, I would identify that as a theme under instructional challenges and bring up the question while speaking with the school or district PD planner, administrator, or PD consultant, asking for clarifications (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). However, in all such instances, I made sure that the confidentiality of the participants was protected by not identifying anyone who could have brought up a particular issue or concern for which I was seeking clarifications.

The coding style I used in this study is described as "open coding," (Straus and Corbin, 1998), which is a technique where transcript snippets are identified by placing code words, ideas, or marks in the margin of the transcript itself. Each subsequent reading of the transcript would follow a similar procedure. In most cases, Dedoose generated different color markers, which made it easier to chart the

progression of codes and emerging categories from reading to reading. As the transcripts increased in number, prior transcripts were reread and more codes were added. After multiple thorough readings, each transcript was revisited according to its import for the emerging themes of the study. The same open coding procedure was used for the analysis of data in the field log: field notes, observer comments, and analytic memos were read and reread, coded and recoded. Due to the large number of codes, they were clustered to identify broader themes on common issues. As a result, major categories emerged, which included: assessment, curriculum, dual language needs, dual language program approach, program goals, teacher certification, teacher background, dual language challenges, dual language instructional strategies, perceptions on bilingual teaching and learning, teacher concerns, teacher motivation, perception on PD. Dedoose was used to match the coded snippets corresponding to each category. This resulted in lengthy text compilations and some briefer ones. This process of "axial coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) helped to group individual pieces of data under larger categories, which in turn highlighted the breadth, depth, and weight of each category. This recursive, inductive approach to analysis, often referred to as "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), allowed the themes and their supporting evidence to merge together from the disparate pieces of collected data.

The analysis was further refined by careful and detailed readings of each of these newly created category-based documents. Through a process that Straus and Corbin (1998) refer to as "selective coding," the data in each document were recoded into subcategories, rearranged according to the new codes, and developed

into coherent documents that were internally consistent and externally distinct from each other, and that contributed essential information toward addressing the research questions. The data gathered in the interviews were triangulated by corroborating them with related documents, observation notes, and by further literature reviews.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study is to provide a rich description of the teacher learning processes, experiences, and perceptions involved in the professional development programs they are offered. For that, I draw on three major theories. I draw on the social constructive learning (Baran et al., 2011; Green & Gredler, 2002; Rovai, 2004; Savery & Duffy, 1995; Woo & Reeves, 2007) and transformative learning (Gilbert, 2003; Kabacki, Odabasi, & Kilicer, 2010; Mezirow 1996; Taylor, 2008) theories to understand how teachers learn from professional development programs and what influences their perceptions of the learning process in the context in which they teach. The Complexity theory (Clarke & Collins, 2007; Collins & Clarke, 2008; Curtis & Stollar, 2002; Davis & Sumara, 2006; Hoban, 2002; Marion, 1999; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Stollar, Poth, Curtis, & Cohen, 2006; Weaver, 1948) helps to conceptualize the contextual element critical in professional learning. Finally, I have drawn on the theories of program coherence and alignment (Finley, 2000; Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, and Bryk, 2001) to conceptualize the development of institutional program plans as part of program reform initiatives.

Looking through the lens of social constructive and transformative theories of learning. In order to examine the perceptions and experiences related

to PD needs, challenges and strategies in the context of a dual language education program I consider the constructive, social constructive, and transformative approaches to learning theory, where professional development is seen as a learning context for teachers. Constructivists perceive that the knowledge is constructed as learners make meaning of themselves through experience, maturation, and interaction with the environment (Rovai, 2004). Social constructivists view learning as "socially shared cognition that is co-constructed within a community of participants" (Green & Gredler, 2002, p. 57). According to social constructivists the role of social interaction is important because they view the act of learning or knowledge construction as a process occurring through social negotiation (Savery & Duffy, 1995; Woo & Reeves, 2007). Woo and Reeves (2007) emphasized that providing learners with meaningful social interaction is important because the construction of knowledge is possible through "mediation and negotiation within a learning community" (p. 20). Baran et al. (2011) emphasized the reconstruction of teachers' roles as a result of their experiences, which in turn leads to instructional changes. They pointed out that some instructors renovate their instruction by acting, doing, and reflecting upon their practice when they meet unexpected situations.

Transformative learning theory seeks to explain how adults construct and appropriate "new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world" (Taylor, 2008, p. 5). Transformative learning theory provides new perspectives on instructor learning because it can explain how they actively question and transform their practices and beliefs. Mezirow (1996) defined learning

as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 162). Mezirow has developed and revised the concept of transformative learning since he first coined it (Kitchenham, 2008). The researchers (Mezirow, 1996 & Kitchenham, 2008) claimed that the transformative perspective helps researchers understand how instructors challenge their previous ideas, values, and meanings critically. Transformative learning theory has been used in teacher education fields, for example, in teachers' application of new professional development program models (Kabacki, Odabasi, & Kilicer, 2010), faculty members' use of technologies (Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004), and a teacher's learning of new concepts (Gilbert, 2003). Kabachi et al. (2010) defined transformative learning as "a process in which adults change their views and habits-which they have gained as a result of their experience" (p. 266). In to understand how teachers learn from professional development programs and what influences their perceptions of the learning process in the context in which they teach, it is important to examine teachers' historical development (Palincsar, 1998).

In my study the social constructive and transformative theories to learning underlie my analysis of perceptions about learning needs and the approaches to address those needs. Prior background of the individual teachers and the administrators influence their views of the professional learning experiences as they occur in a dual language context. The theories help emphasize the subjective element that goes into developing a program plan, its implementation, and effect.

Complexity of context as a critical element of professional learning.

Literature in teacher learning has conceptualized professional development as a
complex system where various dynamics of social behavior are at work resulting in
multiple consequences for apparently simple decisions that are being made (Clarke
& Collins, 2007; Collins & Clarke, 2008; Curtis & Stollar, 2002; Davis & Sumara,
2006; Hoban, 2002; Marion, 1999; Weaver, 1948). An important characteristic of
the complexity of teacher learning is that it evolves as a nested system involving
systems within systems (Stollar, Poth, Curtis, & Cohen, 2006). Teacher learning
tends to be constituted simultaneously in the activity of autonomous entities
(teachers), collectives (such as grade level and subject groups), and subsystems
within grander unities (schools within school systems within sociopolitical
educational contexts) (Davis & Sumara, 2006). These systems and subsystems
associated with teacher learning are interdependent and reciprocally influential.
Hence, it is important to consider the influence of local knowledge, problems,
routines, and aspirations that shape and are shaped by individual practices and
beliefs in order to explain teacher professional learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Since all nested levels of complex systems are learning systems, where the
system adopts new information and processes and in so doing transforms itself as it
experiences the world (Davis & Sumara, 2005, p. 312). As Stollar et al. (2006, p. 183)
argue, the complexity of schools and other educational agencies emerges through
the reciprocal influences within and between systems so that learning and change in
any particular part of the system can result in change in other parts (Curtis &
Stollar, 2002). In this way, teacher learning is viewed as intimately connected to

learning at other levels of the system. For instance, studies have indicated that the coherence of the learning activity incorporated in professional development with teachers' daily instructional work, the materials used and pedagogical processes teachers engage in result in effective teacher learning (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). Teachers learn most effectively when activities require them to engage with materials of practice (Borko & Putnam, 1997; Greeno, 1991; Hawley & Valli, 1998; Putnam & Borko, 2000), when activity is school based and integrated into the daily work of teachers (Greeno, 1994; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Leinhardt, 1988; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998), and when the pedagogy of professional development is active and requires teachers to learn in ways that reflect how they should teach pupils (Borko & Putnam, 1997; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999).

Although a substantial literature exists about the ability of specific features of professional development to improve teacher practice and student learning, some researchers have begun to question this as causal knowledge. A recent review of this research by Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) concluded that although professional development opportunities have increased for teachers, our understanding of the features and content of quality professional development has not increased proportionately. The work of D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), D. J. Clarke and Peter (1993), and D. J. Clarke (1988) illustrates the cyclic nature of the learning and change process. For teacher learning or growth to occur, change must occur in multiple areas of influence (D. Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Learning in one

system must affect and be enacted and supported in another system. As a result, "effective" teacher learning requires multiple and cyclic movements between the systems of influence in teachers' worlds (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Thus Opfer & Pedder (2011) conclude that in order to explain and predict effective teacher learning and teacher pedagogical change, we must first expand our assumptions about the features of professional development by recognizing that features may collectively work together in different ways under different circumstances in different contexts. Second, we must recognize the important role of variation in intensity of the features. Then, we must expand our assumptions beyond the features of the learning process or activity to consider the reciprocal relationships that exist between the system of activities in which teachers engage and the systems of influences that mediate and moderate these activities, teacher learning, and teacher change. In my examination of teachers' experience of their professional learning and their perceptions about the professional development as a learning process, the reciprocal relationships among the various institutional elements at play is of crucial importance. In this case, the prior belief and experiences of practitioners, the institutional mission and goals, existing perceptions about the nature and effectiveness of bilingual education, district and state policies all culminate in distinct experiences when seen through a practitioner's own socio-cultural lens.

Coherence and alignment in program planning—a critical factor in PD design and experience. In my study, the principles of alignment and coherence (Finley, 2000; Newmann et al., 2001) associated with professional development are

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used as a basis for understanding the process involved in the design, implementation and experiences related to professional development. Existing research identify alignment of program elements as key to developing an effective professional support system (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Elmore, 2000). Research also indicates that when curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments are focused on the same goals, that is, when the policy systems framing education are coherent, prospects of educational improvement are enhanced (Koppich and Knapp, 1998).

Systemic reform is a policy approach to school improvement that emphasizes high standards, aligned assessments, an accountability system, and site-based management (Fuhrman, 1993). This approach recognizes the importance of complex ideas such as constructivism and teaching for understanding; but, as Knapp (1997) claimed, there has been relatively little investment in building and sustaining support systems for long-term teacher learning. Finley (2000) argues the importance of supporting the development of teachers' knowledge, professionalism, collaboration, instruction, agency, and authority in promoting instructional coherence and improved student learning. She recognizes the need for state level policy work to stimulate local educators toward attaining clearly defined and desirable goals, and identifies the lack of attention to professional development as a barrier in implementing changes in practice advocated by the major reform documents. This is because, Finley notes, despite the focus of the changing policies on new curricular materials and the demand on teachers to possess a new set of knowledge, skills and beliefs needed to understand the policy or program, reform

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initiatives have often ignored preparation of classroom teachers. The role of teachers as a key connection between policy and practice calls for opportunities to learn what the policies imply for instruction. Such opportunities may be facilitated when concrete classroom learning and experiences are used to ground the conversation about practice; when inquiry and reflection are components of the learning; when people from different parts of the system communicate clearly with each other; and when the entire process is seen as a learning continuum. This results in a broader view of professional development as teacher learning.

Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, and Bryk's (2001) framework of *instructional program coherence* helps conceptualize how alignment may be attained at the school level. The framework identifies three major school conditions: (1) a common instructional framework guiding the curriculum, teaching, assessment, and learning climate that combines specific expectations for student learning, with specific strategies and materials to guide teaching and assessment; (2) staff working conditions that support implementation of the framework; and (3) the school's allocation of resources such as funding, materials, time, and staff assignments to advance the school's common instructional framework and avoiding diffuse, scattered improvement efforts in order to promote stability of curriculum and student assessments, on one hand, and stability of teachers' professional assignments on the other.

Prior research has documented the importance of organizational factors, such as unity of purpose, a clear focus, and shared values for student learning (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; Hill & Celio, 1998;

Sergiovanni, 1994) in attaining program alignment for school improvement. Studies on the broader educational system tend to discuss coherence with respect to alignment of a school's instructional program with external policies and standards (Consortium for Policy Re-search in Education, 2000; Furhman, 1993; Smith & O'Day, 1991). Such studies point out how cluttered and contradictory state and district policy environments can fragment school development efforts (Cohen, 1995; O'Day, Goertz, & Floden, 1995).

The literature on program coherence and alignment of program elements in institutional reform informs the present case study. A focus on alignment and cohesion encourages me to analyze participants' views of the instructional support fraework in relation to the school and district goals, curriculum, instruction, assessments, and teaching-learning expectations. Looking through Newmann et al's (2001) proposed concept of *program coherence*, I try to understand the general agreement or interrelationship among the three broadly identified aspects of n instructional framework—input, design and implementation—adopted at the district as well as the school levels represented in the following elements:

- School mission and program goals within the district's policy framework

- Teachers' professional development needs for teaching in dual language programs

- Extent of incorporating inputs in designing and implementing professional development programs;

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Researcher Position and Credibility

Since naturalistic inquiry in research investigates feelings and perceptions of individuals in respect to their real life experiences, it requires the demonstration of the credibility of both the researcher and the methods employed. Hence, it befits the researcher to engage in persistent observation, triangulation of data, dependability and trust between participants and researcher, ensure authenticity and fairness in the research process, and the closeness with which the findings represent the experiences of the participants (Ely, et al., 1991).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), prolonged engagement in the field helps establish credibility in that it allows the researcher to understand the phenomena being observed over time within the context in which it is embedded. The design of this study allowed me adequate amount of time (four observations of coaching sessions; 1-2 interview sessions with each participant at the school; 2-3 school visits to observe classes while instruction was going on) to be spent in the school across the 2013-2014 school year and even during part of the 2014-2015 year, to collect the required data for answering the research questions and to allow possible distortions in the data to be accounted for (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Prolonged engagement resulted in increased familiarity of the researcher among the school personnel, which helped reduce the influence of the "researcher effect"—participants behaving according to their perceptions of the study or of what the researcher is interested in. Lincoln & Guba (1985) note that trust building is a developmental process that must be engaged in daily. Participants were ensured that their identities, along with that of the institution and the district, would not be

revealed when the findings are published or in the ways conversations with them

are documented. They were also ensured that their confidences would not be used

against them, that there were no "hidden agendas," and that the data collected from

them would be held in the strictest of confidence.

Persistent observation—focusing in detail on the characteristics and

elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being

studied—is another means of establishing credibility.

> If the purpose of prolonged engagement is to render the inquirer open to the
> multiple influences - the mutual shapers and contextual factors - that
> impinge upon the phenomenon being studied, the purpose of persistent
> observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation
> that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on
> them in detail. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304).

The technique of persistent observation ensures depth of experience and breadth of

understanding, which can be acquired only through prolonged engagement with

participants and the field of study. Exploration of the details of the phenomena

under investigation enables the researcher to separate the significant from the

irrelevant, so that the focus is on the more relevant aspects ultimately leading to

increased credibility of the findings.

Additionally, in order to allow for subtle and nuanced analysis of data that

can ultimately strengthen a theory, the researcher needs to be welcoming about

contradictions in the data that can give rise to unexpected findings. This is known as

"negative case analysis." According to Ely et al. (1991), the search for evidence that

does not fit into the researcher's emergent findings leads to a re-examination of

one's findings, which is necessary to demonstrate the thoroughness of the analytic

process. Qualitative researchers actively look for negative cases to support their arguments. In this case study, negative case analysis inconsistencies and possible contradictions were taken into account in the refinement of the emerging categories and themes; the "outliers" and exceptions were integrated into the thematic whole by continually revising the hypotheses until the "fit' was perfect. This helped increase the trustworthiness of both the findings of the study as well as the research process itself.

Also, in order to verify my findings, I engaged in triangulating the data by referring to multiple sources. For instance, to verify a claim made by a participant that seemed crucial to understand the relevance or lack of relevance of the professional support teachers received, I used cross-references on the same issue from multiple interviewees engaged in developing the instructional support framework in various capacities. Additionally, I also referred to professional development workshop documents and institutional policy documents that could shed light on the issue.

Finally, the process of peer debriefing was also used during the course of gathering and analyzing my data. I wrote reflective memos following the interviews to identify possible gaps in my questions and the information derived from them, and identify my possible biases as a second language speaker of English.

CHAPTER THREE

Goals and Curriculum: Looking at the Program in the Context of the District

This is the first of the four chapters where I examine the data from the interviews and documents related to the dual language bilingual program at Spring Valley Dove Lane (SVDL) Elementary school. This chapter documents my understanding of the origins of the school's mission and vision and how school personnel view them. It also notes how the school's mission and district requirements together influenced the evolution of the school's curriculum and instructional approaches since the inception of the program.

School's Mission, Vision and Goals

This section focuses on the process that led to the adoption of the program's existing mission, vision and goals. I draw on the participants' views and organizational documents to understand how the school's past molded its present as the institution went through years of change and experimentation. It is important to note the significance of individual experiences in the process of organization building and organizational change.

Perceptions and life experiences—how the originators saw them.

Wiggins and McTighe (2007) define a school's mission as an institution's envisioned long-term goal "against which we design (and forever adjust) schooling" (p.9). The design is driven by a deliberately intended purpose to achieve specific effects in learners. Spring Valley Dove Lane's education philosophy, as stated on its website, is "rooted in bilingual curriculum" with a vision to develop biliteracy among all its students; and its mission, as stated, is to prepare them as global thinkers and

citizens. The statement highlights the school's intention to accomplish bilingualism,

biliteracy and global citizenship as the ultimate long-term outcome for its program.

During interviews, the school administrators, coaches and teachers described their

understanding of the institution's goals mostly in terms of its bilingual approach.

But the perceptions of each participant differed in their emphases on certain aspects

of bilingual education around biliteracy, multiculturalism, and global citizenship. As

gathered from the interviews, the school's bilingual vision was originally introduced

in the form of a strand[vi] concept at Spring Valley Elementary School (SVES) before it

merged with Dove Lane (DLES) to form Spring Valley Dove Lane (SVDL) Elementary

in the 2008-2009.

According to the literacy instructional coach and the Assistant Principal at

SVDL, that the program was born primarily out of the Principal's vision premised

upon an existing body of research that "if we get English language learners into dual

language programs, they do better in the long run." The Principal (when she was

previously the Principal at SVES) had launched the strand bilingual program as an

innovative initiative at her old school. She strongly believed that every student,

irrespective of one's social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, deserves the

opportunity to have access to the advantages of bilingual education as key to

building their social capital. She argues that

> …as an immigrant and having my own kids, I saw the difference… I believe in
> bilingual ed (sic), the nurturing of the first language is incredible… what a
> sense of self-esteem for these kids to feel that "my culture is being taken into
> account".

She maintained that as a first generation immigrant to the United States, she witnessed the positive influence of bilingual education on her children's lives and on the lives of other immigrants. Such personal experiences prompted her to perceive bilingual education as an instrument to attain cultural sensitivity, self-esteem and academic success to which every student should have equal access.

The merging of the two schools brought together two distinctly different communities. The dual language strand program brought in from Spring Valley Elementary was introduced to Dove Lane's existing English-only program. This resulted in a diverse student population with different linguistic needs and cultural understandings. Spring Valley's largely Hispanic student population started learning alongside Dove Lane's largely non-Hispanic, African-American, English-only population. Despite the differences of the two populations, the administrators—Principal, Dr. Moreno & Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia)—perceived "common needs" among these learners. As Ms. Garcia claims, there were issues of equity arising from "discrepancy between the kids that were only learning English and the kids that were in dual language" in the same school. The dual language program, she claims, grew from Dr. Moreno's vision of providing

> ...these kids an opportunity that they are capable of regardless of the socio-economic issues...that they deserve the opportunity to have a chance to be bilingual. But at the same time, we also really feel that our program is the best model to serve kids who're coming in with very limited or with no prior exposure to English.

Most of the other dual language schools in the district have been conceived as "elite programs...trying to service the community," claims Sonia Diaz, the literacy coach. She also notes that over time growing parental and community interests in

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the district towards bilingual education have shifted the notion of deficiency (weakness) associated with bilingual education to an additive (strength) stance, where bilingual education is viewed as a way of attaining academic and future social and economic success. Many immigrant families are now showing interest in developing and/or maintaining heritage language, while English-dominant families perceive the benefits of multilingual education and language exposure, beginning at an early age, to improving their children's academic success. Thus, many schools in affluent areas of the district in this study opted for bilingual programs to serve their community's demands; in contrast, for Spring Valley Dove Lane it has been a matter of educational equity growing out of the vision of the school leadership.

Ms. Garcia also underscores the school's emphasis on "the enrichment aspect of" bilingual education for all students—the Spanish language learners, who are mostly native English speakers, and the English language learners, who are native speakers of Spanish. The term "enrichment" was coined by Joshua Fishman (1976) to emphasize that bilingual schooling should be available to the linguistically dominant (in this context, native English speakers) social groups as well. The approach capitalizes on students' existing language strengths (whether it is in English or in a minority language) and perceives them as "experts" in their first language (L1) while they learn a second language (L2). This is an integrated model where two language groups study the curriculum through two languages which helps expand their cross-cultural ways of thinking. It enriches both majority and minority students' learning and is expected to result in high academic achievement of all students (Thomas & Collier, 2012). It is assumed that the enrichment aspect

would remove the deficiency element associated with remedial, compensatory models of bilingual schooling where second language learning is interchangeably used with "limited English proficiency in U.S. education policy discourse.

Both the Principal (Dr. Moreno) and the Assistant Principal's (Ms. Garcia) beliefs reflect the importance of establishing high expectations for all students through bilingual education. Rosenthal and Jacobson's classic (1968) study on the "expectation effect" shows how high teacher expectations can improve students' performances. This philosophy permeates the observations of Dr. Moreno as well as Ms. Garcia, who viewed every student in the school as a "language learner" with potential for success upon equal access to bilingual education. This belief is also reflected in their observations about expectations for the school's teachers. Ms. Garcia emphasized the need for teachers to make a deliberate effort to hold high expectations not only of the English language learners in the school, but also of the Spanish language learners.

Teachers' perceptions and experiences—How the implementers saw the mission, vision, and goals. Due to the strong influence of teachers' perceptions of their students' learning abilities, teachers work with their own understanding of the curricular material, shaping and interpreting the central ideas and framing their instructional approaches for students (Ball and Cohen, 1996). The interviews with the two sets of Spanish and English teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane reveal how they approach the concept of bilingual education, based on their personal and professional experiences. This sets the stage for understanding their instructional strategies and challenges within the dual language set up of the school.

While the administrators at Spring Valley Dove Lane highlighted the equity

and enrichment aspects of the school's bilingual education approach, some of the

teachers emphasized the global aspect of acquiring bilingual skills. For instance, the

third grade Spanish teacher Santiago Romero notes,

> By the time students reach fifth grade and then leaving the school, the vision
> is that they are bilingual global citizens. That means, they can manage both
> languages—Spanish and English—and they also have the social tenets to be
> great citizens…taking responsibilities for their action, caring for others… not
> only helping them develop academically, but also socially.

This perspective highlights the sociological aspects associated with

bilingualism—an appreciation and respect for cultural differences and global

understanding that enables a child to view the global community as part of his/her

greater social existence. Existing research shows the advantages of bilingualism in

promoting open-mindedness, tolerance, and wider cultural horizon among

bilinguals (Fishman, 1976; Sorban, 2011). Mr. Romero is a native speaker of Spanish

but was born and raised in the United States and attended an early transition

program with a large Hispanic population. His English fluency is native-like. Besides

he has travelled internationally and sees the value in developing the ability to

communicate in more than one language.

The fifth grade English teacher, Edwin Wilson, who is a native English

speaker, underscores the value of developing an open mind and becoming tolerant

and accepting of other cultures, beliefs and ideologies as a benefit and goal of

bilingual education. He identifies that the school's bilingual vision is:

> …to educate children with a bilingual curriculum and to instill in students
> …the enriching aspects of bilingualism not only from a linguistic perspective

but also from a cultural perspective….making students more aware not only of their community but then also of the wider world.

Mr. Wilson attributed his belief about the value of bilingual education and his drive to work in a dual language program to his personal experiences. After college he worked as an ESL teacher for adults in Argentina and thereafter, at an after-school program for students and youth in a predominantly Hispanic immigrant community in the U.S. His experiences developed in him the urgency for greater involvement with families and students whose daily struggles prevented them from having a positive work and educational experiences. As part of an increasingly culturally and ethnically heterogeneous community he saw the value of making "students more aware not only of their community but then also of the wider world."

Edwin Wilson's partner teacher in the fifth grade Spanish classroom, Sylvia Sanchez, also emphasized the fact that "it is not only the language, it's also the culture" that underscores the concept of bilingual education. She comes from a Spanish-speaking country with the hope "to be with students that are learning English," who are in most cases undocumented immigrants separated from their families and "have really strong struggles all over the place, not just academically, it's around them." She believes the clash of cultures is an existing problem both at the community level and among students in the school. She claims that the African-American student population who forms the majority of the Spanish language learners is sometimes resistant against the Hispanic immigrant students or the ELLs, often saying, "I don't want to learn Spanish because my mom said Spanish is not important." Hence, for Ms. Sanchez, the value of bilingual education is not only in teaching two languages, but also in developing among all students a sense of cultural

tolerance and respect for diversity. She claims that not everybody in the school recognizes such resistance among the Spanish language learners, "but I see it...but I think the school is trying to wash out those things." Seen through the social constructive (Green and Collier, 2002) lens, learning as socially shared cognition that is co-constructed within a community, cannot occur within such a culture-resistant environment. It indicates the need for effective intervention or management of social behaviors involved in learning and teaching within a complex dual language environment.

Of the four teachers I interviewed, Emily Miller, who was Mr. Romero's partner teacher in the third grade English classroom during the 2013-2014 school year, has a background that is quite different from the others. She came from a background in philanthropy and international education and development. A sudden interest that she developed towards teaching prompted her to pursue an expedited certification in Elementary education. For her, collaboration is the big takeaway from a bilingual environment and she claims that collaborative approach inherent in the instructional model of Spring Valley Dove Lane interested her in taking up a position at the school. She notes that "developing that (collaborative) relationship is helpful" for building a robust bilingual environment. However, she feels that the importance of collaboration—a foundational aspect of bilingual learning and instruction—has never been clearly communicated by the administration.

Here, it is important to note how ideas about bilingualism and bilingual education are often influenced by the person's own experiences that have shaped

their values and beliefs over time. The complexity of the cumulative experiences of each of the professionals interviewed may be associated with the identified mission, vision and goals in one way or another. A 2014 grant document that the Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia shared states the school's mission as continuous refinement and development of "second language acquisition instructional best practices across all grades and content areas" (2014 Star Rising Award Application, p.18). In the same document, the school's vision is identified as developing "global citizens" and fostering "long-standing relationships with community partners," who are recognized as "an essential part of cultivating culturally sensitive, bilingual citizens" (p.15). Similarly, an institution's program development may be seen as a complex process that reflects the agency of individuals associated with it. The following section extends the discussion on program building by focusing on the ways institutional policies and goals often affect decisions regarding curriculum development and instructional approaches.

Concretizing the Mission and Vision Through Curriculum/Program Development: Influences of the Greater Context

Although a school's mission and vision are often founded on the community's needs and/or demands and the ideologies of its leadership, every school is situated within the greater contexts of its district, state and national education policies and trends. Research shows that the complex levels of a learning system like that of a school and/or other educational agencies emerge through reciprocal influences within and between systems, whereby learning and change in one part of the system may result in change in other parts as well (Curtis & Stollar, 2002). This may be

claimed as true in the case of Spring Valley Done Lane as well. Despite its program

mission and vision driven towards promoting bilingual education, the district's

framework as primarily "ESL service delivery"[vii] (Bilingual program provider, Olivia

Nunez, at the district's District Office of Language Learning or OLL), within which

the school operated at the time of the study (2013-2014), seems to have affected the

school's program development. The implications of the district's policy framework

on the school's program development are discussed below.

At that time of the study the district did not have a clearly established policy

towards bilingual education (although there have been some notable changes in the

area of bilingual education policies during the months following my interview with

district personnel). Most specialized services offered to English/ second language

learners in the district schools emphasized English language proficiency and were

organized by the district's Central Professional Development Office (CPDO) with

occasional guidance from the district's District Office of Language Learning (OLL). In

the absence of a definite bilingual education policy, the district's District Teacher

Evaluator noted during his interview that school leaders adopting bilingual

programs for their institutions

> ...come with different ideas ... to adapt to whatever they consider is best and
> also responding to their student population.

Hence, each school had established different models of bilingual programs in

order to suit their respective mission and vision. That, to some extent, influenced

the respective schools' approach to program development, in terms of their

selection of curricular, instructional and professional development models. In the

following section I use the case of SVDL to examine how the district's policy could also have a significant influence on a school's yearly goals and subsequent curriculum development.

Influence of the district's policy on the school's program goals. Spring Valley Dove Lane's school district has a major literacy focus when it comes to instructional and professional development goals. As Alyson Garcia, the Assistant Principal notes,

> …generally, the District has had a focus, professional development-wise, on literacy, for sure. And we're asked to choose a focus within the literacy…the choices were Small Group Literacy Instruction, Close Reading, and Phonics & Morphology.

The district implemented a 120-minute literacy block instruction approach during the 2013-2014 school year to improve "literacy success for all (K-5) students" (district website). This block of time is intended to provide a common way to helping students transition between grade levels and schools. A typical literacy block would consist of a 20-minute instruction module on phonics and morphology[viii]; a 60 minutes module of independent and guided reading, and literacy workstation; and a 40-minute module of writing practice followed by sharing and reflection. Every school in the district that has English language learners were recommended to adopt one of the three approaches to literacy instruction—Phonics and Morphology (P&M), Small Group Instruction or Close Reading approach. Among the schools that opted for the Phonics and Morphology (P&M) approach to literacy instruction, Spring Valley Dove Lane was the only dual language program, while the others are primarily ESL programs.

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The district's professional development program for teachers was also reorganized at that time. According to the district's *K-2 Phonics and Morphology Pre-service Professional Development* guidelines, the expectations for P&M focus schools have been to:

- Establish a tiered phonic intervention system

    o Whole Group: Fundations (K-3); Words Their Way/ Building Vocabulary From Word Roots (3-5)

    o Small Group: Double Dose/ Burst (K-3); Just Words (4-5)

    o One-on-One: Wilson Reading System (K-5)

- Teach at least 4-6 tier two-vocabulary words each week that are connected to the unit theme and/or complex text being used during literacy instruction

- Create meaningful and engaging workstations. P&M schools will implement independent reading, fluency, and word work stations

As part of its literacy instruction curriculum, the district recommended schools to use Wilson Fundations as one of the language training courses and reading intervention programs to support struggling readers and English language learners. This course is offered by the Wilson Language Training Corp[ix] as a phonics and spelling supplement or word study block to teach the foundational skills of the Common Core Standards. The district recommends this program to schools for developing a consistent word study practice to facilitate vocabulary development among struggling readers (district website).

Due to the variation in the language proficiency objectives—English-only versus biliteracy in English and Spanish—these schools, including Spring Valley Dove Lane, identified different approaches to literacy instruction for themselves. As the Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia observes, most of the schools in the district opting for the Phonics and Morphology instructional approach to literacy "do not have a well-established English Phonics-Morphology programs, so they are all learning how to do Fundations." However, Spring Valley Dove Lane approached the district's recommendations on literacy instruction in a different way, considering its own program goals. It adopted the Phonics and Morphology focus with the intent to establish a school-wide word study program.

> So we started doing words their way… we started (Fundations) for the lower grades and then we on our own said, "we need something more uniform for the upper grades"… In English, we felt really good about this sequence that we have for word study, but for Spanish it was continuing to be an issue… We do not have a systematic approach to phonics. We've lots of different approaches. We've lots of different materials. We've people from lots of different countries. But we didn't have a uniform approach. So it was a little bit of a strategic move, I think, on my part." (Assistant Principal, Alyson Garcia)

The school's ultimate goal was to create a similar word-study program in Spanish for its grade levels K-5 based on the English model of Fundations.

The relevance of Fundations as an umbrella approach for second language instruction is perceived critically by many of the interviewees at Spring Valley Dove Lane. Several school and district personnel viewed the Fundations' approach to vocabulary development as directed towards improving English proficiency, although the school's stated mission, vision and goals identified the urgency for developing bilingual skills that would involve vocabulary development in both

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English and Spanish. For instance, Ms. Sanchez, the fifth grade Spanish teacher perceived Fundations to be more appropriate for the younger grades. She also noted that starting at the third grade level, teachers at her school do not use Fundations; instead they follow the Reader's and Writers' Workshop (RRW) model for literacy instruction.

Two of the teachers interviewed at Spring Valley Dove Lane consider that the selection of the literacy (RWW) and mathematics instruction curriculum (Singapore Mathematics) are based on the perceived learning needs of the students. Santiago Romero, the third grade Spanish classroom teacher noted that the Reader's and Writers' Workshop has an in-built differentiation approach to literacy instruction; and according to Edwin Wilson, the fifth grade English teacher, the Singapore Math curriculum helped emphasize students' fluency in basic mathematical facts through a deep conceptual understanding. This was attained through an instructional approach that moved from the concrete manipulative stage to the pictorial representation stage to the abstract concrete level (Edwin Wilson & Singapore Math curriculum website).

The 2014 grant document notes that the school's curricular models were adopted as a key measure to narrow the gap/ disparity in reading and math achievements between Black Non-Hispanic and Hispanic students on the 2010-2011 district assessments. The curriculum plan seemed to serve as an instrument that would help the school strike a balance between its bilingual education goals and the district's student performance goals in literacy and mathematics. By adopting its own curriculum, based on the district framework, the school on one hand remained

committed to its mission; however the ultimate program goal was directed to attain the district learning standards.

The grant document specifies the various factors that influence the development of the school's annual teaching-learning goals. It identifies the use of data from multiple sources like district and internal student assessments and teacher surveys; input from consulting professional developers; and district requirements. In 2011, only 23% of the school's Black Non-Hispanic students scored proficient or advanced in math on the district's annual assessment. That year, 54% of the Hispanic students scored "proficient" or "advanced" indicating a 31% performance gap between the two populations. The school analyzed the gaps in students' learning in both literacy and mathematics based on that data and developed its strategic planning for 2011-2012. The plan proposed the introduction of an interim assessment, ANet. The purpose of the interim assessment would be to generate data for developing a sound action plan for the years to come. The strategic plan also laid out the new annual goals, which envisioned the revision of the school's curriculum and the adoption of an instructional model that involves collaborative unit planning and intervention groupings.

Since then the school's curriculum approaches, instructional models and professional development efforts have undergone major changes. The data between 2011 and 2013 indicated major gains in both literacy and mathematics. The 2014 grant document also stated that the district's adoption of the Common Core State Standards also led to the school's initiative to vertically align[x] its curricula in both math and literacy, and to introduce improved intervention programs to bring about

growth in student achievement rates. The document indicates that the rate of Black

Non-Hispanic students (mostly SLLs) scoring at the proficient or advanced levels in

math grew from 23% in 2011, to 35% in 2012, and 52% in 2013. In 2013, 40% of

SVDL's students scored "proficient" or "advanced" in reading compared to 29% and

28% in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Despite this significant overall growth rate, the

school administration recognized that the reading scores remained below the

district average and perceived the need to move more students to "advanced

proficiency" levels in both reading and math. Accordingly, in 2013-2014 the school

adopted the following school-wide goals: "(1) of building deep understanding of the

grade-level content and by that specifically we mean the Common Core Standards,

and then (2) using data to drive instruction and (3) establishing a system of social

skills" (Assistant Principal). The new goals indicate a significant shift from the

"bilingual" aspect of teaching and learning to an increased rigor in grade-level

content knowledge as specified by the CCSS. The following section discusses in

greater details the ways in which the new standards influenced SVDL's curriculum

and instructional models.

      Influence of district-adopted standards on curriculum and instruction.

At Spring Valley Dove Lane, the initial approach to facilitate professional learning

through consultants in Reader's & Writer's Workshop and Singapore Math

instructional strategies. However, due to continuing gaps in student learning

identified in the 2010-2011 district assessments and due to the district's adoption of

the Common Core State Standards in 2011, the school introduced significant

changes in its approaches to curriculum, instructional and teacher professional

development. Thus the systemic reform policies at the district level prompted the school to train the teachers on the new knowledge and skills sets that the standards expected students to acquire.

There was an emphasis from the school administration to "elevate the rigor" of the curriculum by taking the "teachers as a team through a process of analyzing and understanding the level of rigor" (Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia). All four teachers interviewed at the third and fifth grade levels consistently emphasized on the need to live up to the "rigor" of the new standards for all students, both in English and Spanish classrooms. Mr. Romero, the third grade Spanish teacher referred to the "rigorous" nature of the assessments (The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or PARCC[xi]) used to evaluate students' skills and knowledge that the new standards demand. He, therefore, recognized the need to ensure his "lessons meet the rigor of the CCSS," which in turn resulted in the modification of the literacy and mathematics curricula. As the Assistant Principal observes,

> …because Singapore Math on its own wasn't totally aligned to the Common Core…we moved towards looking at Engage New York… But then we look at our kids and the needs of our kids and we can't just teach this as a package… we really have to use what we know about our students, what we know about our end goal just to reach the standard and then we use the strategies through the Singapore Math and the Workshop.

Perceiving the inadequacy of the existing math and literacy curriculum frameworks in addressing gaps in students' academic achievement, the school leadership team adopted the following curricular changes:

- A Balanced Literacy Approach aligned with the district's Phonics and Morphology focus in literacy development

- The Singapore Math curriculum complemented with Engage New York to ensure alignment with the Common Core State Standards

- Increased focus on high quality science and social studies texts to support math and reading instruction, to target students' performance in science, and to prepare students   [Grant Application, SVDL, 2014]

In order to align with the Common Core State Standards, the school revisited the old Reader's and Writer's Workshop units using complex texts to identify reading skills connected to the grade level standards and then crafted teaching points for instruction. As the 2014 grant document indicates, this approach helped the school select and use the texts at the appropriate level of complexity, and to identify and close gaps in the existing literacy curriculum units. The process involved vertical articulation of the standards to better understand the progression of the standards across grade levels.

The newly adopted approach in literacy instruction also emphasized on building students' independent writing skills by engaging them in structured writing exercises that are "purposeful and meaningful" (literacy coach). The goal has been to establish connections between the reading and writing skills, which the coach believes, are

> ...not really integrated right now—it's aligned, usually when they are reading narratives or writing narratives. But we have to be more intentional in asking, how do we use one to support the other.

Such "intentional" integration of the reading and writing skills required clear understanding of the priority standards in literacy, of students' learning needs from multiple data sources and systematic planning and execution of lessons and units.

In addition to understanding the standards, the school's dual language model also called for deeper understanding of the content knowledge by all students in both the languages—English and Spanish. This added an additional layer of program planning that required the ability among teachers to provide differentiated instruction related to content acquisition needs, on one hand, and language acquisition needs, on the other. Consequently, Spring Valley Dove Lane adopted an alternative literacy instruction model to supplement Fundations, which was the district's generalized approach to literacy instruction. As Ms. Garcia notes, "whatever the district was going to provide was not going to meet our needs… because it was not going to be targeted to Spanish." Thus, to balance a program mission around biliteracy and to improve student achievement in district assessments, the school piloted its own word study program, Dictado[xii], during the 2013-2014 school year. This program "wouldn't necessarily be different from Fundations, except that we have it going on in two languages" (Alyson Garcia).

Besides serving the mission of biliteracy, Dictado was also introduced as an approach to attain the vertical articulation of the Common Core Standards in literacy across grade levels. The objective was to enable teachers to understand the progression of the priority standards and associated language skills at each grade level and those intersecting various grade levels. As a measure to attain the objective, the school administration assigned the literacy coach, Sonia Diaz, with the

responsibility to develop Dictado and train the teachers on its strategies. This initiative entailed piloting Dictado instruction in both English and Spanish and extending it across all grade levels (first through fifth). In the words of Sonia, the literacy coach,

> They're getting it in Spanish! But now we're going to have English teachers do it too…. They'll pilot it. And do it the true Kathy Escamilla way where it's like you do Dictado one week in one language and one week in the other language then really start.

Here, Sonia's reference to Kathy Escamilla is in relation to the school's earlier adoption of a biliteracy program, *Literacy Squared*[xiii]—a framework designed by Escamilla to accelerate the development of biliteracy through literacy instruction conducted in both Spanish and English. The framework suggested the need to improve the quality of instruction through direct and explicit attention to cross-linguistic connections; purposeful and intentional planning to create trajectories towards biliteracy; use of authentic instructional approaches in Spanish and English that respect and focus on the internal structures of each language; and use of collaborative instructional approaches. Dictado is one of the unique strategies Literacy Squared has created to accelerate biliteracy development. Sonia Diaz has been supporting the teacher learning process in the adoption of these literacy instruction strategies.

While Dictado has been widely accepted by the school administrators and some teachers at Spring Valley Done Lane, the fifth grade Spanish teacher Sylvia Sanchez expressed her concerns about its adoption across all grades as the Spanish word-study instructional approach. Sanchez considers Dictado better suited for

Spanish language instruction at the second and third grade levels when learners are trying to grasp the basic language skills and grammar. She does not agree about the relevance of adopting Dictado for her fifth grade advanced Spanish learners who need to develop more complex language skills for a deeper understanding of the context. She thinks, "what we need for fifth graders is probably Asi se dice… as it goes to deepen the sense of the language."

Interestingly, other school personnel that I interviewed, including Sonia Diaz, the literacy coach, who has a background in dual language education, do not share Ms. Sanchez's concern about the use of Dictado across all grades. Diaz did not perceive the difficulty of adopting Dictado across grade levels, when Kathy Escamilla's Literacy Squared program (see Chapter 4) expressly recommends the use of Asi se Dice for intermediate grades. This gives rise to questions about the adequacy of the school's adopted Spanish curriculum to establish vertical alignment of literacy skills across all grade levels, which is one of the core expectations of the Common Core standards.

In this context it is important to consider the school's access to funding and support in establishing a robust Spanish curriculum that is at par with the district recommended curriculum in English. Adopting Dictado for the lower grades and Asi se Dice for the intermediate grade levels to support the school's mission of bilingualism and biliteracy would demand additional support. Here, the question to ask would be: Does the school have the ability to sustain multiple bilingual instructional programs such as Dictado and Asi-se-Dice for developmentally appropriate language learning? Despite the district's goal to promote English

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proficiency among all students, does the district support goals of dual language proficiency development in programs like that of Spring Valley Dove Lane to address the new standards and attain the learning goals set for improving student achievement? If so, how?

Besides literacy, the school's math curriculum had also undergone significant revisions in order to align with the Common Core math standards. Despite the school's identified success in raising students' math achievement using the Singapore Math curriculum, the district's adoption of the new standards resulted in the school's reconsideration of the relevance of the Singapore Math curriculum. The Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia, noted how the school had initiated a revision of the curriculum, against the singular use of Singapore Math. Although the older curriculum is still used to train teachers on math instructional strategies, the new learning needs and goals of the students prompted the administration to combine it with the instructional principles of Engage New York's "A Story of Units" math curriculum. Ms. Garcia argues that because "Singapore Math on its own wasn't totally aligned to the Common Core" the administration had to adopt the curricular changes mentioned above.

Garcia explained that Singapore Math mostly consisted of studying the curriculum books and looking at the sequence of the mathematical problems; whereas, the new approach prompts teachers to consider scaffolding strategies that would help students apply their knowledge in multiple scenarios: "It's like seeing the problem and then breaking it down." Thus, with the new district standards, the school had to meet student achievement goals using a new set of guidelines, and a

new curricular and instructional framework. This in turn affected the teacher support system to reorganize the process of instructional planning. The school developed the Data Cycle Meeting Outcomes Chart provided below as an attempt to reorganize the instructional framework of the school. It breaks down the school's new program plan aimed at attaining a school-wide goal of training teachers on the vertical alignment of standards across grade levels so that students may be prepared on the relevant skills.

Table 2:
Data Cycle Meeting Outcomes Chart (SVDL), 2013-2014

Meeting	Purpose	Outcomes/Deliverables	Teachers Prepare	Leaders Prepare
Planning from standards – *Focus on the Content*	Achieve school-wide goal of deeper understanding of the Common Core standards by unwrapping standards using PARCC release items and grade level texts. Math- Teacher will gain a deeper understanding of the level of rigor. Reading- Teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the reading skills needed to master the standard.	Math -List of skill based objectives for focus standards Reading - Annotated anchor text - List of reading skills connected standards - Scaffolded list of teaching points increasing in complexity from low to high	Math - Read module and topic overview for upcoming unit - Review ANet SAS Reading - Identify an anchor text for the upcoming unit - Read and mark-up text - Review ANet SAS	Math - Select grade level focus standard(s) - Identify released items to be analyzed ELA - Identify focus standards -Read and mark up text
Planning from standards –*Unit planning*	Apply the deeper understanding of content standards to plan the upcoming unit.	Math - Calendar of lesson objectives - Short cycle assessments created from a breakdown of mid and end of unit assessments Reading- - Select and prioritize teaching points - Schedule instruction - Final text selection	Math - Read unit plan ELA -Read previous unit plan -Bring unit anchor text	Math -Read unit plan ELA -Read previous unit plan
Data Analysis/ Action Planning	Analyze multiple sources of data to determine student mastery and misconceptions of the standards. Create a plan to address student needs and reassess mastery of	Math- - Item analysis with detailed student misconceptions by group - Aligned reassessment - Re-teach plan Reading- -Select relevant	Math - Complete the entire assessment - List of standards by performance - Proposed priority	-Review data to develop areas of focus and preliminary root causes -Identify priority

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The chart provides guidelines on how the instructional coaches at Spring Valley Dove Lane would support teachers in understanding Common Core standards by breaking down the elements of the PARCC assessment system. During the cycle meetings teachers use the standards to understand the text contents in respect to the learning goals, apply that understanding to develop unit plans, and apply multiple sources of student performance data to realign their lessons with the priority standards during follow-up instruction.

The data cycle chart is evidence of the influence of the greater district policies on the school's program planning including elements of curricular changes and changes in teacher professional learning to improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement.

Emergence of a New Instructional Model— Bilingual Instruction to Meet New Standards

Dual language programs often have to go through a trial and error process to identify the best way to plan timing for alternating instruction in two languages. With new district-recommended curriculum in literacy instruction and the need to align to new district standards and accountability measures, schools are now opting for structured programs such as the *alternating day*, *half day*, or the *roller coaster* model[xiv] (Chen and Mora-Flores, 2006). Spring Valley Dove Lane's experimentation first with the *Roller Coaster*, then with the *Every-other-day* dual language instructional model demonstrates such a trend.

Under *roller coaster* arrangement, Spanish and English classroom teachers engaged in independent planning of their lessons and units. For instance, if a

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Spanish classroom teacher at a particular grade level planned one content area in Spanish, his or her counterpart in the English classroom would plan another content area in English. That is, if the English teacher planned a two-hour literacy block in reading, the Spanish teacher would plan and instruct on writing and mathematics. As a result, students would not receive instruction in the content area simultaneously in both the languages as teachers taught different content areas in English for half the day, and in Spanish during the other half. Due to the absence of a need for teacher to collaborate, it was often perceived as a convenient process by teachers, administrators and coaches in developing lessons, implementing lessons, and providing support with lesson and unit planning. However, as the Ms. Garcia noted, the arrangement did not have the desired impact on student learning. Due to lack of opportunities to plan collaboratively, teachers were often unable to identify and address the deficiencies in students' learning that occurred in their partner's English or the Spanish classroom. The continued gap in learning affected students' overall understanding in various content areas, which in turn, negatively influenced their achievement rates on the district examinations.

The instructional shift to the *every-other-day* model was introduced in 2013 as part of school's program plan to improve overall student achievement in all subject areas. Under this new model, the English and Spanish partner teachers would plan collaboratively and provide instruction on the same content simultaneously in two languages. This approach represented a shift from a teacher-centric to a student-centric model of instruction. According to Freda Vasquez, the school's literacy consultant, the every-other-day approach to balanced literacy

seemed like a good fit for Spring Valley Dove Lane's heterogeneous student

population because

> ...in balanced literacy, the child is at the center of education and it lends itself in differentiating the instruction for all children. So, children read at a reading level in whatever language they are reading; children write and choose the topic they are going to write based on... their ability as a writer. And because balanced literacy is flexible to differentiate instruction, it was a good model for (SVDL) being a heterogeneously grouped dual language school.

According to, Ms. Garcia, this instructional model was adopted to address the unique

challenge of incorporating two languages into the daily learning practices and

routines of students. The objective was to provide all students ("language learners")

access to content area instruction simultaneously in both languages. Conceptual

knowledge gained from one day's lesson would facilitate both linguistic and

conceptual connections through the use of explicit bridging activities, and through

the collaboration and alignment of Spanish and English teachers—specifically

addressing the shortcomings of the roller coaster model.

The math instructional coach identified this model to be particularly valuable

for math instruction because of opportunities for teachers to collaborate. She

observes that the collaborative aspect can help teachers who often feel that they

lack support from colleagues and the administration in making good instructional

decisions in Spanish. For many math teachers who did not feel as confident in math,

she notes, "spending six weeks on a certain math content where kids were not really

getting good, strong instruction, was problematic."

The literacy coach perceived that the new approach would facilitate

opportunities for the Spanish and English partner teachers to plan a unit together,

go through the details of the daily lesson plans, brainstorm strategies and share student learning issues on a regular basis. She hopes that the continuation of the same lesson simultaneously in two languages would enable teachers to "bridge" the lessons through "this consistent linking back to what was done previously to what we're doing today" and that "the alignment should be such that if I walk into either an English or the Spanish class, they are still at the same lesson that day."

Besides collaboration, "bridging" is also identified as an important instructional element of the Every-other-day approach. The concept of bridging is built on the theoretical underpinning of bilingual education representing the ability of students to transfer knowledge and skills between languages (Beeman & Urow, 2013). Such cross-linguistic transfer is difficult to attain when instruction in English and Spanish occur independently of each other and in the absence of appropriate collaboration among language partner teachers to carry out instructional planning and execution. Whereas, strategic use of the two languages through planned literacy instruction in Spanish and English, every day, facilitates bridging (ibid) not only in reading and writing but also in other content areas. The coaches provide a sound example of bridging concepts across languages. For instance, in math and science, students need to work around the technical terminologies and vocabulary associated with learning scientific and mathematical concepts. It is crucial that students are able to link their vocabulary acquired during literacy instruction in both languages with those specialized terms. This indicates that teachers have to collaborate on intentional vocabulary development related to content, even when they are planning for literacy lessons, using bridging techniques.

Another crucial aspect of successful instruction under the new model is *teachers' diagnostic abilities.* Ongoing diagnosis of students' strengths and abilities is key to make the collaborative planning process successful. Teachers should be able to detect student's literacy as well as content area learning needs so that the information may be incorporated while planning for the successive lessons on a unit with their partner teachers. As the new data cycle meeting plan shows, diagnosis of student learning and gaps therein, are major aspects of successful instructional planning and implementation in attaining the rigorous goals set by the new Standards. As the external professional developer of literacy notes, teachers need to be able to diagnose student's learning needs in order to match them with the appropriate teaching strategies. Teachers are expected to look at a piece of student work as part of various formal and informal assessments, identify gaps in understanding, and predict the appropriate teaching modalities.

The Context and Program Development

The examination of data in this chapter begins by illustrating the influence of individual perceptions and life experiences on the ways in which institutional missions get defined and interpreted. This reveals the aspect of teacher perception and learning as a socially constructed process that is shaped by one's interaction with the surrounding community.

The discussion also indicates how a school's program-planning process serve as a negotiating platform, where the institutional mission and vision get molded as the school functions within a greater, more complex learning system. Such modification-inducing interactions may be identified as a social negotiation (Woo &

Reeves, 2007) process, where systemic reform policies are directed at school improvement through alignment of assessments and site-based management to high standards (Fuhrman, 1993).

In this study, the nature and goal of the school's program plan seem to have changed over time as a result of an effort to align with the changing policies and requirements of the greater context of the district. The ultimate goal of the district has been continuous improvement of student learning and academic excellence; however, its approach to defining and measuring the successful attainment of those goals have changed in keeping with the national trends in educational assessment and accountability. These changes have had a ripple effect on both the content and processes of student learning, on school's need to conform and on expectations regarding instructional approaches. The visible effects of these changes at the district level are reflected in their transformed policies and standards; and at the school level, these changes are evident in curricular and instructional approaches and student assessment patterns. In the case of Spring Valley Dove Lane, although bilingualism continues to be the school's primary mission, the requirement to align its program with the "increased rigor" of the new district standards required a negotiation process and balancing act at the school level.

To get an in–depth understanding of the success/ effectiveness of the new curricular and instructional approaches, it is imperative to know teachers' perceptions of the program goals, their instructional practices and the needs and challenges associated with the newly adopted approaches. In the following chapter I will examine the pedagogical practices of four classroom teachers at Spring Valley

Dove Lane adopted in respect to the program goals. The chapter will also provide

insight into the challenges these teachers face while planning, designing and

executing instruction within the program's dual language framework.

CHAPTER FOUR

Instructional Strategies, Needs and Challenges

Teachers working with students learning a second language often struggle with creating equal learning opportunities (Kirshner-Morris, 1995) because the special needs of this population call for special pedagogical approaches. Haley (2000) suggests that teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse learners need to refocus the lens if they are to help their students be successful. Adding an "intentional language component" (Beckett, Nevin, Comella, Kane, Romero, & Bergquist, 2002) to lessons can enable teachers focus on more than just the content or living skills elements required in Individual Education Plans (IEP) targeted at increasing students' success. According to Beckett et al. (2002), teachers' ability to modify a lesson's learning objectives by adding the intentional language component helps second language learners acquire multiple learning standards related to both content and language proficiencies.

In this chapter I examine the instructional approaches of four teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary School as they try to accomplish the program's bilingual mission and attain the district-mandated goals, while functioning within set frameworks of "best instructional practices." The analyses of the perceptions about instructional strategies, needs and challenges generate findings and raise questions that contribute to a critical understanding of the issues related to capacity for programs and teachers.

Teachers' Approach to Instruction—Responses to School and District Goals

In this section I analyze the perceptions and everyday classroom teaching experiences of four teachers I interviewed—two pairs of partner teachers in English and Spanish classrooms at the third and fifth grade levels. These include teachers' comments on their individual as well as collaborative instructional approaches in relation to the school's adopted mission and goals. I highlight the strategies teachers use to meet bilingual instructional goals within the framework of the district's new standards.

I also discuss the challenges teachers face while adapting to the school's new (every-other-day) dual language instructional model. The teachers' conversations about the school's curriculum and instruction are largely centered on the district's curricular and instructional policies. In most cases, the teachers recognized the district's and the school's present emphasis on meeting students' achievement goals as directed towards attaining the Common Core Standards. Their conversations helped uncover the implications of the new standards on teachers' ability to plan and execute lessons and units according to grade-specific priority standards to address student-learning needs identified from assessment data.

Teachers' strategies in literacy instruction. A crucial element of second language learning is vocabulary instruction. This is often facilitated through targeted instruction in specific content areas like mathematics, science and literacy. Teachers and administrators at Spring Valley Dove Lane recognized the importance of vocabulary development among students using complex texts in various content areas to help students develop the standards-specified skills in reading and writing

in their respective grade levels. Such goals call for teachers' ability to facilitate

vocabulary development by adding an "intentional language component" (Beckett et

al., 2002) to lesson objectives in the various content areas. Intentional language

instruction would entail the evaluation of students' existing language skills in order

to determine appropriate language development objectives that complement and

extend students' acquisition of the content. As Sylvia Sanchez, the fifth grade

Spanish teacher observes,

> ...for reading you need things that they can really use and they can
> understand, then when you're doing math you want them to learn the
> process of math and the number sense. And science is different… your goal in
> science is to make the content accessible …and you have a lot of cognates and
> it's easier if you know a little bit more of Spanish.

Ms. Sanchez explains how she approaches science instruction in Spanish using

cognates to explain concepts to both English language learners and Spanish

language learners in her class. Her goal is to help students develop the scientific

vocabulary needed to comprehend and communicate a particular scientific

phenomenon students are learning at any given point of time. She notes, "what you

need is a very precise vocabulary and those higher level words" in order to be able

to transfer concepts and language skills from English to Spanish and vice versa.

Content acquisition as a result of intentional language instruction requires

specific scaffolding and differentiating instructional techniques (TESOL Standards,

1997), which would vary according to students' learning needs and existing

language proficiency. According to Santiago Romero, the third grade Spanish

teacher, the scaffolding strategies would differ from one student to another based

on the time a student has spent in the school's dual language environment:

...if a kid is learning Spanish, has been in our school for a few months, he's

going to need different scaffolds.

If the content is not accessible to a student at a grade-specific level content, "he has

to be part of an intervention group" to ensure the student is able to progress

towards attaining the standards-specified grade-level skills. Santiago thinks that

teachers at his school need to use a myriad of strategies because they are trying to

address students' needs according to their varying language levels using necessary

scaffolds in vocabulary instruction,

> For example, making sure that all your vocabulary words have an illustration to go with it so that the students can access the vocabulary and then giving them the sentence starters, and then, making sure that when they're working together in pairs with students that are competent in the language that can help them understand.

> Besides planning for intentional language instruction while teaching content,

Edwin Wilson, the fifth grade English classroom teacher emphasizes the use of

techniques such as "flexible groupings." Teachers use this technique to group

together students of mixed content and linguistic abilities to promote

interdependence and also "encourage students to help one another with difficult

words through translation or modeling." He also emphasizes the importance of

differentiation strategies like the ones built into Reader's and Writer's Workshop

curriculum where:

> ...students, during independent reading, are reading a book on their particular level that they've been tested in the beginning of the year and in the middle of the year. So during independent reading, not every student is reading the same book; the students are all reading different books and practicing particular skills that've been introduced during the read-aloud.

Mr. Wilson believes that the use of these literacy instruction strategies enable students to focus on the grade-level skills they need to acquire in order to meet the district standards. For instance, in order to help students identify the characters and the significance of their actions in a reading piece, teachers use scaffolding techniques during read-alouds, independent reading, as well as flexible groupings to identify characters' thoughts, feelings and actions and their effect on the plot of the story. Although the priority skills are same for all students at a particular grade level, teachers are required to use the data derived from student assessments to identify the resources or texts that would match the language proficiency level of each student. Hence, it is important that teachers have an understanding of the standards specified priority skills according to grade-levels, the ability to make ongoing diagnosis of students' strengths and abilities in language and content area learning needs using student assessment data, and use that diagnosis to match students' learning needs with appropriate teaching strategies. The literacy consultant at Spring Valley Dove Lane confirms this when she observes that teachers are expected to look at a piece of student work as part of various formal and informal assessments, identify gaps in understanding, and predict the appropriate teaching modalities.

These are some of the ways in which the teachers I interviewed engaged in "intentional language instruction" (Beckett et al., 2002) to help second language learners acquire multiple learning standards—content as well as language— by modifying the learning objectives of lessons based on students' existing content and linguistic skills. Use of these strategies indicate how the teachers strategized their

instruction using the curricular framework the school has adopted to meet the new district standards, while striving to attain the school's bilingual mission. Successful implementation of the Readers and Writers Workshop demands a specific skill-set among teachers in order to facilitate effective language learning among students. According to the Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia, these skills include teachers' ability to successfully write mini lessons, plan read-alouds, and construct independent reading and conferring, and facilitate guided reading. Hence, the teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane are required to work with the students to address their needs in developing skills like phonemic awareness, work attack skills, fluency, or reading comprehension. And Ms. Garcia believes "there's a lot of teacher skills that need to be in place in order to do that."

Perceived instructional challenges and accommodations. Teachers not only commented on the strategies they use for literacy instruction, they also identified the challenges encountered to address the changes in the school's curriculum (literacy and mathematics) and instructional models.

Effects of school's literacy curriculum on instruction. Besides adopting literacy instruction strategies used by the school's Reader's and Writer's Workshop program, teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane are also required to implement Dictado to meet the bilingual literacy goals. As discussed in Chapter 3, Dictado is a Spanish word study program that the school had piloted to identify and align the Spanish language learning and instruction across grade levels. A section of the school's leadership team—especially Ms. Garcia the Assistant Principal, Ms. Diaz the literacy coach, and Mr. Romero the third grade Spanish teacher, who was also the

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teacher representative on the leadership team at the time of study—emphasized the relevance of Dictado in attaining literacy learning goals for both English language learners and Spanish language learners.

Mr. Romero described how teachers could use Dictado to achieve oral language development and to build metalinguistic awareness among students as a way of "making them aware of the language connections, like what transfers and what doesn't." Dictado's holistic instructional strategy was aimed at developing students' vocabulary in both English and Spanish. With Dictado, the teacher dictates a paragraph of text for students to write. Through their writing, students demonstrate their understanding and use of discrete skills such as spelling, punctuation, syntax and semantics. Researchers claim that Dictado strategies may be used as an effective instructional tool in bilingual education and that they may be applied both for instruction and evaluation (Beeman & Urow, 2013). To prepare teachers on the use of Dictado strategies, Ms. Diaz emphasized the need for teachers to review samples of student writing to identify sentences reflecting spelling patterns and elements of writing mechanics that the teacher aims to teach.

Despite the school administration's emphasis on the use of Dictado in vocabulary instruction and oral language development across grade levels, the perceptions of the two Spanish teachers I interviewed—Ms. Sanchez of fifth grade and Mr. Romero of 3rd grade— greatly varied. While Mr. Romero perceives the advantages and relevance of Dictado strategies as a third grade teacher, to develop the metalinguistic awareness of students across languages, Ms. Sanchez views these strategies as lacking relevance for advanced language learners in her fifth grade

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classroom. According to her, Dictado is geared towards teaching language rules at the early stages of language learning, for instance in grade levels K-2; hence, she says,

> …what we need for 5th graders is probably *Asi se dice*. Because the students have been in the program since Pre-K, Kinder… so they know, they have the Spanish…Dictado is for rules, but *Asi se Dice* goes more to deepen the sense of the language. Why you say something this way or that way in Spanish.

Similar to Dictado, Asi se Dice is another cross-linguistic strategy offered by Kathy Escamilla's Literacy Squared biliteracy instructional program to which the school subscribes. Ms. Sanchez's preference for Asi se Dice over Dictado strategies, for her fifth grade students are based on her understanding of what advanced language learning involves for her students. She believes that her students need to engage in a language learning process that requires a more complex and sophisticated scrutiny of language than Dictado offers. Asi se Dice is recommended for students in the intermediate grade levels because of its emphasis on the subtleties and nuances of communication cross cultures and languages (Literacy Squared).

Although Ms. Sanchez recognizes the value of piloting Dictado as a Spanish word study program to complement the district-recommended *Fundations* program, she perceives the school administration's decision to introduce Dictado across all grade levels as an extreme measure. She believes that teachers at different grade levels should have access to and information of different strategies that suit their students' language learning needs and hopes to be able to use Asi se dice with her fifth grade students.

Interestingly, Ms. Sanchez's partner teacher in the fifth grade English classroom, Mr. Wilson, did not provide any insights either about Dictado or Asi se dice. His comments are more around the need to adopt differentiation techniques in literacy and mathematics instruction:

> ...you have students who probably don't even need to be at school ... they're just brilliant... But then there are students who still can't count by twos. And they're sitting right next to each other in the classroom. So it's more of how you're differentiating your lessons; how you go about creating a structure for all those students and where do you meet them.

Knowing to use different strategies to meet the needs of students at different language proficiency levels is a common issue cited by all the four teachers that I interviewed. But, Mr. Wilson's emphasis on differentiating instruction is of a general nature and applicable for teachers not only in bilingual settings but in English-only classrooms as well. His concern is more about the content of literacy instruction, not the language development aspect of it.

The difference in approach to literacy instruction in the same dual language setting at the same grade level could be an outcome of the language-based instructional training and backgrounds each teacher has. Moreover, the different languages they use in providing literacy instruction brings in different issues related to the use of English as opposed to the use of Spanish in a primarily English-oriented educational framework. The framework not only determines the position of one language in respect to the other in the hierarchy of the learning scenario, it also influences the expectations of the system about teachers' pre-service preparation, backgrounds, and abilities. Moreover, differences in the grade-specific language proficiency levels expected of students would also influence how a Spanish teacher

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in the third grade would perceive the relevance of a particular strategy, in comparison to a teacher at a more advanced grade. These differences bring to the forefront concerns about developing a school's program plan where the adoption of a particular curriculum framework may not be adequate in meeting both the content-based and the language-based learning needs of students in a dual language program. They also highlight the importance of developing teachers' ability to address the demands placed by a new curricular and/or instructional framework, especially when they bring with them different skill-sets in bilingual/ dual language instruction.

Effects of school's mathematics curriculum on instruction. As discussed in Chapter 3, the district's recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards has shifted the focus of district schools, including that of Spring Valley Dove Lane towards increased rigor in curriculum and student learning. This, in turn, has influenced teachers' approach to instruction to help students master the standards and the associated skills in both literacy and math. As the third grade Spanish teacher, Mr. Romero explains:

> ...next year (the district) is rolling out the PARCC assessment, which is very rigorous, supposed to replace the (old district assessment). So, we have to go in and have to modify some of those work sheets, some of the lessons that Singapore Math has, because they're not rigorous enough to meet the levels of the PARCC assessment.

Ms. Garcia, the Assistant Principal confirms the need to adjust previous instructional practices according to the new standards using a revised curriculum. She viewed the necessity for teachers to adjust

> ...what we know about teaching Singapore Math... as we moved towards
> Engage New York (Engage New York) because when we look at our kids and
> the needs of our kids ...we can't just teach this as a package.

Following the curricular revisions, the teachers are expected to be able to combine the two approaches to help students attain the depth of knowledge and breadth of skills benchmarked for a particular grade level that each program offers so that students can benefit from the resulting changes. The Engage New York program claims to significantly narrow and deepen the scope of teachers' use of time and technique in teaching only those mathematical concepts that are prioritized at a particular grade level by the Common Core standards. Its stated goal is to enable students reach strong foundational knowledge and deep conceptual understanding and be able to transfer mathematical skills and understanding across concepts and grades ([EngageNY](#)).

The new standards also require teachers to understand the connected nature of the grade-level mathematical skills and to perceive learning of concepts as a continuous act occurring across grade levels. Conforming to that approach, Engage New York promotes scaffolding and differentiating strategies that are primarily application-oriented. This, according to Mr. Wilson, the fifth grade English teacher is a "skills-based" approach that teachers have to adopt.

A distinct difference is noticed between some of the teachers' observations of the new math curriculum and that of Ms. Garcia, the Assistant Principal. According to Ms. Emily Miller, the third grade English classroom teacher, adopting Engage New York for her students has been particularly challenging for teachers, despite its usefulness in meeting the new standards. Although Ms. Garcia claims that the

curriculum had been adopted keeping in mind the particular needs of the language learners in the school, Ms. Miller believes otherwise. She observes that Engage New York is "not ELL-friendly at all…It is overtly wordy" requiring teachers to "modify the lessons a lot" to meet the language proficiency levels of students. While she admits that the program matches the rigor of the new standards, she points out "because of the way the lessons are scripted, it is not ELL friendly." She also claims that planning lessons based on the new curriculum requires time-consuming modifications in order to make mathematical concepts accessible to students who are at varying proficiency levels. According to her, the Singapore Math strategies helped second language learners visualize abstract mathematical concepts through concrete and pictorial medium facilitating effective learning.

Mr. Wilson's viewpoint regarding the math curriculum is aligned to Ms. Miller's. He points out that with Singapore Math, teachers can focus on the entire learning continuum, starting with the concrete and using the pictorial to attain an understanding of the abstract mathematical concepts. This, according to him, helps both ELLs and SLLs, "language learners in general, to have that physical thing to manipulate" because "some students are ready to move to the abstract quickly, while some students need the concrete." Although such differences in learning abilities are common in most classrooms, it becomes especially challenging when a teacher has to address students' learning of the content, as well as the acquisition of a second language, through the same lesson.

Research in bilingual education indicates that the language a child uses in the classroom needs to be sufficiently well developed to be able to process the cognitive

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challenges involved in learning (Cummins, 1984). Without such opportunities in second language development, the quality and quantity of what children learn from complex materials and produce in oral and written form may be relatively weak. Moreover, research in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol or the SIOP model emphasizes the need to make content comprehensible for second language learners while promoting their second language acquisition (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Howard & Christian, 2002). This has been found to facilitate mastery of academic content among second language learners.

Accordingly, Ms. Miller's perception of Engage New York's "overtly wordy" approach highlight one of the challenges teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane seem to encounter as they help second language learners master mathematical content. She believes that the mismatch between the language used in the curriculum and the students' language proficiency level tends to create a gap in the comprehensible input impeding the process of learning of the concept. Her primary concerns are related to the challenges teachers in this school possibly encounter as they try to "scaffold down Engage New York in a way that it's accessible to everybody," that is, all language learners. Interestingly, when asked why the school selected the curriculum despite such difficulties inherent in its language use, Ms. Miller indicated that "there is a pressure to conform to the district about the choice of curriculum," which has influenced many district schools, including hers, to adopt Engage New York. Hence, in her view it seems to be the district's policies that have greatly influenced the school's recent curricular choice in mathematics, rather than the students' unique needs, as claimed by the administrator, Ms. Garcia.

From the point of view of Ms. Garcia, teachers in her school have encountered difficulties in adopting the transition from Singapore Math to Engage New York. She believes that the difficulties emerged mainly from the lack of adequate professional support teachers received during the initial phase of implementing the new curriculum. She thinks that as a result, teachers have continued with the assumption that lessons from Engage New York could be structured and used the same way as Singapore Math:

> ...it didn't occur to them how challenging that would be when you provide it to a group of kids that they have in front of them. There's a real need to use the materials and adapt them so that the kids can access them.

Ms. Garcia's observation is indicative of the administration's expectations of teachers' ability to perceive and modify their lessons based on the learning needs of students in the school's dual language environment. However, she believes that teachers were unable to perceive the effectiveness of the new math curriculum for teaching second language learners due to their lack of understanding of it and due to lack of professional support.

If the Ms. Miller's stance regarding the adoption of the new mathematics curriculum is considered, there seems to be a clear lack of teacher agency in curriculum development. Existing research shows the critical importance of professional learning in building teachers' agency whereby teachers are able to bring together the ideas of power and action to impact student learning (Finley, Marble, Copeland, & Ferguson, 2000). It is a key aspect of school improvement that might support teachers as they rethink their roles in creating a coherent instructional practice as part of a school's overall development.

Ms. Garcia's comments on the same issue reaffirms the absence of a support

system that would provide timely help to teachers in understanding the new

curriculum, while providing them support to address the dual language program's

unique teaching-learning needs and challenges. It also indicates a gap in

communication between the administrator (who designed and directed the school

professional development) and the teachers (who are the recipients of the school

initiated professional support). Unclear communication has been a consistent

matter of concern among all the four teachers that I interviewed. Although neither

of the Spanish teachers pointed out similar challenges related to the implementation

of the Engage New York curriculum, they shared concerns about their struggles in

understanding their instructional goals and professional commitments. The result,

according to them, has been uneven and sometimes ineffective instructional

practices among teachers across the building.

Effect of the school's new dual language model on instruction. Teachers

in the study spoke in great detail about the influence of the school's newly adopted

Every-other day instructional model on their instruction due to the new

professional demands it placed on them. All four teachers recognized the

importance of collaboration, communication and partnership among the grade level

teams as key elements for the successful implementation of this instructional

approach. However, their individual positions on addressing the new demands

differed. Some teachers viewed "collaboration" as a crucial feature of this model,

while others viewed the same feature as a major logistical challenge. For instance,

Emily Miller, the third grade English teacher, admitted that this collaborative aspect

of the school's dual language program interests her the most where "you'd really have to work well with your partner." She emphasizes the importance of strong partnership in matching instructional structures, procedures and content that each teacher strives to deliver in a separate language, because

> ...if the structures exist in the two languages the kids are able to access things a little easier.

The rationale is that if partner teachers in the English and the Spanish classrooms present a vocabulary or a concept in different ways, it becomes difficult for students to develop their metalinguistic awareness—that is, the ability to perceive the connection between the two languages and transfer skills from one language to another. Hence, use of similar formats while presenting new information and using similar sentence frames and structures improves the quality of input making it easier for students to comprehend.

The concept of collaboration as a key instructional strategy for successful teaching in bilingual settings has already been established by prior research in the field (DeMonte, 2013). Franco-Fuenmayor's (2013) study indicates how differences in teachers' knowledge and perceptions about bilingual instructional practices can become a major impediment in delivering transformative pedagogies that are considered crucial in building ethnolinguistic identities of language minority students (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Gay, 2002; OLLson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Valdes, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002 cited by Garcia & Kleifgen). Teacher collaboration has been identified as a way to bridge that gap in understanding (Franco-Fuenmayor's, 2013).

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Speaking about the importance of collaboration in a dual language setting,

Sylvia Sanchez, the fifth grade Spanish classroom teacher indicates a gap in

understanding that often exists among English classroom teachers at SVDL:

> …sometimes the English classroom teachers… they only think they are teaching English to the Spanish kid. They don't see that we're also teaching Spanish to the English-only kids.

Due to the fact that English classroom teachers in dual language programs are not

always trained in second language instruction, Ms. Sanchez believes that partner

teachers need to share their knowledge, insight and strategies about the same. She

thinks that instruction based on shared or collaborative planning is especially

important in dual language settings where teachers in both English and Spanish

classrooms are serving second language learners—whether English language

learners or Spanish language learners—irrespective of their language of instruction.

> So, it's like, 'okay, you're English so for more reasons you have to do it.'… When you have the same requirements in both languages that makes sense for the students.

Sylvia's English partner teacher, Edwin Wilson, highlights another advantage

of collaborative instruction planning. He believes that the requirement for teachers

to collaborate under the every-other-day model, makes way for "really scientific

ways and conversations about how we're going to teach certain things." He believes

that in the absence of collaboration, where partner teachers do not teach the same

content or the same lesson as if they are almost parallel lessons, they can almost

undermine what's going to happen throughout the unit. For instance, he says, when

one teacher is teaching introduction to fractions in English, the partner teacher

would also teach introduction to fractions. Thus, if the students receive instruction on the introduction to fraction in English one day, they would have the next lesson in that progression in that unit, in Spanish the next day. For Mr. Wilson, this seems to be more effective because

> ...if students don't have proficiency in one language they're able to build that schema or build the understanding in the language they're most comfortable with. So that the next day they can transfer the knowledge.

He believes that the opportunity to plan collaboratively allows teachers in a dual language program to discuss any conceptual misunderstanding or learning gaps among students.

Santiago Romero of third grade also notes the importance of collaboration in effective dual language instruction. He observes "this dual language program can't be successful unless you collaborate." However, he quickly adds his views about the challenges associated with collaboration. "It's tough," he says:

> ...because you have to be on the same page every single day...you need to
>
> have solid communications with someone who's open to feedback.

As noted earlier in this chapter and also in Chapter 3, the every-other-day model of instruction was a big transition for the teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane as it involved intensive planning and extensive time commitment on their part. Successful instruction within this model called for collaborative planning among English and Spanish partner teachers to ensure that the content of their unit and lesson plans are aligned and complementary. Such collaborations would demand more time for updating and revising instructional strategies, as well as, equal access to high quality resources in both languages. And most importantly, they would need

adequate instructional support and clear understanding of the program's goals and expectations. In response to the deliberate questions I asked each teacher regarding their daily pedagogical experiences and challenges within the school's new instructional arrangement, they identified the following challenges:

Challenges in collaboration and partnership. All the four teachers agreed on the challenges involved in undertaking collaborative planning—the key aspect of the successful implementation of bilingual instruction, particularly that of the every-other-day model. Under this model, each grade level team plans the lesson together in order ensure that the unit and lesson plans in both English and Spanish classrooms are aligned and that all students understand the lessons. Such efforts in collaborative planning called for daily brain-storming and communication among English and Spanish partner teachers followed up by small-group instruction.

One of the many challenges the teachers noted was the lack of adequate opportunities to exchange ideas with their colleagues and learn from their experiences and understanding of the new approach. All four teachers talked about the school's structure and protocol that did not provide ample opportunities for teachers to come together as a group and form a learning community where they can share ideas on effective teaching practices and concerns. Learning gaps resulting in one classroom need to be identified, communicated, and addressed appropriately in the language partner's classroom through collaborative planning. If not, the persisting breach can affect a student's learning continuum creating an increasingly large achievement gap over time. The importance of planning around the linguistic differences in English and Spanish and the need to include bridging

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strategies to transfer learning from one language to another, highlights the value of collaboration. As described earlier in this chapter, "bridging" or transfer of knowledge and skills between languages is an important element of the every-other-day model of instruction. Teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane recognized the value of sharing information and ideas about "best instructional practices" to facilitate such cross-linguistic transfer —practices that have already proved effective for their partners or peers in other classrooms in the same building.

However, according to Edwin Wilson such an atmosphere of genuine collaboration has been identified as missing in this school. He believes that all teachers in the school should be made aware of the value and more importantly, the school program's requirement to collaborate—the administrators should clearly mandate the need to collaborate. However, in absence of a clearly stated set of instructional expectations, teacher often tend to overlook the importance of collaboration, which leads to challenges and constraints in realizing the instructional goals.

Some teachers pointed at difficulties in collaboration emerging from differences in teachers' personalities, their content-area expertise and language use for classroom instruction. Despite the school's clearly stated position on promoting biliteracy and bilingualism among all its students, third grade teacher Santiago Romero indicated that some teachers in the school continue to have different understandings and commitments towards the dual language instructional goals:

> … in this school, you can't really have other things affecting what you're doing. For example, you have to dedicate your time…If you want to be good

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at this and you want your kids to be successful in a dual language setting, like the one we have—it's a lot of preparation.

He believes that different teachers approach their work with different levels of commitment. For some teachers their family or other commitments prevent them from devoting the extra time needed for collaborative planning. That often results in creating more work for those people who want to see things through. "So the level of time commitment is very heavy on the teachers at this school."

Many of the professional-learning designs that show improvements in teaching and learning include some kind of regular collaboration among teachers in a school or across grade levels—sometimes with an instructional leader—to work on better strategies and practices for teaching. This is especially true in a dual language instructional set-up like that of Spring Valley Dove Lane, where ineffective instruction or incomplete learning, if left addressed, can have great detrimental effects on overall student achievement.

Clarity in program goals. Research in systemic reform policy for school improvement indicates the importance of clearly articulated program goals aligned with standards and facilitated by well-prepared school personnel as key to a program's success (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Marzano, 2003; Rosenholtz, 1991). Thus, developing program goals aligned with standards adopted for institutional improvement is not sufficient. School leadership has the responsibility to clearly articulate the goals and train educators and other school professionals on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the new program goals might demand. However, interviews with the four teachers and instructional coaches at Spring Valley Dove Lane consistently indicated a lack of such clarity in the communication

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between the administrators and the educators. Teachers perceived this as a major

weakness in the school's organizational planning to develop a clear roadmap for

setting long-term goals of improvement. They perceived the need to be aware of the

program expectations regarding teacher roles and responsibilities in order to strive

towards instructional excellence effectively. For instance, Santiago Romero of third

grade, laments that many teachers at his school lack a clear understanding of what is

expected of them in terms of their professional responsibilities—not in terms of the

curriculum, but in terms of the instructional approaches, mind-set, and strategies

that are essential for instructional success.

> …right now we don't know what's expected from us…You know, develop
> expectations and provide support so that teachers can meet those
> expectations.

On a similar note, Edwin Wilson of fifth grade observed how the school lacked a

clear communication system originating at the top administrative level. He then

went on to describe how collaboration should look like in order to be effective:

> …it needs to come from the top; and there needs to be a structure in place,
>
> and vision articulated for how it's going to be.

He further stated, "there's not a clear communication about what exactly we should

be teaching and so it's open to interpretation." In the absence of such clear

understanding of the goals and roles of the instructional staff, any program

development process would get disrupted, despite its good intentions. Hence he

recommends establishing a system where teachers are able to share information

and discuss the challenges they are facing professionally. This is because, he

believes, in the absence of clear expectations, it is often up to the grade level teams

to figure out their approaches and strategies in addressing an issue. Such directionless pursuits are prone to failure and tend to rob off the motivation to collaborate.

     Access to resources. For the teachers working in a dual language setting, collaboration is not the only challenge they face involving instruction and planning. Equal access to quality and relevant resources in both Spanish and English emerged as a major concern among all the teachers I interviewed. As Edwin Wilson noted,

> The biggest thing is just to have access to resources that are great. Especially like making sure that there're matching texts in both English and Spanish so that the students can support their understanding of both languages.

Despite teachers' efforts to get access to teaching and learning materials, there is lack of funding and additional support from the district in addressing these issues. Hence, in many cases teachers have to buy their own texts. As Sylvia Sanchez observes, "a lot of time it's our personal library… like, I go to Mexico and I spend like, $1000 to buy books." Then Santiago Romero adds,

> All of these are paper books that I have to print out and make copies of and put together because we don't have enough texts in Spanish. Almost all the lessons that we plan are done in English because not everyone is bilingual in the teams.

These observations provide a general indication that teachers not only lack instructional materials in Spanish, but also lack the required support to improve instruction in Spanish classrooms. Hence, Spanish teachers often end up writing a lesson in English and then translating it into Spanish. For instance, the newly adopted math curriculum Engage New York is in English. So, teachers need to translate and use it without any support in relation to instructional resources. These

gaps in alignment of teacher support with the curriculum and instructional changes as part of program development raise concerns about instructional program coherence. Newmann et al's (2001) claims about the importance of aligning student learning expectations with corresponding teacher support, allocating resources to advance a school's common instructional framework, and improving staff working conditions to support the change in framework, call for the need to address the existing programmatic gaps that were revealed during the study.

Identified Instructional Strategies, Needs, and Challenges

The discussion above indicates major obstacles that teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane face on a daily basis as they strive to balance the program goals, on one hand, and the district-mandated assessment policies, on the other. These challenges are often associated with the curriculum and instructional models that the school has adopted—the ways in which new learning goals have created new instructional expectations and changes in instructional patterns, while teachers continue to receive inadequate support with instructional resources and their learning systems. Some of these challenges may be rooted in the district and the nation's bilingual education environment, within which the school is nested. My interviews with the school professionals (teachers, administrators, and professional development consultant and instructional coaches) point at the importance of clearer communication, collaboration and partnership among teachers; between teachers and administrators; and also among teachers, administrators and professional development consultants, as a way to attain the school's overall improvement goals.

The examination also reveals how differences in teacher backgrounds result in differences in their instructional approaches and perceived challenges in the dual language environment, calling for the need to examine the relevance of the professional support teachers receive in this context. In the following chapters I will analyze interviewees' perceptions to understand how the district and the school address the unique challenges of the teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane through their respective professional development designs.

CHAPTER FIVE

District Provided Professional Support

In the previous chapters I have examined the circumstances in which teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary school function. Findings have shown how the school's program goals and the district's policies aimed at systemic reform through a new set of standards, assessments and an accountability system cumulatively shaped expectations about excellence in student learning and instruction. Reflection of the changes at the district level is evident on the school's evolving program goals, resulting in the adoption of new curricular and instructional models. Due to the central role of teachers as agents of implementing reform, it became imperative for the district and the school leadership to attend to their professional development needs. In this chapter, I examine the district's professional development framework for elementary school teachers in second language instructional environments. The goals is to understand how the professional learning needs of teachers in dual language instructional settings like that of Spring Valley Dove Lane, gets addressed at the district level. The examination is based on interviews with district and school personnel; documents shared by personnel at both levels; and public information available on the institutional websites.

The earlier sections of the chapter focus on the structure of the district's professional development and teacher support system. Then the district's professional development offices and divisions are analyzed, in respect to their relevance to Spring Valley Dove Lane's dual language program. The chapter ends

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with a discussion of the findings related to the perceived relevance of the district's

teacher support system and the school-district dynamic in facilitating teacher

learning.

Teacher Professional Support: Structure of the District and the Program

Services

Interviewees at the school and the district levels provided unique

perspectives about the nature of the district-facilitated support teachers receive. In

many instances the observations were framed in reference to the district's

professional development requirements across district schools; and in some cases

they highlighted the ways in which Spring Valley Dove Lane sought autonomy from

the district-mandated professional development program. The policies laid out in

publicly available documents, such as the *New Teacher Handbook* (2014-2015) and

the *Professional Development Guidebook* (2010-2011) reveal the district's general

approach to school education and job-embedded teacher preparation at elementary

and secondary levels in all programs. I first describe the various offices involved and

then their agents engaged in designing professional development programs.

District Offices: The Central Professional Development Office and the

Office of Language Learning. The 2010-2011 Professional Development

Guidebook identifies the district's Central Professional Development Office (also

referred to as the Central Office) and the Office of Language Learning (OLL) as

prominent actors in providing professional support to elementary level teachers in

the district's schools. According to the district's website, the mission of the Central

Office is "to deliver high quality instructional resources, innovate classroom practice

and scale effective programs to increase student achievement and prepare all students for success in college, career and life." It is the Central Office that designs and implements professional development programs and facilitates year-round workshops and training modules for schools across the district. The office has several focus areas around instruction and professional development in literacy and mathematics. The Office of Language Learning, on the other hand, is a division under the district's Specialized Instruction Program. It has the responsibility to provide specialized instructional resources to teachers of English language learners.

District professional development agents: The instructional coaches and District Teacher Evaluators. The district's 2014-2015 New Teacher Handbook identifies the importance of providing professional support to all school educators in order to facilitate high student achievement across all district schools. According to the Handbook, the District Teacher Evaluators or DTEs (from the district's Specialized Instruction Program) and the Instructional Coaches or ICs (from the district's Central PD Office) are the primary district agents who undertake the responsibility of providing professional support to teachers. The District Teacher Evaluators are identified as third-party evaluators of teachers who use a district-adopted, numerically based standardized instrument to rate the instructional quality based on classroom observations and student test scores. They are responsible for conducting approximately a hundred 30-minute observations during each observation cycle (two observation cycles per academic year). They also maintain detailed observational records by thoroughly documenting and rating evidence from each classroom observation. Based on the evidence, they write

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detailed reports to accompany each observation, which would include explanations of the teacher's ratings, evidence, and suggestions for growth. According to Olivia Nunez, the dual language planner at the Office of language Learning, these reports are meant to provide direction to district professional development initiatives.

The Teacher Evaluator's post-observation conferences with teachers are expected to allow opportunity to discuss specific areas of instructional improvement. Additionally, the evaluators also have the opportunity to provide one-on-one coaching to develop and build upon instructional skills, which includes instructional planning, content delivery, maximizing instructional time, and building a positive classroom community. They also have the scope to lead workshops for teacher learning with a focus on content and pedagogy, collaborate with school-based instructional coaches, and connect teachers with professional development resources.

Unlike the Teacher Evaluators, the Instructional Coaches work more closely with teachers on a daily basis in a supportive role. The district assigns the coaches in schools to support and enhance teacher practice through differentiated, job-embedded professional development (District website). As described in the 2014-2015 Handbook, most district schools have at least one assigned coach who is a member of the school's Leadership Team (LT). Due to their placements within a particular school, coaches function as an integral part of the teacher's development and the school's improvement process. They provide year-round, school-based, intensive instructional support through five Learning Cycles that are each six weeks long. Throughout the Learning Cycle, the coach works with eight-to-ten teachers.

There are two different types of Learning Cycles: Collaborative Learning Cycle (CLC) and Individual Learning Cycle (ILC). Collaborative Learning Cycles are six-week cycles of intensive classroom instructional support facilitated by instructional coaches in small-group settings. The CLCs focus on improving students' academic achievement through job embedded support. Each instructional coach supports teachers in better understanding student data[xv] and identifying appropriate instructional and planning strategies [Refer to the Data Cycles Meeting Outcomes Chart on page 95]. Related to the CLCs are Individual Learning Cycles or ILCs that occur between a coach and an individual teacher. These take place over a six-week period, but are tailored to the specific needs of the focal teacher. The instructional coach works directly with the teacher to create a coaching plan to meet the teacher's specific goals and aid him or her in implementing new instructional practices.

Besides conducting the learning cycles, the coaches also support the school's administration as a member of the school's Leadership Team. In addition to the school's Principal, Assistant Principal, Special Education Coordinator, Dean of Students, and the Lead Teacher, the literacy and math coaches are also a vital part of the Leadership Team at Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary. Together they address school issues related to developing institutional vision and annual program goals and objectives (School's Grant Document, 2014). As Alyson Garcia, the Assistant Principal points out, the Leadership Team exists as a result of the district's requirement and as one of the requirements of ANet (an interim assessment that the school has adopted to generate data for guiding the unit planning process and

student interventions for improving student achievement). The responsibilities of the coaches may be summarized using the words of Sonia Diaz, the literacy coach at Spring Valley Dove Lane. She perceives her duty to be "taking what the district has to say and then really finding it for our staff."

However, the responsibility of the literacy coach at this school seems to extend beyond the district's requirement. The school's program mission and goals are a strong determinant of the nature of the coaches' support that is needed, despite the fact that they are district appointees. For instance, Ms. Diaz's district assigned duties is to support teachers in creating a scope and sequence for developing language skills that need to be taught in grades K-5 as part of the district's Phonics and Morphology literacy program. However, given the school's program goals and the administration-assigned responsibilities, Ms. Diaz is often required to provide additional support. She notes that during the 2013-2014 school year she worked with the teachers to identify the priority standards that needed to be addressed based on students' performance in the previous year's district exams. According to her,

> ...that doesn't fit the box. I wasn't doing what I was supposed to be doing, but for the first time we ended up with a scope and sequence for literacy skills. We were the only ones who've ever done it in the district. But because of it I'm considered minimally effective ... and got dinged pretty bad.

Ms. Diaz claims that the school had hired her during the 2012-2013 school year because of her background in bilingual education. She was expected to "take lead in professional development under the umbrella of Phonics and Morphology, but for Spanish." In her view, the trainer from the district's Central Office did not

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have the dual language background necessary to provide the kind of support teachers in this school needed, "so they gave us some flexibility in being able to bring district PD elements from the turnkey training" and adapt it for the school's staff. Possibly because she helped bridge the language gap in the Central Office-designed professional development program by working very closely with administrators and teachers, most of the school personnel indentified her as part of the school's internal teacher support system, rather than a part of the district's professional development program.

The position of the math coach, Salma Abadi, has been different from that of Sonia Diaz. Abadi has been playing a central role as part of the school's leadership team in shaping the program mission and goals since the early days of the school's founding. The school administrators seemed to value her input in developing the program goals over the years and some of the teachers recognize her contribution in supporting them to meet math instructional goals. However, the four teachers that I interviewed viewed her inability to model instruction in both English and Spanish as a major drawback in the context of the school's bilingual program. Ms. Abadi's support, although valued, did not help bridge the language gap in the way Ms. Diaz's coaching did. Despite the drawback in the teachers' eyes, Abadi successfully met the district responsibility of providing support with school leadership and job-embedded PD for teachers in the content area of mathematics. She helped address the district goal of aligning school instruction and curriculum to district math standards through program development and teacher learning.

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Although teachers and administrators viewed the coaches as in-house support agents, the District Teacher Evaluators were perceived as district agents conducting teacher evaluation; and their feedback was perceived as part of the district's "formal" evaluation system, rather than a form of professional learning. As the Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia notes,

> ...they would rate you ... saying, 'are you using these second language acquisition techniques, are you prompting students to speak in complete sentences, talk together, are you providing support for emergent learners, kinds of things.'

The evaluators' role as an external, third-party, un-biased evaluator contributed to the perception about the lack of relevance in the feedback and support teachers received from them. Although the school administrators used the same district rubric to evaluate teachers' instructional effectiveness using classroom observations, they were perceived as part of the school's team. This is reflected in the math coach's observation that

> The teachers on the whole know (the Assistant principal) and she works so hard to create a positive experience... That, the District Teacher Evaluators don't. Because they are in the building for just half an hour to come and observe you and their whole existence has to do with evaluating you.

Such differences in the dynamic between the district's evaluators and the teachers, versus the administrator and the teachers in terms of evaluation and teacher feedback, possibly influenced school personnel's views about the relevance of the feedback generated from the two sources using the same rubric. While the district evaluators' use of the rubric is primarily seen as an instrument that determines "just what 'good' teaching looks like" (Santiago, 3rd grade Spanish teacher), the Assistant

Principal's use of teacher evaluation is seen as a way to "keep(s) running a list of the things that teachers (need), and then how do we find ways making sure that they are supported" (Sonia, literacy coach).

Although the school personnel perceived the district evaluators as passive contributors to teacher professional development, the latter's feedback is considered helpful in providing directions to the district's planning for a relevant and robust teacher professional support system for the district schools. This is well represented in the words of Olivia Nunez, the bilingual program provider interviewed at the Office of Language Learning:

> …they say, "well, overall this is what I'm seeing, this is working well, but boy, nobody seems to know about this!" And then we'll try to incorporate that into PD … And sometimes there's stuff we don't know about and it's like, "boy, we better read up about discourse or stuff like that".

Such contributions made by the district evaluators using a district tool to assess instructional effectiveness can provide district offices important information about instructional gaps and challenges existing in a school building or in a particular classroom.

This is also a viable way for the district to measure the validity and reliability of the district's teacher evaluation instrument. Although it is outside the scope of this study, it would be important to examine the validity of the teacher evaluation rubric, which is used both in ESL and dual language instructional settings. This raises concerns about whether the tool can be an effective measure and provide equally relevant feedback to teachers in both ESL and dual language classrooms, especially when it is conceived on an ESL framework. Findings from such a study

could have significant implications about the relevance of the feedback teachers

receive based on the elements specified on the rubric and the professional

consequences of findings yielded by such evaluations.

In Figure 2, I illustrate the elements of the district's and the school's internal

frameworks for teacher learning. The purpose is to show how school personnel

perceived the degree of relevance of each element in the context of the school's dual

language program.

DISTRICT SERVICES | **PROGRAM SERVICES**

OFFICE OF TEACHING & LEARNING (OTL)
- Conduct general district-wide workshops

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DIVISION (LAD)
- Offer bilingual courses and workshops targeting dual language schools connecting district policies and program needs

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN LITERACY (APL)
- Provide support during post-observation conference and structured instructional planning meetings

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES (IC-L/M)
- School-based personnel who provide in-house, job-embedded support to enhance instructional practice in literacy and mathematics connecting district policies and program needs

EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS (EPD)
- Independent consultants hired by the school/program who provide support with literacy and mathematics instruction

MASTER EDUCATORS (ME)
- Provide support during post-observation conference

Increasing degree of relevance in the school's PD

Figure 2: Framework of the PD services at the district and the program levels

As Birman, Desimone, Porter and Garet (2000) claim, the relevance of

professional development activities and experiences for teachers is often

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determined by the opportunities for active engagement in a coherent set of learning experiences that encourage continued professional communication among peers and incorporate experiences that are consistent with instructional goals and aligned with state standards and assessments. As I show in the illustration, teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the programs did not get distinguished based on the source of their development—the school and/or the district. Rather, it was mostly a factor of the coherence of a program involving teachers' daily instructional work, materials and pedagogical process in the context of their specific dual language instructional model. Thus, despite being part of the district's professional support system, the Office of Language Learning and the in-house instructional coaches were seen as more relevant and effective than the program offered by the district's Central Office and/or the school's own professional development consultants.

In the following section I discuss the perceived role and relevance of some of the actors and offices involved in the district's professional development programs, namely the district's Central Professional Development Office, the Office of Language Learning, and the instructional coaches. I choose to focus on some actors, more than the others based on (a) the emphasis participants place on them as professional development providers during the interviews on the whole; and, (b) their direct influence on the school's curriculum and instructional goals. Hence, the District Teacher Evaluator and the Assistant Principal as a PD provider will be largely left out of this discussion, although the Assistant Principal's involvement will be touched upon in places where they are relevant.

Perceptions: Provisions and Relevance of the District PD Program

Position of the Central Professional Development Office. While the

school administrators and instructional coaches form a crucial part of the program

planning and design team at the school level, the professional learning designers

(PLD) from the district's Central Professional Development Office play a similar role

at the district level. As mentioned above, the office has the responsibility to serve as

an instructional resource for teachers in relation to innovate classroom practice

with a goal of increasing student achievement. All district decisions and actions

regarding the professional support provided to teachers in schools are based on the

guidelines laid out on the *Effective Schools Framework*. The Central Office personnel

are expected to use the framework to develop evaluation and support tools to

ensure coherence and set clear expectations in planning programs for all district

schools.

As documented on the district's website, the math and literacy professional

learning designers at the Central Office are responsible for developing and

implementing the district's main teacher support system. The support is provided

through programs that aim at aligning the teaching-learning practices in schools

with the district curriculum standards and expectations. For example, the interview

with Andrea Knapp, the literacy professional learning designer revealed one of her

responsibilities to direct school principals to align "their specific needs with the

Common Core State Standards." Besides, she also provides support to schools on

issues related to "classroom management," setting up "routines and procedures" of

student interaction in the classroom, and identifying instructional planning

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strategies like "asking text-dependent questions." She also provides "blanket trainings" to schools with Phonics & Morphology literacy focus, six times a year. The "blanket training" focused on the vocabulary development aspect of literacy instruction in English based on the *Fundations*[xvi] word study program.

Most of the school personnel that I interviewed, who primarily included the school administrators and educators, seemed to view the contributions of the Central Office and that of the Office of Language Learning in different ways. They tend to associate their perceptions of "the district PD" mostly with the workshops facilitated by the former. Alyson Garcia, the Assistant Principal and Santiago Romero, the third grade Spanish classroom teacher at Spring Valley Dove Lane admitted to referring to the Central Office designed workshops when they spoke about "the district PD." For instance, in one of the interviews, Alyson Garcia clarifies, "I have to be careful when I'm talking about the district, I am referring to the District Central PD Office." Additionally, while speaking about the "the school PDs that the district rolled out," Santiago, the third grade Spanish teacher identifies the provider as, "the central office." Moreover, when Edwin, the fifth grade English teacher says, "the district has a lot of professional development opportunities," he refers to the Central Office's services that are targeted for teachers in all schools throughout the year. Here, it is important to understand that the district-facilitated professional support, as a whole, is not monolithic and the Central office is only one of the actors.

Another interesting pattern in interviewees' description of the district's PD is that they refer to it in relation to support provided in literacy instruction. This is especially evident in the descriptions of Alyson Garcia, the Assistant Principal and

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Sonia Diaz, the literacy coach. According to Ms. Garcia, "the district has had a focus, professional development-wise, on literacy, for sure. And we're asked to choose a focus within the literacy." Ms. Diaz added to the notion when she spoke about the district professional development goals during the 2013-2014 school year saying:

> This year they had schools select an area of literacy that they wanted to focus on. And then based upon what you chose, the professional development coincided with that.

That year the district revised its literacy professional development and provided schools three instructional options, namely the Phonics & Morphology (P&M), close reading, and guided reading and workstation approaches. As discussed in Chapter 4, these approaches were modified to align with the Common Core Standards. The new focus has shifted from general guided reading[xvii] instruction to a 120-minute literacy block instruction model. Different departments within the Central Office designed and implemented the professional development provided to schools according to their chosen literacy focus.

When schools in the district were provided the choice of adopting a literacy focus area, Spring Valley Dove Lane opted for Phonics and Morphology. As Ms. Garcia puts it, the primary goal of her school's dual language program has been to enrich its literacy instruction through "a school-wide word study" approach. The school's literacy focus on developing vocabulary in both English and Spanish is strikingly different from the district's singular emphasis on English. Ms. Garcia claims that the school opted for Phonics and Morphology with the intention to use its guidelines to develop its own word-study program in Spanish. Besides, perceiving that the generic professional development workshops facilitated by the

Central Office were designed around the Phonics and Morphology guidelines and

that they would not meet the bilingual instructional needs of the school's teachers

Spring Valley Dove Lane opted to design its own PD. As the Assistant Principal notes,

> They pull the schools in a group. There are nine schools, so all of them except
> for us, they pull them in a group to provide this professional development.
> And we just got the permission at the beginning, because our needs were
> really different, to do our own professional development on site.

Ms. Diaz, the literacy coach also shares Ms. Garcia's viewpoint about the lack of

relevance of the Central Office-designed workshops. She believes that due to the

district's English-only focus, teachers did not receive any support in Spanish

instruction at that time:

> ...every Spanish teacher's doing whatever they (sic) think they need to do,
> which puts a lot of strain on our teachers... The trainings were not adapted...
> the professional development trainer or specialist that they have in the
> district is not someone who is well versed in dual language. And the schools...
> we were the only dual language school in that cohort that selected Phonics
> and Morphology. So the PDs did not necessarily align with what we need in
> our building.

The (literacy) learning goals and preference for professional support services

in each school is often influenced by the student demography, their linguistic skills

and background, and eventually their need for language learning support. Among

the district schools that adopted the Phonics and Morphology literacy approach,

only Spring Valley Dove Lane followed a dual language instructional model. Hence,

the generic approach of the Central Office to "maximize its impact" of its trainings

for all Phonics and Morphology programs made Spring Valley Dove Lane "the

outlier" (Diaz). The consequence was the school's adoption of a new program goal

on literacy: developing "our own vocabulary, phonics-morphology PD and creating an aligned language for the teachers" (Diaz).

The idea that Spring Valley Dove Lane was an outlier in the district's second language instructional context with respect to other schools adopting Phonics and Morphology is reflected in other interviews as well. The Assistant principal explained the rationale behind the school's "intentional" selection of this literacy:

> ...we knew, whatever the District was going to be providing was not going to be meeting our needs, because it was not going to be targeted to Spanish.

Hence, she viewed the school's decision to design its own system of teacher support as a "push-back" against the district's "one-size" instructional support:

> ...like everybody needs to do this, because we really have a sense of what the needs of our school are. So, we kind of push-back the things when we see that we have a different need than what (the district provides).

Garcia thinks, this "push-back" is a way of showing that her school has already attained many of the district-set goals for preparing teachers on vocabulary development through their internal unit-planning process. Hence, the administration could successfully rationalize the demand for "autonomy" from the district-recommended and facilitated professional development programs. Instead, they proposed to design a program plan based on the school's unique teaching-learning needs and challenges. The result, according to Garcia, was the piloting of a Spanish word study program, Dictado that was conceptually aligned to Fundations—the district-recommended literacy concept focusing on developing English proficiency—but created opportunities for providing support in Spanish literacy instruction as well. As Garcia puts it:

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We want to look at (the district's) professional development program and take the pieces that are relevant and implement them, which requires us to have extra time on the professional development days.

In many ways, the interview with the four teachers revealed similar concerns about the relevance of the Central Office-designed professional support, in respect to their unique instructional needs. That they did not perceive the district's training opportunities as relevant and hence were reluctant about availing them are recurring themes across these interviews. For instance, Edwin, the fifth grade English classroom teacher noted, "The district has a lot of professional development opportunities. I haven't taken advantage of enough of them." His partner teacher in the Spanish classroom, Sylvia, described the district workshops to be "only in English… we felt like we were losing our time because we would need to have another meeting where we'd talk about how to do these things in Spanish." Additionally, Santiago, the third grade Spanish teacher claimed that the district professional development programs "does not apply, I mean, it's awful." He went on to state, "the district has no idea" when it comes to individualized teacher support based on school and program needs, hence "it's just a waste of time."

Not only did Santiago point at the lack of relevance of the Central Office-directed programs, he also noted the lack of preparation of the district's professional learning designers in addressing the program-specific needs of teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane:

> …(the district PD) doesn't take into consideration the language needs of the population that we serve… they are made by adults who have no connection to what exactly is going on in the schools…

The school personnel's argument that the program planners at the district's Central Office often lacked understanding and knowledge about dual language instruction indicated a disconnect between the district's support system and the school's unique challenges. They argued that professional learning designers who lack clear understanding of the challenges associated with the various models of dual language instruction (such as the *Roller-coaster* or an *Alternating day* model) would find it difficult to conceive and design relevant opportunities for teacher learning. They emphasized the importance of the specialized expertise teachers in a dual language program need to acquire in order to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.

Such perceptions about the general inadequacy of the district's professional support system for teachers resulted in the school's "push-back." Subsequently, when the student achievement rates started showing improvement in 2012-2013 district assessments, the administration at Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary claimed its ability to address the needs of its learners—both English and Spanish. The school was finally granted "autonomy" by the district to develop and implement its own teacher professional learning system with an additional focus on meeting the needs of Spanish language learners. Andrea Knapp, one of the professional learning designers at the Central office, noted "they didn't want support from (the district). They wanted to do it alone. And we respect that".

The position of the instructional coaches. As a district appointee functioning as an integral part of a school's support system, the instructional coaches they serve as a conduit for channeling the district's curricular and

instructional goals towards the school. This is especially true in the case of a school like Spring Valley Dove Lane that has developed its autonomous curricular, instructional and teacher learning frameworks. Sonia Diaz, the literacy coach identifies it as one of her responsibility to "get the (district's) turnkey training and then come back and try to adapt it, at best of my ability, to then bring it to the staff." Accordingly, she is required to attend teacher trainings conducted by the Central Office to develop an understanding of the district's curriculum and instructional standards in order to transfer that understanding and knowledge to teachers during sessions known as the learning cycles. Ms. Diaz explains how the information related to district standards and expectations are channeled during Collaborative Learning Cycles:

> ...at the Collaborative Learning Cycle we did unpacking of the standards. I'm sitting down and looking at student work and the standards and making decisions as to what we felt were the priority standards for the year.

During these cycles, both the literacy and math coaches help teachers look at the student data gathered from assessments and use that information to plan units according to the district adopted Common Core standards.

The math coach, Salma Abadi, also cites instances when teachers reach out to her with specific difficulties around "how to scaffold," "how to respond to brief constructive responses and the questioning folded into it." These are Individual learning cycles or ILCs. In these cases, Ms. Abadi observes, she would work with the teachers individually with a focus on the Common Core standards and the district's instruction guide—the Teaching & Learning Framework[xviii]. These individual guidance sessions provide opportunities for targeted instructional support based on

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teacher- and/or classroom-specific needs, which is part of the "district-mandated work that needs to happen" among teachers and coaches (Sonia Diaz).

Challenges of coaching: Ms. Diaz believes that the nature of providing individual support often becomes a matter of contention for coaches based on the demands of the school. For instance, teachers might seek specific instructional support with preparing lesson plans during the week, these were additional demands that did not "fit the model of coaching that the district has in mind" (Diaz). Hence, they are often excluded from the report the coaches send to the district.

As Sonia Diaz points out, the school administration hired her "to lead the professional development under the umbrella of Phonics and Morphology, but for Spanish." This was because the school did not have an established structure for common word-study practices across the two languages (Spanish and English). In that role, Diaz has been assigned the responsibility to develop "the Spanish word-study" (Garcia) curriculum for the school to supplement the district's English-focused Fundations literacy program during the 2013-2014 school year. Accordingly, Dictado was adopted based on the research Diaz had conducted on the alternate Spanish literacy framework:

> ... (Sonia) met with the teachers and they said yes, we'd like to try this as a delivery model and so they piloted it with a group of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th grade Spanish teachers. (Garcia)

As a result of the adoption of the new framework, Diaz claims, teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane received support in Spanish literacy instruction for the first time with a focus on

> ...what is it that Spanish teachers feel they need in order to implement phonics & morphology or vocabulary (instruction) goals in the classroom.

She perceives the opportunity as one of the first initiatives that the school has adopted to address the challenges involved in dual language instruction. Teachers received support from the literacy coach in "looking at non-transferable skills or skills that are specific to English or Spanish." Diaz describes the general nature of her support as "coach-led" but "definitely teacher-driven" in essence.

The responsibility to establish a Spanish academic vocabulary that is vertically aligned and consistent across all grades and subject areas fell not only on the literacy coach, but on the math coach as well. Hence both coaches provided support in math and literacy on alternate days. As Diaz notes: "one day with math, and then the next PD day we did it with literacy terminology" in order to the capture the math and literacy concepts in both English and Spanish. She also points at existing dichotomy in the coaches' role both as part of the district's professional support program and as part of the school's leadership team:

> In this school, coaches are considered to be part of the admin team, which is a double-edged sword... sometimes it makes coaching hard, because teachers need to feel like you are not part of the leadership. (Sonia Diaz)

It indicates an underlying distrust among teachers, who often perceived the coaches as representing the school administration's interest and not theirs. Despite such challenges associated with her role as an instructional coach, Diaz she claims to overcome them by "advocating for teachers" and consistently recognizing their need for support. Both coaches used the district's Teaching and Learning Framework as

well as the Common Core Standards to guide teachers instruction with an understanding of —

> …who are our new teachers in the building, what is their capacity, what are they going to need to report on and then what are these cycles going to look like throughout the year (Diaz).

Despite such extensive support provided by the coaches, teacher observations revealed mixed views about the usefulness of the coaching they receive in math and literacy. The concerns of the Spanish teachers include issues around insufficient coaching in Spanish classroom instruction, unequal coaching provided to strong versus struggling teachers, and lack of support with understanding and addressing the demands of the Every-other-day instruction model, among several others. Santiago, the third grade Spanish teacher (who was also the lead teacher on the school leadership during 2013-2014), pointed at the difficulty some Spanish teachers face regarding the support they receive from the math coach, who doesn't speak Spanish. These teachers, he claims, often struggle with translating math concepts from English to Spanish. These are significant planning drawbacks resulting in the failure to address the program's goal of vertically aligning academic language in both Spanish and English across subject areas. Although, his overall concern has been that "coaches do not get into the classes enough…and when they do, it's with a struggling teacher…what about the rest of us?" He suggests that the coaches need to develop a calendar for visiting all classrooms to bring in more uniformity in support and to set the priorities right. However, Santiago did recognize the relevance of the literacy coaching that the Spanish classroom teachers received.

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Despite the fact that Santiago has been the lead teacher on the leadership team, it is ironical that challenges faced by Spanish teachers due to inadequate support and modeling in Spanish from the math coach were not been reflected in the school's 2013-2014 annual professional development plan. This raises serious questions about the lack of teacher agency—their power and action—to impact student learning through decision-making power about curriculum development and their own professional learning.

Sylvia Sanchez of fifth grade also recognizes similar challenges related to inadequate coaching for more experienced teachers in the school. She notes,

> When we started doing the Dictado…(Diaz) came, she observed, but she never shared with us. Then they choose one teacher to do the modeling and they never invite (sic) us to see it.

The lack of opportunities to observe peer instruction and receive peer-feedback, or receive immediate feedback from coaches, indicates a major gap in the opportunities for peer support as an instructional resource. Such an educational environment obstructs the process of building professional learning communities, which is a key component of effective professional support (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). Ms. Sanchez also indicates that the issue of unequal teacher support through coaching seems to be a common concern among teachers who were identified as "stronger" by the administration, and are eager to find support to further improve their capacities.

It is important to note that perceptions about the relevance of the coaching support varied widely from one teacher to another, irrespective of the language they used or the grade levels they taught. The only common concern has been related to

the math coach's inability to model math instruction in Spanish. Ms. Sanchez's English classroom partner teacher Edwin Wilson perceived the coach-lead collaborative learning cycles weekly as a helpful process. For him, these cycles provided an opportunity to collectively look at student data, or the standards for developing an upcoming unit, or pick books and read through them to discuss some of the key concepts. He further added that during these meetings teachers were able to communicate their concerns and needs to the leadership team so that they could be addressed through the annual professional development plan.

The position of the district's Office of Language Learning. The above discussions indicate mixed perceptions about the effectiveness and relevance of the support teachers received from the instructional coaches, and mostly negative perceptions about the relevance of the programs developed by the district's Central Office. However, the school personnel viewed the Office of Language Learning mostly as a relevant and effective source of instructional support—a bridge between the district's generic professional development provisions and the school's language-based needs for professional support. Personnel at the Central Office also recognized the key role the Office of Language Learning plays in addressing the challenges related to second language instruction in district schools. Andrea Knapp, one of the professional learning designers at the Central Office explains, "any time we create training we pass it to the Office of Language Learning…they provide really good practical notes" regarding the learning needs of English language learners. She recognized the advisory role of the Office of Language Learning in recommending "techniques that are going to be totally not effective for ESL or bilingual education

or completely overlap, or how do you switch." For Andrea, the Office of Language Learning is a crucial support for individualizing the Central Office-designed workshops in terms of the language-specific instructional needs of different district schools.

All the school personnel including the Assistant Principal, instructional coaches and the teachers, recognize the value of the courses and workshops offered by the Office of Language Learning in attaining the school's dual language goals. This is in stark contrast to their perceptions of the programs developed by the district Central Office and indicates the perceived degree of relevance of the services provided by the two offices.

Olivia Nunez, bilingual program provider at the Office of Language Learning, believes that the programs facilitated by her office have a significant impact on teachers in bilingual schools. She explains how one of their language acquisition programs called the Bilingual Educators Language Acquisition cohort (or BELA) contributed towards improving teachers' skills as language developers. BELA is specifically designed for teachers in the district's dual language schools and is offered as language development courses at a local university. Nunez believes that the language development element of these courses can potentially open doors for the teachers to become dually certified in ESL instruction as well as in elementary or secondary education. Since dual certification is not required by the district or by the bilingual programs within the district, such qualifications and associated knowledge on second language is often found to be missing among teachers of second language

learners. Such lack of knowledge in second language pedagogy tend to impede

effective instruction and learning especially in dual language environments.

Nunez also notes her office's role in providing targeted dual language

training in the form of "one-shot workshops." External experts are brought in during

these workshops to share their research and expertise around dual language

instruction. The length of these sessions may vary—from a day to a week—and are

generally held at one of the district schools. These workshops are distinctly different

from those offered by the Central Office in that the latter are designed with an

English perspective because they are designed for the whole district, claims Nunez.

To address the language-related shortcoming of the Central Office-designed

workshops, Office of Language Learning has promoted collaboration among the

district's professional learning designers from various offices so that the unique

needs of schools with second language learners are effectively addressed.

Accordingly, she says

> I present to the dual language schools so that even through the district's PD I
> can bring that dual language perspective and answer questions that are
> related to that. (Nunez)

This way of addressing issues related to second language instruction, according to

Nunez, is built on "the feedback that we hear from teachers." She refers to teachers'

complaints about district's general professional development programs as "not

looking at bilingual learners" and she recalls a teacher saying "I teach in Spanish but

I was taught to read in English; so I don't know how to teach reading in Spanish."

Olivia Nunez claims to have used that kind of information to provide targeted

support through workshops where dual language experts from various resource centers addressed dual language specific instructional issues.

Due to Office of Language Learning's unique approach in supporting the instructional needs and challenges of the district's bilingual schools, Spring Valley Dove Lane sought out its guidance in shaping and rebuilding the school's bilingual program around a whole-school dual language model. As Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia explains—

> When we first created the plan, we worked with (Nunez)… She met with us and went through the plan with (the literacy coach)… we reviewed the plan and talked about the goals of the plan.

Through courses and workshops on the "basics of dual language" instruction, the Office of Language Learning has also helped the school to establish its "foundations of bilingual education" and a teacher learning culture focused on bilingualism and biliteracy.

The four teachers I interviewed recognize the value of the instructional support facilitated by the Office of Language Learning and believe they need more such learning opportunities. However, as Santiago, the third grade Spanish teacher laments,

> They're such a small unit that it's hard for them to make sure that every teacher of every building of the dual language schools get the attention they need. But they're great; they're awesome. They know what they're talking about.

On a similar note, the Assistant Principal observes, "they're kind of after-the-fact involved… they are not part of the creation of (the district's) plans."

These observations indicate that the kind of professional support the school seeks more extensively from the district would be in line with the support the Office of Language Learning provides. Such programs would help translate the district's overarching goals of improving student achievement across all schools; and make the district's professional support system more relevant for dual language bilingual schools.

Discussion

The district professional development programs as resource and impediment: The school-district dynamic. The preceding discussion on the professional development framework reveals two major findings—first, the professional support services designed for teachers at the district level consist of several layers and divided into various divisions and offices; and more importantly, teachers' perceptions of the relevance and significance of these services vary based on the bilingual content of the services.

Figure 2 illustrates the perceived degree of relevance of the district's professional development programs according to the school personnel I interviewed. They generally perceived a gap between the school's bilingual program goals and the Central Office-facilitated professional support. However, the Spanish teachers at the third and fifth grades, and the Assistant Principal perceived value in the support received from the Office of Language Learning in shaping the school's dual language program.

The school personnel generally perceived the district Teacher Evaluators as external observers who lacked understanding of the school's instructional

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environment, expectations, and goals. Hence, the instructional feedback and support provided by these evaluators based on district-adopted guidelines on "best practices" in ESL instruction were not viewed as opportunities for professional learning.

Finally, the perceptions of the teachers and administrators varied widely about the relevance of the instructional coaches' support. The administrators (the Assistant Principal and Principal) recognized the importance of the coaches in developing and implementing the school's internal professional support system as an integral part of the school's leadership team. The third and fifth grade Spanish teachers, on the other hand, expressed concerns mainly on two major issues: (a) the degree of the coaches' involvement (literacy coach's singular focus on struggling teachers) in modeling and providing useful feedback to all teachers, both veterans and struggling; and (b) relevance of the coaches' input based on their linguistic capabilities (monolingual math coach who couldn't provide support with Spanish lessons). Contrarily, the fifth grade English teacher recognized value in the coach-facilitated learning cycles as opportunities for teachers to communicate their instructional challenges, concerns and needs. He also noted that the coaches needed to provide greater support in designing interventions for struggling students in the school.

In a nutshell, as Figure 2 illustrates, the teachers and administrators viewed the support provided by the Office of Language Learning as most relevant in respect to the school's needs. Its emphasis on the need for a specialized preparation for teachers in dual language programs like Spring Valley Dove Lane helped to build a

degree of trust among the Spanish teachers I interviewed. It also influenced their perceptions of what they considered as valuable instructional resources—ones that they could benefit from—to understand the "best practices" in dual language instruction. Thus, despite the traditional nature of the workshops, their emphasis on bilingual instruction and the relevance of the content made them relevant to the teachers' learning needs. As earlier researchers claim, "if teachers are expected to teach to new standards, including complex thinking skills, it is essential that they have a sophisticated understanding of the content and of how students learn the content…" (Birman et al., 2000, p.30).

Moreover, as Ms. Nunez of the Office of Language Learning observed, the courses and the workshops were designed based on the feedback of teachers and administrators in the dual language programs about their needs for instructional effectiveness. They were also aligned to the district-adopted standards and expectations about the quality of student learning and instructional effectiveness. Hence, these programs were seen as coherent with the overall program mission, needs, and goals. As Cohen and Ball (1999) observed, coherence is a matter of teachers making sense of the instructional relationships in ways that impact their educational practice. Understanding the basic principles of second language acquisition and strategies of bilingual instruction lie at the core of instructional effectiveness in dual language schools, which is facilitated through the programs of the Office of Language Learning. The knowledge, experience and skills gathered from these programs are not only integrated with the school's developmental goals and its program for teacher learning; they also support the district standards and

assessments. This helps to bring in coherence in teacher learning opportunities that can potentially bridge the gap between the district's education reform policies and the school's developmental goals.

Although the teacher perception of the support provided by the instructional coaches varied, the literacy coach was viewed as more relevant, as Fig. 2 illustrates. Her background in bilingual education and knowledge of dual language instruction was perceived as a strength that teachers seemed to benefit from. Due to the lack of a similar background and set of skills in the math coach and the professional learning designers at the district's Central Office, they were seen as distant from the teachers' need.

CHAPTER SIX

School's Professional Development Program: In Pursuit of a Solution

Research shows that teacher preparation and staff development have a strong correlation with student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Teacher learning opportunities are effective when they occur in light of the school's educational mission and complement the environment of the program in which teachers practice (Leighton, 1995). However, studies in job-embedded staff development practices in bilingual educational settings indicate a major gap in such opportunities (Garcia & Kliefgen, 2010; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll, 2005). In this chapter, I examine the nature of instructional support system at Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary School that has been designed in response to its dual language bilingual program goals, on one hand, and to the district's education reform policies, on the other.

Using the evidence gathered from my interviews with the school administrators, the four classroom teachers, the literacy consultant and the instructional coaches I analyze the school's autonomous instructional support program. I discuss the design of the program in reference to the school's evolving goals; the perceived impact of the professional development consultants; and the , perceived instructional needs and challenges identified by the school personnel.

The previous chapters have established the bases on which the school 's program goals have been developed—the beliefs of the administrators and the changes in the district reform policies through the adoption of high standards and aligned assessments. Accordingly, the focus of the new goals have been to improve

student achievement across grade levels, languages, and content areas; to align instructional approaches to student learning needs and goals specified by the district standards; and to enhance teachers' understanding of the priority skills and knowledge across grade levels. Such broad program goals indicate the school's attempt to balance the demands of a dual language program with that of the district's standards. In order to attain the balance, the school has to design a coherent instructional program, which according to Newmann et al (2001) has (a) a common instructional framework that guides the curriculum, teaching, assessment, and learning environment and that matches expectations for student learning with relevant instructional strategies and assessment instruments; (b) staff working conditions that support attainment of the goals and the framework; and (c) an adequate and coherent allocation of resources to establish a stable curriculum, student assessments and teacher professional assignments.

As a dual language school, Spring Valley Dove Lane has the goal of facilitating student learning and instruction, and allocating resources to promote knowledge and skills simultaneously in two languages—English and Spanish. As prior research (Howard et al, 2007) suggests, providing and preparing for effective instruction in a dual language program is especially challenging because of its added goals of promoting bilingualism, biliteracy and multicultural competence, while balancing the learning needs of students from two language groups. Accordingly, teachers and administrators at Spring Valley Dove Lane have consistently emphasized the need for specialized instruction and teacher support, and therefore the demand for an autonomous teacher support system. Figure 3 illustrates the challenges school

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personnel identified as existing within the school's dual language instructional

framework and the perceived gaps in the district's general professional

development programs.

Table 3:

Perceived PD gaps and instructional challenges

School Personnel	Perceived Gap in District PD	Perceived DL Instructional Challenges
SVDL Asst. Principal (Alyson Garcia)	Not targeted to Spanish	Teacher Collaboration due to DL instruction model + Developing specific skill-set for successful implementation of school-adopted literacy & math curricula + Ability to use second language acquisition-based teaching strategies
3rd Grade Spanish Teacher (Santiago Romero)	Does not consider language needs of the SVDL student population	Lack of teacher collaboration + Lack of equal resources + Unclear goals and expectations
3rd Grade English Teacher (Emily Miller)	Does not address school's specific needs—The English-only training has no Spanish equivalent + Same provision and support for bilingual and monolingual programs	Lack of equal distribution of resources in English and Spanish + Lack of teacher collaboration + Lack of adequate time to collaborate+ Due to every-other-day model, there is a break in the instructional rhythm, momentum and consistency—teachers see a cohort 2-3 times a week

Table 3 (cont'd)

School Personnel	Perceived Gap in District PD	Perceived DL Instructional Challenges
5th Grade Spanish Teacher (Sylvia Sanchez)	Only in English—teachers lose time on separate PD in Spanish	Even if the books are same book, the way something reads in English or Spanish is different and the goals are different + Meta-linguistic awareness needed as translations do not work + Piloted Spanish word study does not apply to upper grades & English word study does not address language learning in Spanish.
5th Grade English Teacher (Edwin Wilson)	Not relevant	Need for true collaboration in planning and implementation of content area + Lack of relevant feedback

The perceived weaknesses in the district's professional development program to address the language-based demands of a dual language program indicated its failure in the eyes of the school personnel. Chapter 5 highlights how such weaknesses resulted in the school's pushback against the district's program and its demand for an autonomous instructional framework. In this chapter I look into the school's approach to developing its internal teacher support system, which is identified as a "parallel journey" (Garcia) undertaken alongside the district to accomplish the school's identified program goals.

While the district did not obstruct the school's attempt at developing an autonomous instructional support framework, it did not provide any additional technical or financial support either. As Ms. Garcia notes:

I knew as I was making that decision that it was putting us down a road of creating something on our own outside what the District was going to be able to support.

The school's professional development program was conceived based on what Garcia identifies as a "needs assessment" that included teacher inputs gathered during learning cycle meetings and administrators' classroom observations. As the 2014 school grant document reveals, information on students' learning needs derived from annual district exams had been major determinants of the school's general program plan. After considering the student performance data in reading and math, collecting feedback from teachers, and examining the recent trends in best instructional practices, the administration solicited advice of the district's Office of Language Learning to redesign its curriculum, instructional approach and internal teacher support system. Selecting literacy and math consultants to provide instructional support with the school's curriculum was the first step in designing an autonomous professional support system.

School's Autonomous Professional Development: The Key Actors and the Design

The key actors in the school's internal professional support system. The literacy and mathematics consultants together play a pivotal role in the school's autonomous instructional support system. However, the data gathered during the course of this study is heavier on the side of the literacy consultant. During interviews, teachers and administrators emphasized the advisory role played by the literacy consultant, but the same did not apply for the consultant in math. In general,

the perceptions regarding the value of the support provided by each consultant varied greatly.

The administrative team selected both the consultants based on the program needs to provide training and technical assistance to all the teachers in regards to classroom instruction. Besides, the consultants play an advisory role for the leadership team and often provide assistance in developing the annual program goals. Over the years, the literacy consultant has provided support in implementing the Reader's and Writer's Workshop (the school's adopted literacy curriculum), while and the math consultant has supported the implementation of the Singapore Math curriculum.

Besides the consultants, the instructional coaches are also a crucial part of the school's internal professional support system. The coaches provide continued support to teachers as part of their district-assigned responsibility. The goal is to improve students' academic achievement by providing teachers with job-embedded support. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, their role is essentially split between the two spheres of the district and the school, as they delicately balance their functions and divide their services to serve both ends. Their work hours are supposed to be divided to fulfill district responsibilities for 80% of the time and the program responsibilities for 20% of the time as discussed in the earlier chapter.

Two tables below represent the roles played by the school-appointed consultants in comparison to the district-assigned instructional coaches. While in Table 4 I illustrate their *envisioned* roles, in Table 5 I highlight the roles that

teachers and administrators have associated with them based on the support they

were perceived to provide.

Table 4:

The Envisioned Roles

In-house PD Personnel	PD Program Designer & Employer	Employer assigned responsibility	Others incidental responsibilities
Literacy Consultant (LC)	SVDL Administration	Address school's annual program goals & teachers' needs [It is assumed that promoting biliteracy and bilingualism is an integral element of the school goals]	May incidentally address district goals in the process.
Math Consultant (MC)	SVDL Administration	Address school's annual program goals & teachers' needs [It is assumed that promoting biliteracy and bilingualism is an integral element of the school goals]	May incidentally address district goals in the process.

Table 4 (cont'd)

In-house PD Personnel	PD Program Designer & Employer	Employer assigned responsibility	Others incidental responsibilities
Literacy Instructional Coach	District's CPDO	1. Support & enhance teacher practice through Job-embedded PD 2. Serve as part of school's leadership team	May incidentally address school's mission of promoting biliteracy and lilingualism in the process. [Literacy coach identifies a limit to providing such support as district will hold her accountable for it—often refrains from reporting]
Math Instructional Coach	District's CPDO	1. Support & enhance teacher practice through job-embedded PD 2. Serve as part of school's leadership team	May incidentally address school's mission of promoting biliteracy and lilingualism in the process.

Table 5:

The Enacted Roles

In-house PD Personnel	PD Designer & Employer	Responsibilities fulfilled	Responsibilities unaddressed
Literacy Consultant (LC)	SVDL Administration	PD targets school's goals to fulfill district requirements in literacy instruction	Does not address school's bilingual mission and teachers' language-based challenges
Math Consultant (MC)	SVDL Administration	PD targets school's goals to fulfill district requirements in math instruction	Does not address School's bilingual mission and teachers' language-based challenges
Literacy Instructional Coach	District's CPDO	1. Provides job-embedded support 2. Provides support with dual language instruction in literacy	School's goals to meet district requirements is incidental
Math Instructional Coach	District's CPDO	1. Provides job-embedded support 2. PD targets school's goals to fulfill district requirements in math instruction	Does not address school's bilingual mission and teachers' language-based challenges

Later in this chapter, I unpack the contrast between the envisioned and enacted roles of the consultants and the coaches to illustrate how various institutional factors influence the remarkable split.

Ms. Garcia, the Assistant Principal and Santiago Romero, the third grade Spanish classroom teacher, describe the school's instructional support framework

as "needs-based." In the following sections I examine how the so-called "needs-based" system is perceived as addressing those needs. This would be crucial in understanding the alignment between the program goals and the instructional support framework, considering the identified gaps in the district's support system.

Specialized Support from Specialized Professionals

At the district level, professional development for teachers primarily involved workshops and after-school meetings designed and conducted by professional learning designers to help schools implement the district recommended standards and curriculum. In the 2013-14 school year, the district piloted the PARCC tests aligned with the newly adopted Common Core State Standards. This required schools to align their program goals according to the standards to ensure that students attained the benchmarked grade level expectations. This also required improved teacher learning systems to ensure teachers understood the grade level proficiency requirements in math and literacy. Accordingly, in 2013-2014, Spring Valley Dove Lane shifted the focus of its instructional support plan towards helping teachers analyze student assessment data and quality of students' work to understand their language and content proficiency levels. The objective was to improve teachers' abilities to design and facilitate instruction that would bridge the learning gaps and match their content- and language-based proficiencies. Consultants were also asked to provide support "based on what our school-wide goals are" (Garcia).

The teachers and the coaches confirmed the key role of the school administrators in designing the school's curriculum and instructional support

framework. However, the Assistant Principal emphasized the pivotal roles of the literacy consultant and the dual language planner at the Office of Language Learning (Olivia Nunez) in the program development process.

Literacy consultant as an advisor: Administrators' perceptions. The administrators recognized their reliance on the expertise of Freda Vasquez, the literacy consultant, in program development since Spring Valley Dove Lane was consolidated in 2008-2009. The Assistant Principal describes Vasquez as "...an outside set of eyes," providing objective feedback to the administrators looking at the program's structure and evolving needs "and then push us forward." Freda Vasquez has a background in teaching ELL populations and working as a staff developer on Reading and Writing Projects at a renowned teacher education institution. As a staff developer she consulted in bilingual schools across the country, among which Spring Valley Dove Lane was one. Currently, she leads a bilingual program that has adopted the Every-other-day instructional approach and has a high ELL population.

During the interview Ms. Garcia, the Assistant Principal explained the nature of Vasquez's involvement in shaping the school's instructional approaches:

> ...about how a few years ago (2011-2012) when we had the new teacher PD, (Salma) and I sat down with (Freda) and asked 'what do we do?' She helped us design a new teacher PD that was specific to meet the needs of the teachers … it's very hard to be a new teacher at our school because there's a lot of learning that needs to happen.

In 2011-2012, the "new teacher PD" involved daily support provided by the math and instructional coaches. At that time Ms. Abadi was the math coach and Ms. Garcia was the coach in literacy. Based on Vasquez's experiences and understanding of

implementing the Every-other-day instructional model at her own dual language program, she advised the administration to replace its earlier Roller-coaster model with the Every-other-day approach. Despite her initial reluctance to introduce such a drastic change in the instructional approach, Ms. Garcia admitted that Vasquez's recommendations for the model to improve student performances influenced the ultimate decision-making process. Vasquez had suggested that "students benefit more from consistent content and language instruction in both languages" (Garcia), which is possible through the Every-other-day approach. When interviewed, Vasquez confirmed her belief that the every-other-day model is "well-suited for the heterogeneous population of (Spring Valley Dove Lane)."

According to the new model, English and Spanish classroom teachers would teach lessons in the progression of the same topic every other day. Due to the need for partner teachers to teach the same content simultaneously in two languages, the approach would call for greater teacher collaboration in lesson planning and implementation. This approach not only brought about changes in instructional patterns, it also implied the need for adequate teacher support so that teachers in English and Spanish classrooms could better understand and implement the best practices associated with the new model.

The Shifting Program Goals and the Evolving Professional Development

During the 2011-2012 academic year, the school was undergoing large-scale programmatic changes due to the adoption of the Every-other-day instructional approach, as well as, high teacher turnover. Consequently, a large number of teachers, including both existing and newly appointed teachers, had to be trained on

the new methodologies of collaborative planning and executing instruction in two languages. The "new teacher PD," discussed above, was introduced based on Freda Vasquez's advice, who suggested the coaches provide group coaching to the teachers, instead of individual coaching. The trainings, Abadi notes, were "like a lab" where the coaches "would go through the different types of fluency in math and (literacy), and then we would go into the classroom and try it out with kids." Supporting Abadi's observation, Ms. Garcia remarked that working in groups gave teachers an opportunity to try various instructional strategies together and learn through peer observation and feedback.

Despite Garcia and Abadi's emphasis on opportunities to provide content-based instructional strategies during the group coaching sessions, neither of them clarified how the sessions helped to address the dual language aspect of the every-other-day model. The very reason for introducing the new approach was to "ensure fluency" not only in content, but also in the two languages through simultaneous planning and implementation of the Spanish and English teachers. However, that aspect of instruction was not revealed through the observations.

The evolving nature of the school's instructional support framework was evident in Abadi's description of the changing program needs and goals. She observed how the focus of support framework changed in 2012-2013 due to a more stable teacher cohort based on the assumption that the teachers continuing from the previous year did not need the continuing support on the foundational concepts of dual language instruction. Rather the emphasis changed to letting "them know what we do—what structures we use." Thus, the focus of that year had been on

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developing instructional skills that are key to the successful implementation of the

Reader's & Writer's Workshop and the Singapore Math Curriculum. The focus of the

support framework shifted once again in 2013-2014 due to the district's adoption of

the Common Core Standards and the piloting of the associated PARCC assessments.

With the changes in the district policies the school had to focus on aligning its

program goals with the new standards, and the support framework focused on

supporting teachers prepare students to acquire the grade-level priority skills

needed to meet the new standards.

Ms. Garcia admitted that:

> …we've shifted away from the dual language kind of support to a deep
> understanding of the content that they are supposed to teach and making
> sure that our rigor is at the right level, which it wasn't in all cases.

Despite the school's focus on content area instruction in 2013-2014, Garcia

recognized that the program needed to balance both the district requirements and

the school's mission of promoting biliteracy and bilingualism among students. She

admitted the importance of providing rigorous instruction, but with equal emphasis

in both English and Spanish. Hence looking forward to the 2014-2015 school year,

she projected the new goal to be:

> …giving our teachers more strategies for working with second language
> learners…making sure that we're integrating and differentiating and making
> the language objective.

The proposed professional development would, for the first time, address the

language learning and vocabulary development demands in both languages to make

the program inclusive of the learning needs of both English and Spanish language

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learners. In the following section I analyze how the professional support system described as "needs-based" address the identified program needs.

Literacy consultant as a professional developer: The consultant's own perceptions. While the administration greatly emphasized Freda Vasquez's advisory role, the interview with Vasquez revealed how she perceived her own contribution to the school's program development. She viewed her role more as the professional development provider, than an advisor to the school's leadership team. She described her trainings as "workshops on the Reader's and Writer's Workshop" that are delivered twice or thrice a year. The workshop sessions usually start towards the beginning of the school year, with one or two follow-up sessions around the middle and/or towards the end of the year. She emphasized the administration's role in determining the content and focus of her trainings. She noted that the trainings were

...based on what the Principal tells me the school needs are...And the

Principal makes that decision based on what the in-house coach says.

If the observations of the fifth grade English classroom teacher, Edwin Wilson, are considered in this regard, they would indicate that Vasquez's sessions provided targeted support on specific aspects of literacy instruction. The support, he claims, is based on "what each grade level wants." Mr. Wilson believes that teacher input derived from the learning cycles goes to inform Ms. Vaquez's training sessions, thereby catering to teachers' specific instructional needs.

The 2014 grant document identifies several factors that helped shape Ms. Vasquez's trainings, besides teacher feedback and coach recommendations

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communicated by the administration. These factors include the district standards

(CCSS and the PARCC assessments) and the interim and annual student achievement

data derived from tests (TRC[xix], EDL[xx], DIBELS, ANet[xxi]) students take throughout

the school year. The document indicates that the recent focus of the workshops has

been to promote teachers' understanding of the standards-based expectations; to

improve their ability to diagnose what the students' literacy needs are from their

ongoing test results; and to match the appropriate teaching strategies accordingly.

Therefore Vasquez confirms,

> A lot of the professional development has been around looking at student work and figuring out what the students need—the categories of students' needs and identifying the teaching modalities to match that.

She cites the example of using the individual reading assessments in evaluating

students' reading levels to explain the importance of a teacher's awareness of the

"what" and "how" of teaching students at their individual stages of language

proficiency.

Enacting a vision: From the researcher's observation of literacy

workshops. During my visit to one of the literacy workshops, I noticed Freda

Vasquez modeling lessons for 2nd through 5th grade teachers from English and

Spanish classrooms, as well as for the school interventionists. The focus was mainly

on using PARCC practice items for individual grade levels and across grade levels, to

help teachers develop strategies and sequences of teaching points (looking for

evidence to answer questions, annotating directions, reasoning, using connecting

words, etc.) that would result in students' acquisition of the grade level skills. Ms.

Vasquez used sample passages to help teachers identify the priority skills for

students at one grade level and then the next, to clarify their understanding of the vertical alignment of standards across grades. Teachers from the fourth and fifth grade levels were paired together to help them understand the skills that needed to transfer from one grade level to the next. The skills included the ability to annotate directions and questions in order to provide answers using relevant evidence; the ability to understand the purpose of reading a passage; and the ability to connect reasoning and evidence to provide a solution.

The following day, Ms. Vasquez would be training Kindergarten teachers and instructional aides on preparing and teaching guided reading lessons, and on the use of informational texts for reading. The purpose of this training was to help teachers identify the knowledge and skill-sets that students will need in order to perform at a grade level, later on. Part of her visit also consisted of coaching the school's leadership team on the existing instructional needs and challenges that teachers are facing and necessary approaches to address them. Ms. Vasquez also conducts follow-up visits, which she believes, are necessary "to support the teachers in whatever areas they feel they still need support with."

The contribution of the mathematics consultant. Since the 2008-2009 academic year the school has adopted Singapore Math's instructional model and has brought in math consultants to train teachers on effective implementation of the curriculum. As noted in previous chapters, Singapore Math combines the emphasis on fluency in basic math facts with a deep conceptual understanding by moving from the concrete manipulative stage through the pictorial representation stage to the abstract conceptual level. This progression in learning requires the skill of

forming concepts by moving through the three stages of concrete, pictorial and the abstract. It requires teachers, particularly in the school's dual language setting, to build students' language fluency while also enhancing their problem-solving skills.

The math consultant at Spring Valley Dove Lane was not available for interview. However, it was gathered from interviews with the teachers, administrators and coaches that the consultant visits the school 2-3 times a year to support teachers on math instruction. Previously, he had provided support exclusively with implementing the Singapore Math curriculum. But since the school's adoption of the Engage New York program following the new district standards, his sessions have combined the Singapore Math and Engage New York frameworks. All the four teachers I interviewed viewed him as an "expert" in teaching the content of Singapore Math curriculum. The curriculum website describes the consultant as an experienced and award-winning teacher, recognized for his success in improving student achievement in Title I[xxii] schools through the use of "innovative instructional strategies." He is described as a specialist in Singapore Math programs who has worked on implementing the program with over 30 schools across the United States (Curriculum website).

Ms. Garcia described the consultant's training approach as primarily in the form of lesson studies. During these sessions he works with the teachers to plan a lesson together, following which the teachers' get an opportunity to apply the plan through direct classroom instruction. Garcia also added that following the adoption of the new district standards, the consultant has supported teachers with understanding the vertical alignment of the math content standards across grades:

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> So, he'll do a session for the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades where they'll look at one of the standards at 1st grade through 5th grade to see how it articulates all the way up.

Edwin Wilson, the fifth grade English teacher describes the consultant's lesson studies as opportunities to "create lesson plans and deliver them under peer and administrator observation." During a debrief following the planning and observation, the consultant introduces teachers to the vertical alignment of standards across grades.

The "Needs-Based" Instructional Support Framework Vis-A-Vis Teachers' Instructional Needs

The earlier sections of this chapter reveal how the professional development planners at the school level—primarily the administrators and the instructional coaches—provided teacher support aligned to their view of the evolving program needs and goals. Ms. Garcia claimed that the school's professional development is "a need-based system (where) we look at the staff each year and assess what the needs of the current staff are." She described how the "PD was specific to meet the needs of helping the teachers learn all of the needs of our curricular models that are teacher-driven." Finally, she admitted, "we ask (consultants) to do something based on what our school-wide goals are." These "school-wide goals," as the Assistant Principal, Ms. Garcia claimed, are based on "needs-assessments" that are conducted every year taking into consideration teachers' inputs derived during learning cycles and instruction evaluation data derived from classroom observations.

While on one hand, Ms. Garcia claimed the influence of teachers' input and staff needs on shaping the annual program plans (including curricular, instructional,

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and PD models); on the other hand, she emphasized the strong influence of district standards and expectations on the change of the program goals. The presence of various factors that affect the nature and quality of the support structure for the teachers makes it is imperative to ask how teachers perceive the relevance of the framework—the ways in which the framework has addressed their needs and challenges, the agents who contribute to effective teacher learning, and the extent to which teacher input has influenced the development of the school's so-called "needs-based system".

Perceptions of teachers on needs-based professional support. I used probing questions to elicit teachers' perceptions about the learning opportunities they had as part of Spring Valley Dove Lane's instructional and professional support framework. Teachers were asked to explain the relevance and effectiveness of the support they received and their suggestions for improving the system. In general, all the four teachers interviewed—Edwin Wilson and Sylvia Sanchez at the fifth grade level and Emily Miller and Santiago Romero, at the third grade level—had a positive viewpoint about the impact of the training they received from the math and literacy consultants. However, when they went through the details of each consultant's approach, their perceptions of the relevance of the training seem to vary due to different factors—their past experiences, their use of a specific language for instructional purpose, and their stance about the challenges associated with the Every-other-day approach to dual language instruction. These are discussed in greater detail below.

Perceptions of the third grade Spanish teacher, Santiago Romero.

Teachers supported the school's decision to opt out of the district's centrally designed professional development program and in order to offer its own. Spring Valley Dove Lane had brought in consultants to provide instructional support to teachers in math and literacy since 2009-2010. However, the district approved the school's autonomy to develop its own instructional and professional support program, in 2013-2014. According to Santiago Romero, the third grade teacher, the new program

> …took into consideration the needs of our school… For the first time they were successful and meaningful for the teachers.

Here, Mr. Romero does not refer to the benefits derived from the literacy and math consultants; rather he recounts the support teachers receive from the literacy coach as a result of the administration's deliberate efforts to provide support to teachers, especially those who are in Spanish classrooms. He found that the literacy coach's efforts help support teachers to understand students' developmental stages of (language) learning, to improve their instruction on vocabulary development, and to provide guidance on developing students' metalinguistic awareness. Existing research in bilingual education shows the central importance of metalinguistic awareness in dual language instruction to help students reflect on and manipulate the structural features of a language (Jacobson, 1963 cited by Roberts, 2011; Bowey, 1988; Garton & Pratt, 1989). For Mr. Romero, the metalinguistic awareness is

> …making (students) aware of the language connections, like what transfers and what doesn't.

He explained that for the first time Spanish teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane received such targeted instructional support from the literacy coach during the learning cycles. In his view, this opportunity has been a crucial element of the school's new instructional support program.

However, when specifically asked about other elements of the program, Mr. Romero also recognized the role of the math and literacy consultants in supporting teachers with content area instruction. He viewed both consultants as "experts" in the respective curricula on which they trained teachers, namely the Reader's and Writer's Workshop and the Singapore Math curriculum: "They know what they are talking about." He thinks that the sessions with the math consultant were "really intense" and that the consultant helped teachers make effective instructional decisions by asking "real questions." He perceives these questions as a way to engage teachers in reflective practice and wishes that the administrators as well as the providers of instructional support within the program would also adopt that approach. In his view, the math consultant's support has been an effective measure in enhancing students' performance in math.

The "enacted" roles of the literacy coach and the math consultant, as illustrated on Tables 4 and 5, are emphasized in Mr. Romero's perceptions. They reveal the literacy coach's "enacted" role in addressing the dual language instructional demands that goes beyond the limits of district-assigned responsibilities. They also reveal the math consultant's "enacted" role that helps support the acquisition of content knowledge, without an emphasis on the language acquisition aspect of instruction that has to occur in a dual language setting.

Mr. Romero recognized the administration as the "the creator of the (school) professional development" and maintained that administrators lacked clarity on the school's expectations for the best instructional practices in a dual language setting. This, according to him, created barriers for teachers in successfully realizing those expectations and implementing the best practices in a classroom setting despite the support from the professional developers. He believes that in order to make the teacher learning process a more successful endeavor, administrators need to identify and clearly communicate the gaps identified during classroom observations. Without such clarity, he believes, teachers would not be able to develop students' metalinguistic skill or hold high learning expectations for all learners: "something that any bilingual school should be doing."

Perceptions of the third grade English Teacher, Emily Miller. When asked about her perceptions of the consultants as part of the school's instructional support framework, Ms. Miller observes that the consultants were brought in to "support our specific needs as a dual language school." She noted that they were expected to be familiar with similar settings so that they could offer "solutions to our challenges." She clearly identified the reason why the school brought in the literacy consultant:

...(Freda Vasquez) is bilingual herself and she was in a bilingual setting as a

Principal, and she gets ESL students... I think she brings in a lot of expertise.

However, this teacher laments that despite Ms Vasquez's understanding of and familiarity with students' needs in bilingual settings, her literacy training sessions are generally "English heavy." She indicated that many new teachers who did not

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have a prior background in bilingual instruction needed support in addressing the challenges associated with dual language instruction and had difficulties with Vasquez's "workshop-style literacy" sessions. These teachers, she noted, faced difficulties internalizing the strategies that the consultant shared during her workshop, and struggled to incorporate them in their instruction.

Teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane are not required to have prior experiences in dual language settings. Hence many lack the necessary understanding and ability to teach using adequate second language instructional strategies in a bilingual setting. Since this gap is not addressed by the literacy consultant, teachers lacking such backgrounds often find it challenging to transition from "a monolingual to a dual language program" (Emily Miller).

Regarding the math consultant, Ms. Miller notes that he lacks a dual language background but "he's really good with Singapore Math, which is why he was brought in." She believes that the math consultant's training sessions were expected to help teachers with grasping the math concepts as aligned to the district standards. However, in her view, the attempt to combine the earlier Singapore Math curriculum with the new Engage New York curriculum has minimized the relevance of the training sessions. To her, Engage New York is "not ELL-friendly … It is overtly wordy and we have to modify a lot of it" to make the content accessible to students at different proficiency levels. When asked, how the consultant could assist teachers with the scaffolding strategies and the modifications, Ms. Miller makes an interesting observation. She notes:

> ...he's here two or three times a year for a few hours so it's only so much. The idea is that the instructional coach will help with that, but I have just learned to do it on my feet.

This observation aligns with what Santiago Romero had previously mentioned about the envisioned and the enacted roles of the literacy coach—she bridges the gap in the dual language aspect of content instruction. These observations emphasize the ways the school is trying to address the need to support dual language instruction using district-assigned agents, rather than the school-appointed consultants. They also expose the irony of Ms. Miller's observation about the rationale for bringing in consultants: to "support our specific needs as a dual language school" because of their familiarity to these settings and expecting "they could speak to solutions to our challenges." The transfer of the roles and responsibilities between the consultants and the literacy instructional coach illustrated in Tables 4 and 5 is once again confirmed, indicating the differences between the envisioned and enacted roles of the school and the district agents.

Perceptions of the fifth grade Spanish Teacher, Sylvia Sanchez. Ms. Sanchez views the school's opportunity to develop its own PD as "useful." She believes that the earlier school instructional support framework "was not aligned to what we needed," but it has now been improved. She perceives the change in the efforts to help all teachers understand the model of bilingual instruction—its value in student learning by setting high expectations for all language learners and believing in the abilities of both English and Spanish language learners.

However, speaking of the consultants, like Ms. Miller, Ms. Sanchez too regrets the English-heavy nature of their support and the lack of attention to Spanish

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instruction. She believes that the Spanish teachers at her school seek instructional support as they ask: "tell me how you did it in English, so that we can do it in Spanish." What they receive, instead, is an unsatisfactory response from the consultant who admits: "(the administrators) never told me you're gonna do it in Spanish." The absence of such unequal instructional support in Spanish and English, partner teachers failed to improve the collaborative efforts among teachers needed to successfully implement the Every-other-day instruction model. Ms. Sanchez claimed that due to the lack of balanced support from the literacy consultant in both the languages, she and her English partner teacher were unable to apply the strategies they learned from the literacy workshops. She admits:

> ...we decided not to do it...we didn't have enough time to prepare... my partner did not feel comfortable enough to do it.

Ms. Sanchez feels that their inability to use the support from the literacy consultant "is a shame" because of the time and resources that the school uses to develop these programs expecting teachers to benefit from them in improving their instruction.

This is context, it is important to note that Ms. Sanchez's partner teacher Edwin Wilson did not have a traditional teaching license. He had been trained through the district's fast track summer training program, which did not include preparation in second language acquisition strategies. His only exposure to bilingualism has been through his earlier experiences while working in Latin American countries and with Hispanic communities in the United States. Sanchez felt that the collaborative relationship that she shared with her partner, helped improve the alignment of the Spanish and English lessons they taught. However,

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there were still some gaps in addressing the needs of second language learners in the English classroom that she thought, could have been bridged through better guidance from the literacy consultant, which, unfortunately that did not occur.

Regarding the math consultant Sylvia Sanchez noted that his training lessons were usually modeled in English classrooms "because the (trainer) who did the PD speaks only English." Hence, she thought, the consultant was unable to address the language learning objectives underlying a math content lesson; instead he provided guidance in developing teachers' understanding of the mathematical concepts, while omitting the ESL or the second language strategies. Despite the absence of an emphasis on language development in these trainings, Sanchez found the math consultant "more open to let us speak in Spanish." To her the math training sessions were helpful since the consultant modeled lessons in real classroom settings, unlike the workshop setting of the literacy consultant. This approach provided teachers with opportunities to observe and ask questions about instructional strategies that they are learning and trying to implement. Teachers could also receive direct feedback during these sessions, which both Spanish and English teachers were able to use in developing mathematical concepts.

Unlike Santiago Romero of third grade, Sanchez's observations about the internal professional support was mostly made in relation to the consultants, rather than the instructional coaches. She referred to the instructional coaches only when asked and not as part of the school's instructional support program. Moreover, she did not link the support systems of the school and the district. Instead, she focused

on the ways in which the math and the literacy consultants influenced her and her

partner's instruction and also shared her hopes for the future prospects—

> I hope the trainers that come here, really understand and share and give us
> resources in both languages. I think next year we're going to do the TWIOP
> [xxiii] and that is going to open a lot of eyes.

However, like Santiago Romero and Emily Miller, Sanchez's comments

confirm that the school-appointed agents for instructional support do not address

teachers' dual language instructional needs. Instead, their support is more content-

oriented. She hopes that in future teacher learning would involve more elaborate

trainings on bilingual instruction strategies. For her, the Two-way Instructional

Observation Protocol or TWIOP holds the promise to mend that gap.

Perceptions of the fifth grade English Teacher, Edwin Wilson. In Mr.

Wilson's view the school's professional support system is "fantastic." The consultant

sessions are "all based on what we want to see." He explains how the leadership

team, consisting of the Assistant Principal and the instructional coaches, gathers

teacher input every week, during collaborative learning cycles: "so that they know

what our concerns are." This way, he believes, the administration is able to design

the school's professional support program and seek relevant services from the

consultants to address weaknesses in the areas that teachers have identified.

Edwin Wilson finds the math consultant's approach to explaining the vertical

alignment of mathematical concepts across grade levels as "really helpful." He

describes the 3-4 day math training sessions as consisting of activities centering on

lesson plan design and delivery under peer and administrator observation. These

activities are often followed by a debriefing session when the consultant

demonstrates how a mathematical concept may be developed using the Singapore Math program keeping in view the concept's progression across grade levels.

Mr. Wilson claims that Freda Vasquez's literacy workshops are mostly based on teachers' feedback, where she would address specific elements of the Reader's and Writer's Workshop on which teachers have been seeking support. She would go through the processes step-by-step so that teachers are able to understand how the reading and writing skills of students may be improved to address the district standards using this literacy curriculum.

Unlike the other three teachers, Wilson did not bring up the issues related to the importance of developing metalinguistic awareness among all language learners or the English-heavy focus of the consultants' workshops. However, his observations did confirm the fact that the emphasis of the consultant-designed trainings was mostly on the content, rather than the language element of instruction. This reinforced what the other teachers have also recognized—a critical gap in teacher learning about effective dual language instruction.

Mr. Wilson emphasized the need for improved intervention techniques to address individual learning needs of students, like spending more time supporting how teachers could address individual learning needs of students. In his view, gaps in both content-related and language-related learning could be bridged through targeted interventions. His observations about effective instruction and teacher learning needs sheds light on how some English classroom teachers are able to relate to the content aspect of instruction, more than the language aspect. These have implications for school administrators and designers of professional learning

to ensure that English classroom teachers are engaged on the language acquisition aspects of instruction as well, especially if they are part of a dual language program where every student is a second language learner.

This examination of teachers' perceptions revealed the influence of their respective backgrounds, earlier experiences, and use of language for instruction on their perceived instructional needs and challenges. Edwin Wilson is a native English speaker who received his education mostly in English and hence has a sound grasp of the academic usage of English. As an English classroom teacher he finds Vasquez's English-only workshops as both relevant and effective. On the other hand, despite being a native speaker of English, Emily Wilson's views about teachers' needs and challenges are different. Her background in Spanish language learning and international development is reflected in her recognition of the lack of support and the need to emphasize the language-related aspect of bilingual instruction in the school's instructional support framework.

Of the two Spanish classroom teachers, Santiago Romero was born and brought up in the United States. Despite being a native speaker of Spanish, his school experiences are rooted in a transitional bilingual education program in a Hispanic-dominant school community. In that program he received instruction purely in English after transitioning out of Spanish starting at the fourth grade level. His command over the use of English as an academic language is stronger than other native Spanish-speaking teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane, like Sylvia Sanchez, who emigrated from a Spanish speaking country and did not grow up learning English. Thus, despite being native speakers of Spanish, Mr. Romero and Ms.

Sanchez perceived the effectiveness and relevance of the literacy consultant's workshops in different ways and based on different criteria. Although the teachers identified different instructional challenges, they all agreed on one aspect—that the school's leadership team, especially the Assistant Principal, played a central role in conceptualizing the design of the school's instructional support system with some assistance from the instructional coaches and the consultants. However, none of the observations indicated active teacher involvement in the process of developing the program plan and instructional support framework.

Continuing the Quest for Better Professional Support—Bridging the Gap

The mixed perceptions of teachers about the effectiveness and/or relevance of the school's professional support, indicate different ways in which teachers made meaning of their experience based on their perceived instructional needs and challenges. They also raise important questions about how past experiences of teachers with or without dual language backgrounds tend to approach the act of instruction in the school's unique educational environment—the different challenges they encounter, the strategies they tend to adopt or avoid, the support they ask for, and the changes they wish to see in the future.

The findings from the conversations with the planners (administrators), the providers (consultants), and the recipients (teachers) of the school's instructional support program indicate differences in perceptions and approaches to developing a relevant program that would be aligned with the school goals and help attain the district requirements. The findings seem to reveal how teachers perceive the relevance of each kind of instructional support based on their focus on the content

vis-à-vis language aspect. They identify the expertise of each provider in relation to the skills they view as necessary to successfully implement the school's adopted curriculum, using the program's adopted instructional approach, to meet the district standards and the program mission. The school's approach to program development focuses on "reform implementation" (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Coleman, 1988; Frank et al, 2004; Penuel, Riel, Krause, & Frank, 2009), where "reform" involves instructional change required to attain the new district standards through successful implementation of the school's new curriculum and instructional models.

My findings in this chapter confirm the fact that despite the administrators' claims about the involvement of teachers as active participants in the process of developing the instructional support framework, teachers did not share the same views about their agency in the process. Such divergences indicate a missing link between teachers' identified needs and challenges and the outcomes of the school support system often described by the administrators as "needs-based." Thus the envisioned design for instructional support illustrated in *Table 4* gets enacted in a different way, as represented in *Table 5*, where the roles of the school-designated agents and the district-appointed agents get reversed. This gives rise to critical questions about why a dual language program like Spring Valley Dove Lane does not use its consultants to address its language-based demands. Is it because the funds used towards employing the consultants are provided by the district? If so, are the schools mandated to use the funds only to attain the district specified goals, which does not necessarily include supporting Spanish instruction in bilingual schools?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Where the quest leads me…

"Developing a vision for teaching and learning evolves as leaders discover what students need to know, do, feel, and think and as they learn what the school can become… the goals for improving a school or district should create an urgency to bring the vision to reality"- Mooney & Mausbach, 2008, p. 36.

Research indicates the effectiveness of intensive, targeted, engaging, and demonstrative professional learning environments that are grounded in the teachers' instructional contexts (Center for Public Education, 2013). Reform efforts initiated in many schools and districts have been focusing on teacher learning as the pathway leading to improved student achievement. There is a growing consensus in the field that schools that are successful in promoting student learning often function as professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Little, 1997). As part of these learning communities teachers should get the opportunities to understand the elements of the systemic change as a first step towards transforming their practice (Finley, 2000). However, teachers participating in many district-designed professional development programs continue to be subjected to fragmented and often irrelevant forms of teacher learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Despite extensive research and continuous efforts to improve teacher learning, teachers continue to struggle with the implementation of new knowledge and skills (Ermeling, 2010) in complex instructional situations. For teachers in bilingual settings, the main struggles are commonly around communication, insufficient planning time, varying academic levels of students and inadequate

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instructional resources and support. Research indicates that poorly planned and executed professional development programs offered by uninformed presenters (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll, 2005) who are ignorant of the teaching-learning needs and challenges in bilingual settings (Tellez & Waxman, 2006) are the root cause of these challenges.

My research on the teacher learning experiences and opportunities in a dual language bilingual program echo many of the above-mentioned claims made by existing research. It also indicates how differences in individual backgrounds and prior professional and personal experiences influences a professional's perceptions of the value, challenges and approaches involved in dual language bilingual education. The study raises questions about how the surrounding contextual complexities—institutional goals, policy structures, and actor perceptions and relationships within an institutional structure—affect the learning experiences of teachers in a dual language environment. Additionally, the findings from the study indicate the importance of alignment between program goals and program elements (such as the standards, curriculum, student and teacher assessments, and instructional support framework) in forming the basis of a coherent system that enhances the possibilities of student achievement.

The sequence in which I have presented data gathered from my research is intentionally arranged to unravel the institutional dynamics that shape the process of designing an instructional support framework that facilitates effective teacher learning, implementation of the framework, and the resulting learning experiences in the dual language context. Despite wide variations in the forms and structure of

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existing dual language bilingual programs in the United States, the study confirmed the universality of certain issues around biliteracy and biculturalism in the monolingual national education environment, which continues to be a common battle for all of them.

Research shows a close relationship between a teacher's perceptions about his/ her students' abilities and students' success in schools (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001; Marzano 2007; Reeves, 2010). These perceptions and beliefs are often shaped by teachers' own background knowledge and prior life experiences (Brofenbrenner, 1998). During the course of my study, a close connection was found between participants' past experiences and their perceptions of the dual language program mission, instructional and learning goals, instructional challenges, and need for support. Throughout the study individual perceptions have been used as the primary lens for examining various aspects of teacher learning experiences and program design, in reference to the greater educational context in which these occue. Opfer and Pedder (2011) have used the complexity theory framework to conceptualize teacher professional development as a learning system resulting from a combination of the teacher, the institutional context and the learning activity. I have developed upon this framework to show the context in which teachers' professional learning occurs at Spring Valley Dove Lane, what such learning aims to address, and how it becomes a function of envisioned goals and institutional reality. Finally, I have used Newmann et al.'s (2001) framework for instructional program coherence to conceptualize the importance of the alignment of program elements in effective student learning and success of school improvement reforms.

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Review of Key Findings and Implications

Influence of prior experiences and backgrounds on perceptions and program development: Its implications for the school and the district. In my examination of the school's program goals, I have traced their origins back to the experiences of the school administrators and their mission of equal access to bilingual education as a key to ensuring equity and success in education for all students. At the early stages of adopting the dual language program, convictions about the sociological advantages of bilingual education dominated the founder's beliefs. The vision was to develop every student as a language learner and to prepare them as global thinkers and citizens.

While the mission of biliteracy was the result of the administrators' envisioned conditions for success and equity in learning, it seemed to hold a different value for the four teachers that I interviewed. Some perceived bilingual education as a gateway to inculcate cultural tolerance and respect for diversity, while others perceived it as an opportunity to promote collaboration in an education setting. In each case, the individual's prior experiences as a learner, a trainee, or a professional were strongly reflected in their perceptions of why they valued dual language education and their commitment to attain the program goals.

An institutional mission not only provides the purpose for an educational pursuit (Wiggins and McTighe, 2007), it also influences decisions about program planning and design. Different approaches and understanding of a mission might result in the ways different individuals and institutions pursue the selection of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development designs in order

to create the envisioned educational environment (ibid). In my study, interviews conducted with school personnel revealed the important role played by the school leadership team in program planning and development. It also highlighted the influence of individual perceptions and practices on the implementation of the school's bilingual mission and the attainment of district's education policies.

Changes in the school curriculum resulted from a shift in the administrators' approach to pursuing the bilingual mission while balancing the district standards and expectations for student achievement. The school's earlier emphasis on differentiated instruction, an essential component of bilingual instruction, was shifted towards increased instructional rigor, which is an essential aspect of the district adopted Common Core State Standards. Consequently, the focus of the school's instructional support framework also shifted from acquiring second language instructional strategies towards developing content-based knowledge and grade level skills.

Moreover, the time allocated for language use in instruction also evolved with the newly adopted Every-other-day model. This was the result of the literacy consultant's perceptions of how the linguistic needs of a heterogeneous student population may be effectively addressed according to her own experience. The consultant served as an advisor to the school leadership team; hence her perceptions and understanding of successful bilingual instructional had a significant impact on the school's program development. However, in respect to teacher learning, the consultant's contribution has been stronger towards establishing an alignment of the instructional practices to district standards to meet district

expectations, rather than to align instruction to the bilingual mission of the school. Hence, during the duration of the study it was revealed that teachers lacking prior experiences and expertise in bilingual instruction faced instructional challenges that were left unaddressed by the instructional support programs both at the school and the district levels.

The school district within which Spring Valley Dove Lane Elementary is located does not have any certification requirements for teachers who are teaching in bilingual programs. Although a certification in English as a second language instruction is encouraged, it is not required of teachers entering these programs. Besides, the district has a fast track certification program for candidates who do not have a traditional certification in teacher education. The fast track program claims to transform professionals into effective teachers through an eight-week pre-service program centered on field experience and focusing on core instructional skills developed through class-room-based coursework. This is followed by a period of practice teaching with peers as well as with students in summer school classrooms. The focus of this program is to equip candidates on aspects of classroom management, content instruction, high academic expectations for students.

Implications for the district planners. Two among the four teachers I interviewed had been trained by the district's fast track program—Santiago Romero, the third grade Spanish classroom teacher and Edwin Wilson, the fifth grade English classroom teacher. According to both Mr. Romero and Mr. Wilson the program was superficial and focused mainly on the content of math and reading instruction. They both wished that the pre-service program provided better

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instruction on theories of learner development and learning in order to equip them to work effectively with students with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and needs.

In addition to the inadequacy of the district's pre-service programs, all the four teachers expressed various concerns about the generic nature of the district's instructional support program designed by the Central Professional Development Office. These observations cumulatively indicate a major gap in the district's approach to providing instructional support to teachers in bilingual contexts, both at the pre- and in-service levels.

Implications for planners at the school level. Several concerns also emerged regarding the school's approach to providing instructional support for its teachers to bridge gaps in their instructional practices. As noted previously, teachers came with various linguistic and educational backgrounds, and with different levels of expertise in bilingual instruction. Besides, the evolving curriculum and instructional approaches that were adopted to align with the new district policies demanded new skill sets among teachers. These involved development of communicative and collaborative abilities to facilitate effective instructional planning of the content, simultaneously in two languages. However, these skills have been largely absent from the school's professional development programs that mainly consisted of workshops facilitated by consultants in mathematics and literacy. While the content aspect of the district's expectations is addressed through these workshops, the language, communication, and collaboration aspects of successful bilingual instruction are often left out. According to the four teachers, these gaps in teacher learning is often evident in teachers' planning and

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instructional practices, and consequently, in student's learning of content and development of bilingual skills.

The complexity of the context of professional development design: Implications for developing teacher learning systems. Findings from interviews and documents gathered during the study indicate that the school's bilingual mission is not the sole determinant of the nature and direction of the school's program development process. While the institutional mission determines the long-term education purpose, the program goals target short-term objectives based on the changes in needs and conditions that occur within and outside of the program. In the case of Spring Valley Dove Lane, internal factors like the rate of teacher turn-over or students' adequate yearly progress rate on state mandated assessments have been determinants of its short term program goals. Similarly, external factors such as change in state or district level policies regarding student and teacher evaluation systems have affected its program goals in several ways.

What researchers (Clarke & Hollingwood, 2002; Clarke & Peter, 1993; & Clarke, 1988) have identified as the "cyclic nature of learning and the change process" may be used to explain the interdependence of the elements and parts that make up a complex learning system. Due to the close interdependence between student learning and instructional quality, progress in student achievement can get disrupted due to the gap in teacher preparedness resulting from teacher turnover. In a dual language school, where teachers' foundational knowledge of second language acquisition is one of the core expectations, new teachers who may not have the relevant training would need additional support. This in turn would call for

revision in the school's program plans, especially related to its measures towards

facilitating teacher learning. Findings from this study reveal that Spring Valley Dove

Lane's leadership team has also undertaken such revisions in program plan.

However, it is important to understand the influence of the greater socio-political

context within which programs similar to Spring Valley Dove Lane are nested. In

Figure 4 I have illustrated the dynamic relationship among the various factors that

influence institutional program planning and implementation.
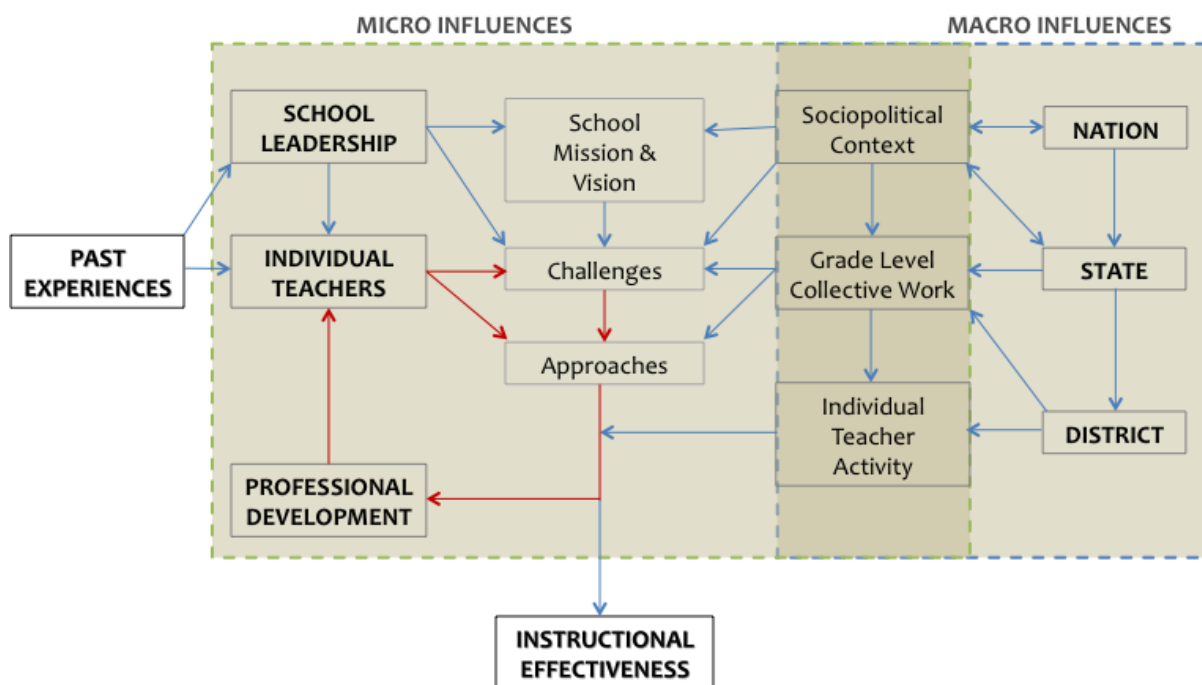
Figure 3: Interdependence of elements in a complex teacher learning system

Dual language bilingual schools often do not receive adequate funds from the

district to support their programmatic needs, due to the predominantly English-only

focus of the U.S. education environment that affects policies at the district level and

ultimately affects how dual language schools are supported. As Figure 4

demonstrates, the ripple effects of such education policies and systemic reforms

initiated at national, state and district levels have a significant impact on the

program implementation at the school level.

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) brought in broad changes in the policy

orientation of educating language minority students in the United States leading to

the disappearance of the public discourse about bilingualism in education

(Crawford, 2004; Garcia, 2006; Hornberger, 2006; Wiley & Wright, 2004). The ripple

effects of the federal legislation can be noticed in renaming of federal and district

offices[xxiv] and policy acts[xxv] to indicate the shift away from the support of bilingual

instruction (Garcia 2009). The changes have also removed the emphasis from

preparing teachers for bilingual education to preparing teachers of English language

learners.

As findings from my study, as well as, existing literature in the field indicate,

districts often do not require second language preparation of teachers as a criterion

for recruitment despite the large number of second language learners in today's

classrooms (Lindholm-Leary & Genessee, 2010). Moreover, district standards and

student assessments largely focus on developing English-proficiency of students as

a priority skill necessary for academic success (ibid). Consequently, district funding

for instructional support are often directed to support education programs that

promote English-language proficiency for all students, rather than dual language

proficiency for all students. As Olivia Nunez, the dual language planner in my study

from the district's District Office of Language Learning points out, the district

...will let these programs grow but we're not going to necessarily facilitate the growth, from the central office's perspective.

Such approaches at the district level often restrict schools' abilities to use district funds to support teacher professional development. The district policies about funding programs are, in turn, dependent on the support received from the federal Title III program that funds initiatives directed only at English-language learners. Since dual language bilingual programs serve English language and non-English language learners, districts are often faced with conflicts around the ownership of funding and supporting these programs.

> If our office can't use Title III because only half of the kids in the program are English language learners, then who's going to buy the books in Spanish for these kids? And that's a question we have not been able to resolve yet. (Nunez).

Nunez's explanation of the problem clearly lays out the interdependence of the elements of the teacher learning system. On the one hand, the ripple effects of a change in a Federal policy about language education can be felt in the classrooms due to schools' inability to provide teachers with the instructional resources and professional support needed to address the demands of bilingual education. On the other hand, teacher turnover in a dual language program during a particular school year can greatly influence student's annual performance. It can affect the school's program planning process and use of internal and external resources to address the gap in teaching and learning. This can also influence the way institutions and individual professionals might prioritize the pursuit of bilingualism as an educational goal within a largely monolingual learning environment.

In this cyclic process of change and interdependence the goals, aspirations and expectations set by the greater socio-political context of education will affect the individual experiences of teaching and learning at the classroom level. This, in turn, will affect how school administrators will prioritize the need for preparing students and teachers. The prior experiences and professional preparation of the teachers will affect how they perceive the challenges associated with dual language instruction, as the school struggles to cope with the goals set by the district. In this context, the call for institutional autonomy in regards to curriculum and professional development design and implementation can be viewed as a culmination of the inter-relationship between the school's bilingual mission and the district's teaching-learning expectations.

Existing research on the effects of local educational policies on teacher socialization indicates how a district's access to resources and capital—human, social, physical, and cultural—can affect teachers' experiences due to the impact the policies have on a school's program planning and design. Districts with less capital and often serving low-income and minority communities are likely to hire teachers who lack experience (Lankford et al, 2002; Shields et al, 2001); these districts are also likely to adopt state-mandated instructional programs to improve students' performance on standardized tests (Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2001; McNeil, 2000; Moon, Callahan, & Tomlinson, 2003) among other things. Besides, their professional cultures influence the amount of and quality of professional support teachers receive (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglman, 2004).

The 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress on mathematics and reading indicates that Spring Valley Dove Lane's school district has wide student achievement gaps between its white and African-American students and between its white and Hispanic students. These findings have prompted rapid changes in the district's educational policies, which include among other things, adoption of new academic standards (the Common Core State Standards) and replacement of the traditional teacher evaluation system with individual value added measures[xxvi]. The adoption of the new standards has had direct influences on the school's program design due to the need to develop new program goals. These goals are the bases on which the school curriculum is revised in order to ensure alignment with the new standards and to meet the required academic rigor. The standards also prompted the need for teachers to acquire a better understanding of the progression of the standards across grade levels; and the curricular revisions demanded modification of teachers' instructional approaches. All these changes had major implications for the kind of support teachers needed as they tried to balance the bilingual mission with the increased rigor in the curriculum to improve student's academic performance implying the interdependence of the elements and parts that make up a complex learning system.

Where the individual perceptions meet institutional reality: Implications for program coherence leading to effective professional learning. The discussions with teachers about their perceptions about the program always centered on their endeavors to attain the bilingual mission through their daily classroom experiences driven by their unique view about the value of bilingual

education. The descriptions they shared about their past experiences and their drive to join a bilingual school revealed a passion each shared about the need for educational equity and about the place of language in education. Some of the teachers were comparatively new to the program and some were veterans. Besides their preparation, understanding and approaches to second language education were different as well. However, as a result of working within the same institutional framework there were some common and some unique challenges that each of them emphasized on.

The teachers' conversations about the instructional challenges are indicative of a tension between the demands placed by the school's bilingual structure, on one hand, and the demands of the district policies on school's curricular and instructional structure, on the other. Balancing the demands from the school and the district program goals implied that teachers had to meet the expectations in relation to the "best instructional practices" as conceived at the two ends. That is, addressing the expectations of the school administration about the envisioned "best practices" of bilingual instruction vis-à-vis the district's framework of "best instructional practices" as defined by its new teacher evaluation system or rubric.

Some teachers perceived that the changes in district standards created a pressure on schools to adopt curricular approaches that are "not ELL-friendly." As a result teachers often found it challenging to adapt the curriculum according to the linguistic and content-level proficiencies of students. These modifications seemed to demand an increased use of scaffolding strategies to meet students' language proficiency levels adding to the complexity of addressing the content proficiency.

Moreover, the fact that the teachers were not able to access adequate instructional support during the curriculum transition possibly affected the way they perceived the effectiveness of the new curriculum and its implications for instructional adjustments. Lack of communication from the administrators about the new goals and expectations associated with the new curriculum created a gap between how the school leadership and the school educators perceived the instructional challenges and their respective solutions. While the administrators believed that the teachers should be able to modify the lessons using the new approach based on students' needs, one of the teachers expressed concerns about the leadership's decision to adopt a new curriculum that was not aligned to the program mission. Rather, she viewed it as a consequence of the district's pressure in enforcing its policies and standards.

Besides the challenges related to the curriculum changes, teachers also highlighted their struggles in adopting the school's shift in instructional time-allocation for Spanish and English instruction, which required greater teacher collaboration. This shift also required greater time commitments on the part of all teachers, improved communication between partner teachers in English and Spanish classrooms, and a greater understanding among English teachers (who often lacked preparation on second language instruction) to adopt second language acquisition strategies in instruction to facilitate learning of Spanish language learners. One of the many challenges teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane seemed to face is the lack of adequate opportunities to exchange ideas and learn from their colleagues. All four teachers spoke about the school's structure and protocol that did

not provide adequate opportunities for teachers to come together as a group and form a learning community where they can share ideas on effective teaching practices and concerns.

Different teachers recognized different instructional challenges as ways to attain their perceived instructional goals. Interestingly, in most cases the perceived challenges were found to be associated with the kind of preparation or support that a teacher lacked. For instance, a teacher's prior experience or training related to ESL instruction is reflected on how he/she perceives the incorporation of differentiation strategies in instruction as a major challenge. Additionally, a teacher's deep understanding of bilingual instructional strategies is seen to influence what he/she believes as an adequate approach to Spanish literacy instruction that needs to be differentiated according to proficiency levels as well as grade levels—something that other Spanish teachers, the literacy coach and the administrators were unable to identify. Hence, the need to adopt an adequate literacy curriculum to fit the language learning skills and demands of students according to grade levels, remained unaddressed. The most crucial among these challenges identified by all the four teachers is the gap in communication between the school's administrators and the teachers about the instructional goals and professional expectations.

Implications for coherence in program development. One of the core findings of this study is a mismatch between goals and expectations at different levels of the learning system—between school and district level goals and expectations about learning and instruction; between teachers' and the administrators' perceived instructional goals, challenges and need for professional

support; and mismatch between envisioned and implemented roles of professional development providers. These findings have significant implications for establishing coherence in the instructional support framework.

My conversations with professionals both at the school and district levels on teacher learning through instructional support frameworks converged on the issue of "relevance." Their perceptions of "relevance" as an aspect of a successful teacher support system are largely embedded in what Newmann et al. (2001) had conceived of as instructional program coherence—a set of interrelated programs for students and educators that guides the common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning environment. The gap in the case of the learning experiences of teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane is related to the lack of coherence in the school and district program development. The link between the content component and linguistic component of effective bilingual education and instruction were missing in the instructional support framework.

Research in the field of professional development has documented how alignment among various organizational elements is key to attaining school improvement. Unity of purpose among the different agents involved in the administration, planning and implementation of classroom instruction and related professional support; and clarity of institutional goals and shared values about student and teacher learning brought about by consistent communication at all levels, have been documented as a way of establishing institutional program coherence (Newmann et al, 2001).

In a broader education context, alignment of the school's curriculum with the external district policies and standards are also found to be key determinants of program coherence (CPRE, 2000; Furhman, 1993; Smith & O'Day, 1991). Although in a perfect world, alignment of the different aspects of a school's program plan may be seen as the foundation for institutional improvement, learning systems are often mired by contradictions in policy and practice, and differences in envisioned goals and actual implementation. Differences emerge as perceptions collide within an institution and among institutions in a broader context; as agents functioning at different institutional levels socialize to form communities to gather resources to support their perceived goals; and as discourses around the purpose and media of education diverge, rather than overlap. The onus lies on the school's leadership to bridge the gap created by these differences.

Complementary school and district support programs: Lessons for others in the field. Professional developers are the central actors in the continuum of a school's instructional support system. The independent consultants in literacy and mathematics that are brought in by the school administrators; the district appointed instructional coaches in math and literacy that provide job-embedded support to it teachers; and the dual language planner at the district's District Office of Language Learning provide instructional support to teachers at Spring Valley Dove Lane in various ways. The support that they are able to deliver is mainly the result of the school administrators' creative approaches to tap the limited resources available to them. Thus, despite officially assigned or "envisioned" roles ascribed to

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these agents the scope of their support is largely molded and redefined by the administrators at the school level.

This is reflected in the support that the school has sought from the district's Office of Language Learning and from the district-assigned literacy coach on issues related to dual language instruction and bilingual program development. As a contrast, the school has employed the math and literacy consultants to provide instructional support towards attaining the district goals. Given the adequacy and availability of these resources, the school administration has tried to use them to strike a balance between attaining the program mission and district expectations. It is interesting to note how the school has been using district resources to support the language aspect of dual language instruction, while using its internally funded resources to support the content aspect. Such creative attempts at swapping roles of professional support providers at the school and district levels to suit program needs, can be great lessons for other bilingual programs faced with similar constraints.

Although the school has adopted effective measures in the use of professional development agents and resources, one of its major weaknesses has been in engaging its teachers as active agents and resources to promote peer learning and creating a learning community within the school. Findings from the interviews portray teachers as passive recipients of the school's instructional support program. Neither the teachers nor the school leadership perceive the former as active agents in developing and facilitating the experiences of teacher learning. There is also a severe lack of opportunities for direct peer support or mentoring. Thus, despite the

administrator's description of the instructional support system as "needs-based," in effect the system lacked adequate representation of teacher needs. As the teachers have noted consistently the Assistant Principal has been responsible for making the decisions regarding teacher support—determining the content and focus of the consultant-led workshops, the coach-led learning cycles, and the dual language developer-led bilingual support. Consequently, important gaps in teacher learning identified by the teachers themselves—such as the collaborative planning aspect of successful bilingual instruction, instructional support in math and literacy for Spanish classroom teachers—are left out of the scope of support framework.

Thus, when I tried to identify the ways in which the school program has been designed to accommodate the needs of its teachers to help them attain the expectations related to dual language instruction, it is difficult to recognize a definite pattern. There is a mismatch between the claims about the program needs and program approaches to address those needs. The administrators' claims about the unique demands of the program as distinct from those of the district, their perceived expectations of instructional effectiveness, and their approaches to program implementation through curriculum, instruction and instructional support show a lack of alignment. The elements of their program design—the frameworks for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning climate—as well as the communication regarding program implementation indicate a lack the coherence. A program where teachers' perceptions about the instructional challenges and needs are not aligned with the perceptions and approaches of professional planners and developers, there is an indication of a major gap within the structure of the

instructional program. Such a gap often impedes the successful attainment of the program goals. The school leadership needs to identify these gaps as a significant next steps in establishing a coherent and successful dual language bilingual program.

This study makes a unique contribution to the field through its findings on how the relevance of teacher learning (in a dual language program) tends to get defined primarily by the issue of language, rather than the format or source of the support system. The main concern here is related to equity in bilingual education represented in the form of the nature of instructional support educators in dual language programs receive as they function in a primarily monolingual broader education context.

The cyclic nature and interdependence of the elements and agents involved in the teacher learning system have implications for professional development planners at both the district and the school levels. An understanding of how discrepancies in teacher support based on differences in ideologies driven by issues of language use in education can result in fragmentation of school development efforts is crucial in an environment that emphasizes heavily on accountability and performance. Demanding performance without "relevant" support, calls for failure on all accounts, at every level, but most importantly for the learners, who are at the center of the debate.

Limitations and Scope of the Study

The most apparent limitation of this study is that it is a case of one dual language bilingual school in a district that has eight bilingual schools. Hence the

findings from this study must be seen through the lens of this particular. The examination of the perceptions about professional development of teachers at SVDL are based on interviews with teachers, as well as, school administrators, an independent PD consultants, the district planners responsible for designing PD for SVDL teachers, District Teacher Evaluators who are responsible for evaluating teacher instructional quality and dual language PD providers at the district level. While I was able to interview the literacy PD consultant and observe her literacy workshop that same did not happen with the math consultant due to his unavailability.

Moreover, given the scope of the study, I interviewed a total of two pairs of Spanish and English partner teachers from the third and fifth grade levels. The teachers were selected arbitrarily based on their availability. The intent was to compare the views of teachers across the two languages and across the two grade levels to understand the similarities and/or differences between how they perceived issues related to PD; the goal was also to understand whether the differences emerged due to grade level requirements, differences in their backgrounds, differences in approaches to bilingual instruction, or due to differences in the language used for instruction. The diversity in the perceptions of teachers irrespective of the language they used or the grade levels they taught implies the need for further exploration involving greater number of teacher pairs from all grade levels. The findings based on the interview of four teachers cannot be taken as representative of how SVDL teachers experienced, perceived and used PD resources available to them based on what challenges they encountered.

While there were opportunities to observe multiple collaborative learning cycles during which coaches provided group support to teachers, I had limited opportunities to observe the workshops provided by consultants in mathematics and literacy. Due to the short time during which consultants held their workshops and lesson learning sessions, I was able to observe only one literacy workshop at the time of the study. Additional observations, mostly of the math workshops would have helped to better understand teachers' issues ("English heavy") around the new math curriculum. Although the findings from the study would not allow making generalizations due to its limited scope, it raises important questions that provide opportunities for further research.

Directions for Further Research

Further research is warranted to enhance the findings of this study. In order to be more productive, the future study needs to be conducted to explore the aspect of teacher evaluation and feedback. This study already revealed that the ME's feedback derived from the district's tool to assess instructional effectiveness can provide district offices important information about instructional gaps and challenges existing in a school building or in a particular classroom. This is a viable way for the district to measure the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument. A future study could focus particularly on the instrument to determine whether the rubric, which is primarily based on an ESL framework, has the validity and reliability to evaluate instructional effectiveness in a dual language bilingual setting. Findings from such a study could have significant implications about the

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relevance of the feedback teachers receive based on the elements specified on the rubric and the professional consequences of the evaluations for teachers.

There is also a need to explore more deeply trends among dual language programs about their access and ability to use district provided funds for supporting bilingual instruction. It is important to know the implications of using district funds to promote bilingual education when the greater social and political contexts of education promote an English-only environment.

ENDNOTES

[i] Spanish Preterite Verbs: The preterite tense is used to refer to action that occurred at a fixed point in time; actions in the past that were performed a specific number of times; actions that occur as part of a chain of events.

[ii] PARCC: PARCC stands for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career. The new PARCC assessment is scheduled to replace the older district assessment in the 2014-2015 school year. The PARCC assessment is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (reading & writing) and Math. It is computer-based and requires students to think critically and solve real world problems. It is expected that this new assessment will give students, parents and teachers specific feedback about whether or not students are on track or off track for college and career and what extra support they need. District students in grades 3-8 and students enrolled in Algebra I, Geometry, and English I & II will take the PARCC assessment.

[iii] All the names of the teacher and administrative staff, as well as those of consultants, and district personnel are pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants. The school's name has also been changed to avoid identification.

[iv] District Teacher Evaluator: This is a position at the district level responsible for conducting impartial evaluations & observations of all district teachers. Following each observation, District Teacher Evaluators conduct a one-on-one conference with each teacher to dialogue about specific areas of development. They also provide targeted, content-specific feedback and resources to help improve effectiveness of classroom instruction.

[v] ESEA Classifications: https://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/demonstrating-meet-flex-definitions.pdf

[vi] A bilingual strand is usually situated in an English-language mainstream public school much as a traditional bilingual program might be. But in a strand program two-way/ dual language bilingual instruction would be not be offered across the school but in one or two classrooms at each grade level. Whereas, a whole school program takes over the whole school site (Palmer, 2007).

[vii] According to this model, second language learning is expected to be carried out on the lines of the content-based ESL (English as a second language) approach whereby instruction is provided to all students in English to help ensure mastery of academic

content areas (English/language arts, social studies, science and mathematics) - As stated on District website under ELL Programs and Support.

viii **Phonics** is teaching students how to connect sounds of language with corresponding letters or groups of letters, as well as teaching them to blend the sounds of letters together to produce unknown words.
Morphology is giving students the skills to study word patterns and structures of language, such as meaningful word parts (like root words, prefixes, etc.).

ix Wilson Fundations: http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/FS_PROGRAM_FUN.htm

x Vertical alignment refers to developing and delivering standards, assessments, and curricula that prepare students for success in the next grade level and beyond.

xi The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC): In keeping with the spirit of multistate collaboration that fueled the creation of the common core, states now have the opportunity to work together to develop a shared assessment system to measure student learning against the CCSS. Three consortia of states have formed to apply for the assessment funds. The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of 26 states committed to building a next-generation assessment system for grades 3 through high school. The system will be anchored by college- and career-ready tests in high school, and will include a combination of end-of-year assessments and "through-course" assessments administered throughout the school year. In addition, the system will include optional formative tests, starting in kindergarten. The system will also be completely computer based. Achieve is coordinating the work of PARCC.

xii *The Dictado* is a cross-language strategy that can be used in both Spanish literacy and literacy-based ESL. It is an adaptation of a methodology from Mexico and Central/South America. The Dictado is used within Literacy Squared to refine language arts skills in both Spanish and English, and it can be used to teach spelling, conventions, and grammar. More importantly, it can be used to teach the skill of self-correction and metalanguage. A unique quality of this strategy involves teaching children how Spanish and English are similar and different.

xiii Literacy Squared: http://literacysquared.org/?page_id=15

xiv To ensure that the two languages are covered equally, variants of the 50:50 model—Alternating Day, Half Day, and Roller Coaster—follow an alternating pattern of language instruction within a two-week cycle. In the *Alternating Day* model, classes alternate days using the target language and English. In the *Half-Day*

model, classes use the target language before lunch and English after lunch (or vice versa) each day. In the *Roller Coaster* model, classes using the Half-Day model switch the order each day so that instruction time in each language is more equally divided. All can be combined depending on the teaching and classroom configuration.

xv Understanding student data is one of new district requirements for teachers to align instruction according to the standards in order to meet the gap in student learning.

xvi The Fundations approach is generally recommended for all P&M schools irrespective of their second language instructional models—ESL as well as whole-school/strand dual language programs xvi-- and subsequently, similar professional development opportunities.

xvii In Guided Reading approach the teacher works with a small group of students who demonstrate similar reading behaviors and can read similar levels of texts (Scholastic). The purpose is to help students expand their reading strategies, focus on meaning, deal with difficult sentence structures and understand concepts and ideas. This is done by selecting books students can read with about 90 percent accuracy.

xviii The Teaching and Learning Framework or TLC: Guided by the district's core beliefs about measurable student achievement goals, the Teaching and Learning Framework provides a common language to discuss instructional practices and teacher actions. It also provides clear expectations for teachers and is used as an instrument in driving coherent, robust professional development, systems of support and evaluation. [Taken from the district's website documenting the Framework and related documents.]

xix **TRC** or Text Reading Comprehension is an early reading formative assessment for grades K-2 that was designed to help teachers understand student reading development by measuring progress on a range of skills, from fluency to comprehension. TRC enables teachers to collect detailed running records and assess student comprehension level. It provides teachers detailed information on the number and type of errors students make while reading. It also measures oral and written comprehension of instructional level text. TRC is administered up to three times a year.

xx **EDL** or Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura (English equivalent is Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). It is administered to students at grade levels K-6 and is used to monitor student growth and development and tailor instruction for individual student needs. It is designed for bilingual and dual

language classrooms and measures fluency, reading comprehension, non-fiction texts features, and reading strategies

[xxi] **ANet** or The Achievement Network interim assessments are designed as assessments FOR learning that are often used by schools as tools to identify gaps in student mastery of skills and standards. ANet provides quarterly Performance Benchmarking reports that show the relationship between a school's performance on that interim and their state's summative assessment.

[xxii] Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) is amended to read: Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged. The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. For further details, refer to :
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html

[xxiii] TWIOP—Two-way Instruction Observation Protocol. The school has planned to adopt this as another form of professional support for its teachers starting the 2014-2015 school year. However, it has not been fully established as a form of SVDL's internal PD program due to paucity of funds.

[xxiv] The Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) renamed as Office of English Language Enhancement & Academic Achievement for LEP Students (OELA).

[xxv] Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the Bilingual Education Act) replaced by Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient & Immigrant Students).

[xxvi] Individual Value-added (IVA) student achievement data is a way of estimating the teacher's impact on student learning as opposed to the impact of other factors, like students' prior skill level, home resources, learning disabilities or classroom composition.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Types of Educational Programs for Emergent Bilinguals [Garcia & Kliefgen, 2010, pp. 26-27]

Table 6:

Types of Educational Programs for Emergent Bilinguals

PROGRAM	LANGUAGE USED IN INSTRUCTION	COMPONENTS	DURATION	GOALS
Submersion (Sink or Swim)	100% English	Mainstream education; no special help with English: no qualified teachers	Throughout K- 12 schooling	linguistic assimilation (shift to English only)
ESL Pull Out (Submersion plus ESL)	90-100% in English: may include some home language support or not	Mainstream education: students pulled out for 30- 45 minutes of ESL daily. Teachers certified in ESL	As needed	Linguistic assimilation; remedial English
ESL Push-in	90-100% in English: may include some home language support or not	Mainstream education; ESL teacher works alongside the subject teacher as needed. Teachers certified in ESL	As needed	As needed

Table 6 (cont'd)

PROGRAM	LANGUAGE USED IN INSTRUCTION	COMPONENTS	DURATION	GOALS
Structured Immersion (Sheltered English, Content-based ESL)	90-100% in English: may include some home language support or not	Subject matter instruction at students' level of English; students grouped for instruction. Teachers certified in ESL, should have some training in immersion	1- 3 years	Linguistic assimilation; exit to mainstream education
Traditional Bilingual Education (Early-Exit Bilingual Education)	90-50% home language initially; gradually decreasing to 10% or less	Initial literacy usually in home language; some subject instruction in home language; ESL and subject matter instruction at students' level of English; sheltered English subject instruction. Teachers certified in bilingual education	1- 3 years; students exit as they become proficient in English	Linguistic assimilation; English acquisition without falling behind 5-6 years academically
Developmental Bilingual Education (Late-Exit Bilingual Education)	90% home language initially; gradually decreasing to 50% or less by grade 4 or 50/50 from beginning	Initial literacy in home language; some subject instruction in home language; ESL initially and subject matter instruction at students' level of English; teachers certified in bilingual education	5-6 years	Bilingualism and biliteracy; academic achievement in English

Table 6 (cont'd)

PROGRAM	LANGUAGE USED IN INSTRUCTION	COMPONENTS	DURATION	GOALS
Two-Way Bilingual Education (Two-Way Dual Language, Two- Way Immersion, Dual Immersion, Dual Language)	90/10 model: 90% language other than English, 10% English; 50/50 model: parity of both languages	English speakers and speakers of a LOTE taught literacy and subjects in both languages; peer tutoring. Teachers certified in bilingual education	5-6 years, usually at the elementary level	Bilingualism and biliteracy, academic achievement in English
Dynamic Bi/Plurilingual Education	English and students' home languages in dynamic relationship; students are the locus of control for language used; peer-teaching.	Teacher-led activities in English, coupled with collaborative project based student learning using home and hybrid language practices	4-6 years, usually at the high school level and especially for newcomers	Bilingualism, academic achievement in English

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