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Teachers' Preparation and Perspectives Toward Native Language Use in the Classroom

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Abstract

This ethnographic case study investigates teacher preparation in educating English language learners (ELLs) and how it relates to perspectives and attitudes toward the use of students' native language (L1) in the classroom for academic and social purposes. The nine participants consisted of preschool through fifth grade teachers including two music teachers. Each completed a survey to report their perspectives toward the maintenance of students' native language. Teachers rated the level of responsibility they feel they have for maintaining students' native language in addition to responding to statements about their practical uses of students' L1 in the classroom. Survey responses were reviewed to look for underlying trends in perspectives. Subsequently, all participants were interviewed individually to discuss their preparation for working with ELLs as well as to elaborate on their survey responses. Results of this case study demonstrate a favorable attitude of mainstream teachers toward using students' native language in the classroom, despite a lack of preparation or training in the education of ELLs and a vague vision from the administration regarding culturally relevant practices. It was found that teachers' attitudes were influenced by family background, self-efficacy, and views on bilingual education as it impacts teacher allocations across the district. Despite participants' support for L1 in the classroom, this study found that most teachers did not put this ideology into practice in their own classroom. This study mirrors other research demonstrating a need for improved professional development for mainstream teachers.

Chapter One

Introduction

I have taught English language learners (ELLs) in a range of program models that have varied depending on the grouping of students, quality and quantity of support in their native language, the level of experience and preparation of their mainstream teachers, and their level of support in social and academic English. In some cases, large amounts of ELLs were grouped together in one classroom while in others there were only two ELLs in a classroom of English-speaking peers. Some ELLs had a mainstream teacher who spoke their native language and provided support in this language whenever necessary to help build upon a foundation. In other situations, ELLs were taught by a mainstream teacher who had no knowledge of their native language. In this case, the students were supported by classroom aides or certified teachers who spoke their language, which is the program model in which I currently teach.

Over the past seven years I have worked with a variety of teachers whose perspectives and attitudes toward the use of students' native language in the classroom ranged from believing students should only learn and be taught through English to believing students should maintain their native language and therefore be taught through that language. For example, in 2009, a fellow teacher was discouraging the school's administration from using funds to purchase bilingual books so some of the ELL students could read books with text in their native language. She questioned the purpose for having bilingual books and stated that our students should only read in English. Two years later this same teacher had labeled classroom objects in Spanish and was excited to see some of her ELLs reading books in their native languages. Consequently, I grew curious to learn why this teacher's attitudes and perspectives had changed. Did she receive further training, was she affected by her students and better understood how they learn, or were

there other factors involved? By better understanding this teacher's change in attitude, and the current perspectives of other teachers, I can more effectively design and implement professional development for my staff around the benefits of incorporating students' native language in multiple areas of their education.

As a result of this reflection, this ethnographic case study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward the use of students' native language in the classroom?
2. How do these perspectives relate to teachers' level of preparation and training?
3. What other factors contribute to a teacher's attitude toward the use of students' native language in the classroom?

This study was conducted at an elementary school serving sixty-five ELL students in preschool through fifth grade in an urban school district in Wisconsin. The school, which began its operations in 2008, is located in a middle-to-upper class suburb, although nearly 50 percent of the student population takes a bus to school from a more urban neighborhood, where the majority of the ELL students live. In the spring of 2012, nine teachers volunteered to participate in this study, including two music teachers and one teacher from every grade level, except for second grade. In February, each participant was given a survey of 28 items using Lee and Oxelson's (2006) as a framework. In the survey teachers responded to statements about the incorporation of native language in the classroom, responsibility for supporting the maintenance of students' native language, and how teachers might foster an environment that supports a belief in the benefits of building a multilingual society. Additionally, teachers were asked to rate their level of training and preparation specifically regarding the use of native language in the classroom, either

socially or academically. Most teachers reported very little to no training at all, while one teacher is licensed in English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual education.

Surveys were collected and reviewed for underlying attitudes and analyzed to determine questions for ethnographic, descriptive interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) that were initially conducted in March with follow-up interviews in April. Interviews, lasting from 30 to 60 minutes, were individually conducted in the teachers' classrooms outside of school operation hours.

The data collected from the interviews and surveys were reviewed to determine relationships between teachers' level of preparation, attitudes, and reported practices, and if there existed any other factors that contributed to a teacher's attitudes. Consequently, the school's vision statement was reviewed to provide additional data. These results helped determine needs for further professional development that can increase supportive attitudes toward the incorporation of students' native languages in the classroom.

Not surprisingly, research shows that teachers who lack appropriate training of basic language acquisition principles often hold common misperceptions about issues relevant to ELL education (Karthanos, 2010), which is reflected in the increasingly negative institutional and societal attitudes toward ELLs and bilingual programming (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004). This attitude has been reified in legislation in California, Arizona and Massachusetts. Despite this rejection of pluralism, reports across the country show that the number of ELLs is increasing at a fast pace (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Hudelson, Poynor, & Wolfe, 2003; Nieto, 2009; Teale, 2009). As this population increases, dominant unsupportive attitudes may correspondingly increase, further intensifying the current problem of negative teacher attitudes toward ELL education (Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004). Due to the relationship between teacher attitudes

and student achievement, one should not accept any amount of negativity in teacher attitudes toward ELLs, as these can have detrimental effects and are certainly cause for concern. In order to confront and transform any attitudes it is first necessary to identify what they are and understand the scope of them; therefore, this project aimed to identify and investigate teachers' attitudes and their potential sources with the intention of using the results to design professional development.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

On one side of the debate, some would say that good teaching is simply good teaching, and English language learners (ELLs) can achieve if they are taught in the same ways as their English-speaking peers (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011; Goldenberg, 2004). According to Coleman and Goldenberg (2011), the foundation of effective literacy instruction for English language learners is similar to that for English speakers. Teale (2009) and Ma (2002) confirmed that students learn to read and write in the same ways, regardless of their language backgrounds. When language requirements are low, such as learning phonological skills or letter-sound relationships in the early years, English language learners can learn English literacy just as well as their English-speaking peers (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2011).

However, researchers acknowledge that as language demands increase over the years, ELLs will need more specialized instruction to overcome challenges (Goldenberg, 2004). Therefore, it is clear that although high quality teaching is necessary for all students to succeed, English language learners require instruction that is tailored to their unique and diverse language needs. By providing such instruction, teachers and schools are ensuring that they are using culturally relevant practices to cultivate the academic, cultural, and civil needs of all of their students. In addition, the relationship between teacher preparation and student achievement cannot be denied (Corerro, Kamil, Ferguson, Garza, & Bagley Marrett, 2000; Williams, 2002). According to Williams (2002), adequate preparation ensures teachers' attitudes are aligned with the linguistic and cultural needs behind ELL education.

This chapter begins with a review of the history of education for English language learners, specifically the legislation that guided the ebb and flow of bilingual education in the

United States, followed by a discussion of culturally relevant teaching, the theoretical framework fundamental to effective instruction for ELLs. In addition, the review contains the accepted definitions of selected program models followed by their impact on English language learners' acquisition of language and literacy. This includes studies on English immersion models, with minimal or no native language support, to studies that compare multiple programs with an additional focus on the use of students' native language. Finally, the chapter contains investigations of teachers' preparation and perspectives and their impact on ELL achievement.

Historical Perspective

The number of U.S. students who are considered English language learners has been increasing dramatically (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Hudelson, Poynor, & Wolfe, 2003; Nieto, 2009; Teale, 2009; Walker, 2004). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), the number of English language learners rose from 4.7 to 11.2 million between 1980 and 2009. According to Nieto (2009), all classrooms in the future will have students who are English language learners. Therefore, it is imperative that all teachers are knowledgeable about how to effectively teach ELLs (Williams, 2002) as well as embrace beliefs and attitudes that positively benefit these students (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

Since the 1800s, schools have used multiple languages to teach students from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Cobb & Kallus, 2011; De Vivas, 2011). However, domestic and international politics and economic strains charged the ebb and flow of support or opposition toward language unification in the United States. As Calderón, Slavin and Sánchez (2011) stated, “ideology has often trumped evidence on both sides of the debate” (p. 107). For example, during World War I, students were punished for speaking their native language (also referred to as L1) in schools, while during World War II, it was viewed as beneficial for the country for students to

learn another language (Cobb & Kallus, 2011). More than forty years ago, the government recognized the need to make modifications in the face of education (Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005) with the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, yet some have argued that “bilingualism threatens the sense of national identity and would encourage minority groups to impose their cultures and languages” (De Vivas, 2011, p. 222).

Due to the social and political nature of language in education (Rolstad et al., 2005), ELL education has been a civil rights issue, for which it has been included in the language of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. On May 25, 1970, a memorandum from the United States Office of Civil Rights stated that schools must take necessary steps to rectify the language deficiency in limited English proficient (LEP) students (Feinberg & Morencia, 1998). The memorandum also required schools to provide LEP students with equal access to Special Education programs without being inappropriately placed due to their language abilities as assessed on linguistically biased tests. In addition, the memorandum recognized the need to make it more possible for parents to be involved in their children’s education. The memorandum stated that schools must communicate with parents in their primary language, as they cannot fully participate in their children’s education without appropriate communication. Schools are required to take whatever measures necessary to make effective communication possible. That is, if parents are not literate in their home language then other modes of communication must be used (Feinberg & Morencia, 1998).

Since schools were not given a clear standard to guide their programming they were able to interpret the memorandum in their own ways. In other words, one school district may have understood the terms “necessary steps” differently from another district, and as a result not all schools were doing what was necessary to help students make significant gains.

Of course, this variation in remedies did not go unnoticed. In fact, in 1974, when the San

Francisco school system failed to provide adequate language instruction for nearly 1,800 students of Chinese ancestry, which denied them of their rights as defined in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), the resulting case, *Lau v. Nichols*, changed the face of ELL education. *Lau* was a class action lawsuit brought by San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Services on behalf of the Chinese students (Feinberg & Morencia, 1998). This led to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in favor of ELL students. The district had violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by failing to provide these students with special instruction designed to overcome their English language deficiency (Feinberg & Morencia, 1998). The court found that it is not enough to provide the same strategies, programs, resources and teachers for students who do not speak English proficiently. Just as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was created to help students with special needs, ELL students needed programs that were tailored toward their individual language needs. This court decision was a major step in the direction of social justice for ELL students, as before *Lau* it was considered normal practice to teach ELL students in the same ways as all other students.

Federal legislation moved again with the Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, which prohibited against unlawful denial of equal educational opportunities to ELL students (Feinberg & Morencia, 1998). Again, schools were told to make appropriate changes to their educational programs in order to attend to the educational needs of ELL students.

However, as in the past, much of this legislation was up for individual interpretation and it became necessary to verbalize common expectations for the ways schools should educate a linguistically diverse population. According to Feinberg and Morencia (1998), in response to *Castenada v. Pickard* in 1981, the Appeals Court for the Fifth Circuit provided a test to determine if schools were providing adequate programming for students learning English. The court asked

the following three questions:

1. Is the school system pursuing a program based on an education theory recognized as sound or, at least, as a legitimate experimental strategy, by experts in the field of providing services to LEP students?
2. Have sufficient resources been allocated to the program so that it can reasonably be expected to implement the selected theory?
3. After being used for enough time to constitute a legitimate trial, has the program proved effective in teaching English and other content areas? (p. 428)

The fight for educational equity continued in Arizona. In the case of *Flores v. Arizona* in 1992, a suit was filed against the state of Arizona which claimed it had failed to provide instruction for English language learners to make them proficient in English and consequently aide them in mastering the academic curriculum. In 2001, the state was ordered to provide funding to help educate ELL students; however, due to budgeting issues, the process of configuring costs and implementing changes has taken many years and continues today.

With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 came the English Acquisition Act. This placed a greater emphasis on schools quickly reclassifying their English language learners as English proficient, rather than recognizing the benefits of programs that use students' native language, such as dual language programs (Rolstad et al., 2005). Those who support this legislation argue that students can simply acquire English if they are completely immersed in it, despite the fact that this was ruled illegal by *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974 (De Vivas, 2011).

With the plethora of legislation underlying ELL education, the future is still uncertain. What is agreed on is that it is important for students to become fluent in English in order to gain access to and be successful in our society. However, the key question remains whether or not

schools should provide opportunities so students can maintain their first language.

Theoretical Framework: Culturally Relevant Teaching

The history of ELL education is strongly charged with issues of culture, nationalism, immigration, and politics (Rolstad et al., 2005). Therefore, culturally relevant teaching is an essential foundation to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students (Delpit, 2009). Not only does it require teachers to use culturally relevant practices, but also it compels them to have a perspective that believes these practices are necessary and effective (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

The necessity for culturally relevant teaching is a result of the current population of teachers. Most teachers of ELLs are White, middle-class women who are most often monolingual (Au, 2002; Nieto, 2009) and more than likely had expected to teach students in White, middle-class communities (Nieto, 2009). Therefore, when ELLs enter school, they rarely see their language or cultural identity reflected in their teacher's communication, traditions, values or standards of living. Likewise, many teachers of ELLs rarely know how to reach their linguistically and culturally diverse group of students (Au, 2002; Nieto, 2009), leaving the unique needs of ELLs unmet. The purpose of culturally relevant teaching is to bridge this gap so English language learners can identify with and engage in their own learning. Furthermore, culturally relevant teaching "not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities in schools" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 496).

Culturally relevant teaching does not mean the students' culture, language and history are simply embedded in the curriculum (Brooks & Karathanos, 2009), as is often seen during holidays or disconnected units of social studies. As Hawkins and Norton (2008) explain, there is

a difference between simply acknowledging students' cultures and addressing social norms that produce and perpetuate institutionalized relations of power. This means that teachers take necessary measures to modify instruction in order meet the unique needs of English language learners. While academic success is an essential goal for all students, it should not be at the expense of students' cultural and psychosocial well-being; culturally relevant teachers provide a way for students to maintain their "cultural integrity" while succeeding academically (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). Culturally relevant teachers observe their students in their natural environment, in the community or at home, and include aspects of this cultural environment in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Gonzalez et al. (1993) suggest that schools should focus on the funds of knowledge that ELLs bring from their homes into the classroom and use it as a basis for the curriculum, such as building units of science or math that reflect their personal experiences at home. Likewise, according to Au (2002), instruction should "reflect the values and standards...of students' home culture" (p. 404) with the goal being that of academic achievement, not just cultural understanding. In this way, students' native culture is used as a guide for planning discussions (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and the organization of classroom instruction. To complement this, May (2011) suggests using read-alouds that promote student interaction and allow students to share personal narratives. This strategy provides students with an opportunity to share their cultural backgrounds so students see themselves as a fund of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 1993; Gutstein, Lipman, & Hernandez, 1997).

As Gutstein, Lipman, and Hernandez (1997) assert, some teachers may be familiar with their students' cultural identities and corresponding needs but still hold a "deficit orientation" that presumes a lack of support from the family or fails to challenge students academically. On the other hand, culturally relevant teachers hold an "empowerment orientation" that establishes solid

relationships with the students and their families, goes beyond traditional boundaries and assumptions, and provides students with a rigorous curriculum (Gutstein, Lipman, & Hernandez, 1997, p. 725). Unfortunately, English language learners are seen by unresponsive teachers as having a deficit due to their limited proficiency in English (Lee & Oxelson, 2006), when the ‘deficit’ actually results from teachers who use an instructional delivery that leans toward lower level skills (Au, 2002). Conversely, culturally relevant teachers make connections between the students’ cultures, languages and experiences in order to gain them access to the curriculum (Brooks & Karathanos, 2009), which keeps them actively engaged in their learning (Cambourne, 2002), rather than spending time on grammar or punctuation (Au, 2002). Additionally, Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests teachers make conscious decisions to not only become actively involved in the community but also to consider themselves *part* of their students’ community.

Moreover, Pappamihiel (2007) recommends that the first step is for teachers to examine their own beliefs about culture and diversity before engaging in culturally relevant teaching. This self-reflection provides teachers with the opportunity to inspect, recognize and rectify any biases that block culturally relevant pedagogy.

The key issue lurking behind culturally relevant teaching for ELLs is the language of instruction (De Vivas, 2011; Goldenberg, 2004; Karathanos, 2009). This is a significant issue for instruction because of the strong relationship between language and literacy. Literacy is more than decoding, fluency or comprehension. Among other factors, it requires the use of oral language, an important skill for students learning English (Calderón et al., 2011), as it is an intrinsic component to reading and writing. This means that students should have access to realistic, engaging and complex texts (Duke & Pearson, 2002) in English and their native language, providing them with ample information to continually develop their personal schemata.

As stated by the international professional organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (1999), the “most effective environments for second language teaching and learning are those that promote ELL students’ native language” (as cited in Karathanos, 2010, p. 51). Indeed, this close relationship between language, literacy and content learning means that all teachers of ELLs are essentially teachers of language as well (Pappamihiel, 2007). Therefore, in order to provide access to and ensure success in literacy, ELLs need effective instruction that improves their language development.

Likewise, the language of instruction is a significant issue in ELL education due to its cultural and pedagogical nature. Using students’ native language, whether as a tool for instruction or for social purposes, and not merely as a tool for discipline, recognizes and embraces students’ cultural background, history and identity (Au, 2002). Doing so is an essential element in culturally relevant teaching for all students, not just ELLs. Furthermore, according to Karathanos (2010), promoting students’ native language in literacy and academic achievement overall challenges the “coercive relations of power that have traditionally oppressed minority and underrepresented groups” (p. 61). Through their discourse, teachers construct meaning and transmit ideologies, usually painted over with underlying intentions or assumptions (Hawkins & Norton, 2009). Teachers, therefore, are in a critical position to either promote or challenge social norms and political agendas that reinforce the subordination of language groups (Karathanos, 2010). Schools that expect all children to learn different languages and cultures help to build a society that appreciates and promotes linguistic and cultural diversity (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

Research on the use of students’ L1 as an instructional tool follows, but regardless of where one is on the spectrum of the language debate, culturally relevant teaching means that teachers bridge the gap between their students’ language development and their access to literacy

skills. According to May (2011), “all teaching, however, is fluid. It seems unlikely that every action of any teacher could be categorized as culturally relevant” (p. 32). Nevertheless, no ELL program will succeed if it does not address issues of culturally relevant teaching (Juárez, 2008) that respects, enjoys, and affirms the diversity in our country (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

Program Models for English Language Learners

Before examining the research regarding the language of instruction, it is important to review the varying components of the available language programs. Described below are the four most common program models for ELLs (Honigsfeld, 2009) as well as basic evidence to either support or dispute their implementation. These models often lack a unifying definition (Branum-Martin, Foorman, Francis, & Mehta, 2010; De Jong, Gort, & Cobb, 2005; Honigsfeld, 2009;), as states and districts are allowed to modify their programming based on student needs. Therefore, it is important to note that the definitions that follow provide a general idea of what the program models might include.

English immersion. Those in support of immersion programs say that students need to be immersed in their second language in order to quickly acquire it (Goldenberg, 2004). In an English immersion program, the instruction is entirely in English, with proficient literacy in English as the intended result. In some immersion models, ELLs are physically isolated from their English-speaking peers and placed in a separate classroom with other ELLs where they receive English language instruction as well as content instruction (Lillie, et al., 2010). Then, they are moved to a mainstream classroom, as they are often expected to become proficient after one year (Honigsfeld, 2009; Lillie et al., 2010), and once there the amount of language support varies depending on how the school interprets the program’s definition and what resources, if any, are available. English immersion programs are also known as Structured or Sheltered English

Immersion (SEI), and are adopted models in California, Massachusetts, and Arizona. Arizona's state-mandated SEI program includes a four-hour block of English language development, while other content areas are put aside (Lillie, et al., 2010). As the research in this chapter demonstrates, English immersion is not a favorable program model due to its negative effects on student learning (Honigsfeld, 2009), and the absence of using the students' strengths in their primary language (Lillie et al., 2010). Indeed, "we learn best in the language we know best," (Goldenberg, 2004, p. 1647) and students are able to transfer their literacy skills from one language to another; therefore, learning to read in their first language helps ELLs learn to read in English (Teale, 2009).

English as a second language (ESL). As in English immersion, the intended result of this program model is for students to become literate in English. In an ESL program, students are instructed in English, their second language (also referred to as L2), and ESL programs vary depending on the level of supplemental native language support the students receive. For example, the "pull-out" model involves removing ELL students from the classroom to receive modified instruction from a specialist who may or may not speak the students' native language. Sometimes the specialist follows the same curriculum as the mainstream teacher, or the two teachers might provide curriculum closely aligned with each other. The "push-in" model places the specialist in the classroom, allowing for a format that looks more like co-teaching. The availability of qualified teachers, space and collaboration can determine the ESL model used (Honigsfeld, 2009) and its ability to improve language and literacy development.

Bilingual education. Bilingual models place ELLs in a classroom where instruction systematically incorporates the use of both English and the students' native language. With the growing number of Spanish-speaking students in the United States, (Durán, Roseth, & Hoffman,

2010; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Vaughn, et al., 2008; Lillie et al., 2010), bilingual programs are typically in English and Spanish. The Early-Exit or Transitional Bilingual models aim to help students quickly move from the bilingual program into the mainstream, English classroom. On the other hand, the Maintenance, Developmental, and Late-Exit models intend for students to develop and maintain literacy skills in their native language while also helping them develop these skills in English.

The amount of time spent using students' native language varies from program to program. In some cases, beginning with Kindergarten, students receive 90 percent of the instruction in their L1, and this is gradually reduced to 50 percent by the time they reach fifth grade. In other cases, students receive 50 percent of their instruction in their native language throughout the entire program (Honigsfeld, 2009; Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Dual language. Dual Language programs are also referred to as Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs, as in this model there are students from two language groups, aiming to enrich language minority (L1) and language majority (L2) students. As in the bilingual programs mentioned above, the amount of time spent in the minority language can vary, but they usually follow either the 90/10 or 50/50 model. The TWI model has the same focus of instruction on the core academic curriculum that other students experience in other programs (Christian, 1996; Thomas & Collier, 2003), except the goal of TWI is for language minority and language majority students to become literate in a second language while still maintaining literacy in their primary language (Christian, 1996; Scanlan & Zehrbach, 2010).

Although some research has shown that high quality instruction in general is beneficial for English language learners, when it comes to the actual impact of the language of instruction much

of the research cannot deny the positive results of using the students' primary language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2011).

Students across the country in these dual-language, TWI programs demonstrate excellent academic performance and bilingual proficiency (Scanlan & Zehrbach, 2010), scoring above their peers in alternative program models (Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2003). Thomas and Collier (2003) contend that the dual-language model is superior instruction compared to other programs for English language learners, as it does not provide "watered-down" instruction solely in social English. In TWI, students have full access to the core curriculum and are held accountable to the same academic standards.

When it comes to effective instructional practices, research attempts to solve the lingering debate over whether or not the program model, and consequently the language of instruction, has a direct impact on ELL student achievement.

Impact of Program Models for ELLs

As shown above, there are significant differences in instructional design, language of instruction, and teacher and student configuration in the various program models. All of these factors play a role in how ELLs succeed in school and whether their linguistic and cultural needs are being met.

English immersion. With some states mandating controversial English-only policies, researchers have studied the effects of this programming on English language learners' language and literacy development.

Lillie et al. (2010) and De Jong et al. (2005) both conducted studies on English immersion programs. Lillie et al. examined the four-hour SEI block in eighteen K-12 classrooms in five school districts throughout Arizona. In the SEI model, students receive instruction that explicitly

teaches English language skills, intending for students to become literate in English. While Coleman and Goldenberg (2011) stated that ELLs needed to be taught *literacy* skills explicitly, the explicit teaching of the English *language*, such as grammar and spelling, has very little effect on the actual acquisition of English (Lillie et al., 2010). Furthermore, after students were in the SEI program for a year, nearly two-thirds of the students either remained at their current level of language proficiency or they regressed (Lillie, et al., 2010).

Similar findings by De Jong et al. (2005) demonstrated the ineffectiveness of English immersion models. In the fall of 2002, a new bill was passed in Massachusetts, stating that English language learners would be schooled only in English using either Sheltered English Immersion or English mainstream classrooms, similar to initiatives passed in both California and Arizona. The new law clearly stated that the students would learn to read and write only in English. The rest of the law was often interpreted differently by different school districts or even between different classrooms within the same school (De Jong et al., 2005). Just as Lillie et al. (2010) found in Arizona, the expectation was that students would become proficient in the English language in one year, but De Jong et al. (2005) found that in Massachusetts the students were allowed to stay in the SEI program until they were ready to be mainstreamed. Teachers and administrators interviewed during this study said they made it their priority to review the ELL student's language acquisition to determine where the student was placed. Based on those results, the schools determined that students needed more time in a supported environment before they were ready to move into a mainstream classroom (De Jong et al., 2005).

One year is not enough time for students to become fully proficient in English (Ma, 2002), as additional research has shown that it takes three to five years for ELLs to acquire acceptable levels of English (Lillie, et al., 2010). These studies demonstrated that students in English

immersion program models, where instruction is entirely in English with no native language support, fall behind in language development in English.

Comparing program models. As Coleman and Goldenberg (2011) contended, ELLs benefit from effective reading instruction regardless of the language of instruction. Much of the research aims to investigate this claim by comparing English immersion models with those that offer minimum to maximum instruction in L1.

Some researchers have found that the language of instruction has little impact on students' literacy and language development. For example, Vaughn et al. (2008) studied the long-term effects of reading intervention on English language learners in either Spanish or English. The language of intervention reflected the language of instruction. Randomly selected first grade students at risk for reading difficulties were provided with reading intervention for fifty minutes a day for an entire year. The intervention included early literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness and word-level reading. Four groups of students were studied, two of which received additional one-on-one intervention in either of the two languages, and the other two received regular instruction with minimal intervention at the classroom level in either Spanish or English. Four years after the intervention, Vaughn et al. (2008) found that students who received intervention out-performed their peers with no significant difference in the results with regards to the language of instruction or intervention.

In two individual comparison studies Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, and Blanco (2007) and Durán et al. (2010) investigated the literacy development of randomly selected preschool-age English language learners in English immersion programs compared to students in two different bilingual programs, either transitional bilingual education (TBE) (Durán et al., 2010) or two-way immersion (Barnett et al., 2007).

In a TBE program, the language of instruction and communication is entirely in the students' native language, in this case Spanish, with only Spanish-speaking students (Durán et al., 2010). After students attend a TBE program they are typically gradually phased out of receiving L1 support and are placed in an English-only or ESL environment with minimal L1 support (Durán et al., 2010; Rolstad et al., 2005), such as in a pull-out or push-in model.

Aside from the difference in the language of instruction in the Barnett et al. (2007) and Durán et al. (2010) studies, all efforts were made to keep the two alternative classrooms the same, including materials, curriculum, and schedule. Both studies measured students' skills in vocabulary, letter-word identification, alliteration and rhyming in English and Spanish (Barnett et al., 2007; Durán et al., 2010), with many of the same assessments used in both studies.

While all students in either program made academic gains when looking at their pre- and post-test scores, the ELL students' vocabulary scores in the English immersion program fell behind their peers in the programs that offered native language instruction, including poorer scores in their native language. The decline in L1 scores for Spanish-speaking students is evidence that the English immersion program is "accompanied by" Spanish language loss (Barnett et al., 2007). Alternatively, the TWI program benefitted Spanish and English language development and literacy, including Spanish rhyming and English phoneme deletion. On the other hand, the English immersion program had similar results in promoting those skills, but only in English.

Although the researchers noted some limitations to their findings (Durán et al., 2011), including the validity of their comprehension assessments and the effect of the students' income level, the results of these studies assert that bilingual education supports L1 and literacy development without hindering the development of L2. The researchers ultimately concluded that

high quality education, with highly qualified teachers, significantly benefits English language learners in either language.

In national, longitudinal studies, Ramirez, Yuen and Ramey (1991), and Thomas and Collier (2002) gathered results from multiple studies on the various program models for English language learners. Over the course of seven years, researching 554 classrooms across five states, Ramirez et al. studied the impact of structured English immersion and two bilingual program models, early-exit and late-exit. In their interpretation of this longitudinal study, Dolson and Mayer (1992) concluded that neither the SEI nor early-exit models adequately prepared students for entrance into a regular English classroom. Thomas and Collier (2002) also found that students immersed in the English mainstream classes because their parents refused bilingual or ESL services showed significant decreases in reading and math achievement by fifth grade, and these students were typically the lowest achievers overall. They had the highest dropout rate and were retained more than any group studied.

As the program models increased the incorporation of the students' native language their achievement increased as well. According to Ramirez et al. (1991), students in the late-exit model were able to transfer concepts they learned in Spanish to English, as demonstrated on English tests, even though they had learned the majority of the concepts in Spanish. Furthermore, upon looking at students' reading scores in the eleventh grade, those students who received native language support in the elementary years showed greater achievement than those who did not (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Interestingly, regardless of the type of bilingual program, Spanish-speaking students performed higher than native-English speakers in reading when tested in their native language. Also, it is important to note that Thomas and Collier found that in the two-way immersion program the native-English speakers outperformed or equaled their peers in the

English immersion programs in all subject areas.

Research clearly demonstrates the positive impact of using the students' primary language (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2011; Goldenberg, 2004). Cummins (1991) found that literacy and cognitive skills that students learn in their primary language are transferred to their second language to the extent that they in fact do better cognitively and academically than students who only receive instruction in their second language (as cited in Brooks & Karathanos, 2009). Additionally, research shows definite benefits of bilingual models (i.e. TWI) for native English students as well.

The next step is incorporating the results from research in teacher preparation and professional development programs (Corerro et al., 2000). The following research shows, however, that many teachers are not well-prepared to meet the needs of ELLs, which may result in attitudes and approaches that hinder ELL academic achievement (Yoon, 2007, 2008).

Teacher Preparation and Perspectives toward ELL Education

The relationship between teacher preparation and student achievement is evident (Corerro et al., 2000; Williams, 2002). Likewise, the quality of preparation and professional development directly affect how teachers approach their practice and their students. Current research in ELL education investigates teachers' and their pedagogies, and how all teachers, not just those who are specialized in the area of ELL education, can effectively teach ELL students. The following research explores issues in teachers' preparation and perspectives toward ELL education.

Teacher preparation. According to the National Reading Panel (Corerro et al., 2000), when teachers are adequately prepared there are positive results for both the teachers and the students. Therefore, it makes sense that preservice and inservice teachers who are well-prepared can directly improve their teaching as well as improve student achievement (Corerro et al., 2000).

In other words, students of well-trained teachers have higher gains in reading than students of other teachers (Williams, 2002).

This would appear to be encouraging for the hope of success for ELL students. However, in spite of the rising number of ELLs, the majority of these students have teachers with limited to no preparation for supporting their unique needs or providing culturally relevant instruction (Au, 2002; Hite & Evans, 2006; Nieto, 2009). Research on ESL and foreign language teachers are often ignored in teacher preparation literature (George, 2009). The following studies demonstrate how teachers are unprepared for working with their ELLs and are in need of more adequate training.

In order to explore issues facing ELL teachers, Batt (2008) used both qualitative and quantitative methods to find out what challenges impede effective ELL instruction in Idaho as well as what professional development is needed to overcome those challenges. The study surveyed teachers who teach in a variety of program models, from English immersion programs to bilingual programs, offering an array of perspectives and experiences.

Twenty one percent of the teachers in Batt's study (2008) said that one of the three greatest challenges they face is their colleagues' lack of knowledge and skills in teaching ELL students. These teachers said that it is the mainstream teachers' and administrators' lack of knowledge and understanding of ELL education that creates the greatest frustration for them.

The respondents also ranked areas they thought needed the most improvement regarding professional development. Teachers felt that they needed the most help with involving parents (30%), but they also indicated comparable need for professional development in the areas of ELL curriculum (29%) and improving overall teaching methods for ELL students (about 26%). Although these percentages are measurably close, it appears overall the teachers in Batt's study

felt there was a great need for further education on how to be more effective in teaching their ELL students.

Other researchers have found that most teachers significantly lack adequate preparation for working with ELL students. In 2004, Li and Zhang conducted a case study of one sixth-grade ELL student, Mei, to explore possible causes as to why she continued to fail in school after having been in an ESL program for the two years before the study was conducted. The principal researcher saw Mei's reading scores (below preprimer level) as a strong indicator of her falling behind.

The results of this case study were similar to those of Batt (2008), where although the teachers had generally positive attitudes toward Mei, they were not well prepared to teach ELL students (Li & Zhang, 2004). One of the mainstream teachers indicated that Mei was his first ELL student and that he had not had adequate professional development to prepare him for working with Mei. Surprisingly, the ESL teachers that worked with Mei said they, too, did not have adequate preparation for working with Mei, and they were not certified in their field (Li & Zhang, 2004).

Unlike the previously discussed studies, George (2009) conducted an ethnographic study of four ESL teachers (three middle school teachers and one elementary teacher) and their perspectives of ELL education. This study provided an alternative view from the others as it focused on ESL teachers and how they felt detached and marginalized from mainstream teachers. The ESL teachers in this study taught in various program models, from sheltered immersion to bilingual models. The study began while the ESL teachers were in their pre-service years and continued into their second year for follow-up, allowing the researcher to analyze data that was collected over a period of time.

The teachers were interviewed formally and informally, and they were observed over fifty times during data collection. Sometimes the observations were taken from the back of the classrooms, but the majority of the observations included the researcher's participation in whatever capacity the teacher asked for, which helps "corroborate and inform the researcher's understandings of teachers' beliefs and practice" (George, 2009, p. 36).

Upon analysis of the data, the issues of marginalization, collaboration, school relationships, and the status of ESL teachers emerged as dominant themes (George, 2009). It appeared that the teachers in the study felt separated from their mainstream colleagues and were often treated as if they were not real teachers but rather they were there to offer support as a classroom aide. Based on the participants' beliefs, the researcher pointed out the need for mainstream teachers to be more educated in working with ELLs, and to work collaboratively with the ESL teachers (George, 2009), which supports findings from both Batt (2004) and Li and Zhang (2004). This study provided a unique point of view from the perspective of ESL teachers, and provides further evidence that teachers need more training that could ultimately adjust their perspectives toward ELL education.

The previously discussed studies indicate an increased need for professional development in ELL education, even, in some cases, for teachers who are assumed to have special training in this field. Indeed, research demonstrates the strong relationship between preparation and perspectives, as teachers without specific training related to ELL education tend to hold less supportive attitudes toward bilingualism or hold negative language stereotypes (i.e. Karathanos, 2010; Lee & Oxelson, 2006). The following section reviews research that specifically explores teachers' perspectives toward ELL education as it relates to student outcomes.

Teacher perspectives and attitudes. How teachers perceive their roles and

responsibilities, including expectations for their students and their confidence in using culturally relevant practices, can greatly influence student outcomes (Brooks & Karathanos, 2009; Yoon, 2007). According to Ray (2009), “teachers who display a high level of self-efficacy and translate that belief into action are very valuable indeed” (p. 134). The relationship between teachers’ attitudes and beliefs and student success is evident. According to Lee and Oxelson (2006), teachers’ attitudes toward ELLs directly relate to the effectiveness of their instruction. Research in the area of teachers’ perspectives and approaches illustrates this relationship.

Consistent with the findings in the above studies is Lee and Oxelson’s (2006) investigation into teachers’ attitudes toward the maintenance of students’ primary language and their relationship with the teachers’ level of training. Their analysis revealed that the attitudes of teachers who have training directly related to language acquisition and literacy for ELLs were significantly more positive than their colleagues who had not received such training.

Lee and Oxelson (2006) also found that teachers with more training were more effectively using culturally relevant practices in their classroom. These teachers shared the students’ language and culture in class, visited students’ homes to learn more about them, publicly praised students who know other languages, and explicitly encouraged students to maintain their native language. According to Lee and Oxelson (2006), these teachers felt that this was all part of connecting with and teaching the “whole child.” They conclude, “issues of linguistic and cultural diversity and language learning are no longer the concerns and challenges of language specialist teachers, but a critical educational matter that involves all teachers regardless of content area” (p. 463).

During their analysis, Lee and Oxelson (2006) found a direct positive relationship between teachers’ level of preparation and their attitudes toward students’ maintaining their L1.

Consequently, they stated that teachers' level of preparation has more influence on teachers' attitudes than their level of experience. The researchers did acknowledge, however, that this relationship may be due to the possibility that individuals with positive attitudes toward the maintenance of L1 tend to enter the fields of ESL or bilingual education and therefore receive more training in that area.

Yoon's 2007 case study of two middle school reading teachers demonstrates that in addition to adequate professional development teachers also need to acquire culturally relevant pedagogy. The researcher observed two teachers, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Young, and four ELL students almost every day throughout an entire semester. The students and teachers were interviewed formally and informally. In addition, Yoon observed the ELL students in their ESL classroom in order to make a comparison between their level of participation in the mainstream classrooms and their ESL classrooms.

Yoon (2007) found a significant difference between the two teachers and the students in their respective classrooms. Mr. Brown had "never seen [himself] as an ESL teacher" (p. 218). His ELL students hardly participated in his classroom. In addition, Mr. Brown rarely attempted to involve the ELL students in the classroom community, perpetuating the separation between the English-speaking students from the English language learners. On the other hand, Mrs. Young said she was a teacher of all students, regardless of their language or any other defining characteristic. According to Yoon (2007), Mrs. Young's ELL students were more comfortable, participated more, and there was a greater sense of community in the classroom. The researcher concluded that Mrs. Young's culturally relevant pedagogy regarding all students contributed significantly to her students' language and literacy success and the overall positive atmosphere in the classroom (Yoon, 2007).

In their case study of an early childhood teacher, Lee, Butler and Tippins (2007) examined a concept referred to as cross-cultural competence. The researchers aimed to understand one teacher's perspectives and knowledge of working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The researchers conducted interviews with Tiffany, who had been teaching first grade for six years. The interviews focused on Tiffany's experience, knowledge, and beliefs regarding diversity (Lee et al., 2007). According to Tiffany, "a classroom with children from other countries is not really diverse unless the children struggle with speaking English" (p. 44).

Similar to Mrs. Young in the previous study (Yoon, 2007), Tiffany had a positive attitude toward working with ELL students, she tried to make the content culturally relevant to all of her students, and she considered herself confident in her skills while working with ELLs (Lee et al., 2007). On the other hand, the study did not include any description of how Tiffany's perspectives affected her ELL students and whether or not they were making academic progress, but Tiffany stated that she had seen her students grow enough to not qualify for ESL services.

Although Lee et al. (2007) provided a close look into a teacher's perspectives toward cross-cultural competence, this particular study had a number of limitations. For example, observations of Tiffany's teaching practices and their impact on her students could have provided greater insight into what it means to have cross-cultural competence and how that actually affects ELL student achievement. Moreover, the researchers did not make any mention of the caliber of professional development Tiffany had had about working with ELLs, so it is difficult to conclude that her effectiveness with ELLs was related to her level of training. Finally, Tiffany's comments about diversity were unsettling, as she saw difficulty with English as the only criteria for a classroom to be considered diverse (Lee et al., 2007).

In 2008, Yoon conducted another case study to explain teachers' perspectives and their

resulting impact on how ELL students are put into powerless positions compared to non-ELL students. While current research does exist that explores teachers' beliefs toward English language learners, Yoon's 2008 case study is in response to the lack of research on how teachers' views of their roles and pedagogical practices actually impact ELL students and their participation in the classroom. Specifically, the researcher sought to discover how teachers can position themselves into power and "intentionally or unintentionally position the students in more positive or more negative ways through their teaching approaches" (p. 3).

The research participants included three classroom teachers and six ELL students, two from each classroom. It is important to note that two of the three teachers in this study were also included in Yoon's 2007 study, Mrs. Young and Mr. Brown. None of the participating teachers had any advanced professional development in the area of ELL education.

In order to gather information on the students' positioning, the researcher focused on what the students and teachers said during classroom activities along with their responses during interviews. Positioning is important to ELL education, as it can increase or decrease a student's willingness to participate in learning (Yoon, 2008). Yoon (2008) asserts that ELL students are more comfortable in ESL classrooms as opposed to mainstream classrooms due to the underlying power relations found in a regular classroom. The researcher found that the teachers' positioning of themselves as either teachers of all students, as teachers for regular education, or as teachers for one subject was directly related to how the ELLs participated in the classroom (Yoon, 2008). It is also important to note that the non-ELL students followed their teacher's model in interacting with the ELL students (Yoon, 2008), which perpetuated the power relations in the classroom, whether they were negative or positive.

Comparable to Yoon's (2008) study on teacher and student interactions, Craighead and

Ramanathan (2007) investigated three middle school teachers' verbal and nonverbal interactions with their ELL students. Craighead and Ramanathan reported that the three participants used effective positive verbal and nonverbal reinforcements with all of their students, such as verbal praise, smiling, and writing instructions on the board. However, ELLs received significantly less verbal and nonverbal interactions compared to their English-speaking peers (Craighead & Ramanathan, 2007). For example, native English speakers received three times as many smiles, winks, or laughter than the ELLs. Craighead and Ramanathan (2007) concluded that the teachers "did not have the ... self-confidence needed to address adequately the issues that ELLs have" (p. 68). Mainstream teachers may be effective with their English-speaking students, but, as this study demonstrated, teachers' socio-emotional approaches that work for English speakers are not always utilized with ELLs (Craighead & Ramanathan, 2007). Likewise, this study demonstrated a gap between teachers' awareness of effective positive reinforcement strategies and their actual implementation in the classroom.

To investigate teachers' attitudes toward the use of students' native language in the classroom, Karathanos (2009) surveyed pre-service and in-service teachers in suburban Kansas. Research discussed in previous sections of this chapter has shown that the use of students' primary language (L1) does in fact foster cognitive growth and allows students to have access to the content areas while learning English at the same time (Karathanos, 2009). Due to the lack of teachers who are qualified in bilingual education, the majority of ELL students are found in mainstream classrooms (Calderón et al., 2011; Karathanos, 2009; Yoon, 2008) with a teacher who, more often than not, only speaks English (Nieto, 2009).

The 327 teachers surveyed in Karathanos' study fit into three categories: pre-service, untrained (experienced teachers with no ESL training), and trained (experienced teachers with at

least nine credits of ESL coursework). The researcher mentioned other similar studies conducted in California and other coastal regions, but the participating teachers were often bilingual themselves, a factor that significantly contributes to one's perspectives of ELLs and their education (Karathanos, 2009). Therefore, in order to focus the participants even more, Karathanos ensured that the majority of teachers (66.1%) did not report speaking a second language.

The purpose of the study was to see if there exists a relationship between teachers' theoretical and practical support of the method of using L1 in instruction and the teachers' experience or grade level. The study found a positive relationship between experience and theoretical support for the use of L1 throughout all grade levels of teaching. However, the study found a discrepancy between teachers' theoretical support and actual practical use of L1 in the classroom (Karathanos, 2009). In other words, while teachers, even those experienced and trained in ESL and language acquisition, theoretically supported the use of L1, they generally did not implement this practice in the classroom, with a significant decline in the secondary grades. While many teachers speak of positive ideologies toward ELL students and the incorporation of L1 in the classroom, their practical use of these theories and pedagogies is limited.

Summary

When it comes to choosing the right program model for English language learners, schools and administrators should not consider this as a "one-size-fits-all" case (Goldenberg, 2004; Honigsfield, 2009; Ma, 2002). Providing students with instruction through their native language, or at least providing native language support at minimum, has a positive impact on ELLs' language development and overall academic achievement (Brooks & Karathanos, 2009; Calderón et al., 2011; Christian, 1996; Dolson & Mayer, 1992; Durán et al., 2010; Goldenberg, 2004; Ma, 2002; Ramiriez et al., 1991; Teale, 2009). In addition, using ELL students' primary language

responds to their culture and heritage (Au, 2002; Delpit, 2009; Nieto, 2009), which plays an important role in culturally relevant teaching that aims to improve the social and academic well-being of this diverse group of students.

In light of the research reviewed above, teacher education should focus on language acquisition and development so teachers better understand the effectiveness of the program models available for ELLs (Corerro et al., 2000) that help improve their language and literacy development. Preparation and professional development contribute largely to a teacher's ability to effectively educate his or her English language learners (Williams, 2002). Today's ELLs are typically taught by teachers who are under-qualified in this area (Au, 2002; Nieto, 2009; Yoon, 2008). Due to this lack of proper training, the attitudes and perspectives of teachers toward ELLs and their education generally appear to be more negative than positive.

Teachers' negative attitudes and approaches can certainly hinder ELL academic achievement and language development. In their 1991 study, Ramirez et al. found that teachers sometimes punished students for the use of their native language (as cited in Dolson & Mayer, 1992), certainly conflicting with culturally relevant practices. The research illustrates how teachers' perspectives and approaches toward ELL education impact student participation, engagement and achievement (i.e. Brooks & Karathanos, 2009; Craighead & Ramanathan, 2007; Karathanos, 2009; Yoon 2007, 2008).

This project extends the research on teachers' perspectives toward ELL education in English mainstream classrooms, a program model widely used throughout the country despite the research defending dual language programs. More specifically, this project looks at how preparation, professional development, and other factors contribute to teachers' attitudes toward

the use of students' L1 for social and academic purposes. More information regarding the methods used in this project can be found in chapter three of this report.

Chapter Three

Methods

For this ethnographic case study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), my ultimate goal was to survey and interview teachers who taught students with varying levels of English proficiency and had a range of exposure to the effects of native language use in the classroom. Furthermore, it was important to find teachers with varying degrees of experience and training specifically designated toward the education of English language learners to help identify any possible connections between training and attitude. After participants were identified, each was asked to complete a survey followed by individual guided interviews, which are explained in more detail below.

Participants

I sought participants who had at least one year of experience teaching English language learners. The 36 certified teachers at the participating school were given a brief questionnaire asking them to state their degree of experience teaching English language learners, their level of training in ELL education, and their willingness to participate in the case study. Nine teachers responded to the questionnaire, five of whom had experience teaching ELLs and were willing to participate in the study. The low response rate may have been due to the busy time of year, as teachers worked to complete report cards, or there may have been a lack of interest among teachers about language diversity issues. It is also possible that due to the small number of ELLs at the school many teachers did not feel that their experiences with their current classroom population would be relevant for the study. I asked four other teachers with experience teaching ELLs to participate in the study. I chose them due to their orientation toward culturally relevant teaching and expressed attitudes toward native language use in the classroom. At the time of the

study, one was teaching preschool-aged children, two taught Kindergarten, one taught first grade, two taught third grade, one taught a combined fourth and fifth grade class, and two taught music to Kindergarten through fifth grade. Table 3.1 displays the teacher demographics for this study.

Table 3.1

Demographics for the Nine Participants

	N
Grade Level	
Preschool	1
Kindergarten	2
First	1
Second	0
Third	2
Fourth/Fifth combined	1
K-5 th Music	2
Teaching Experience	
1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	0
More than 10 years	6
Training Focused on ELLs	
None	5
half- or full-day training	2
At least one university course	1
Licensed in ESL or bilingual education	1
Years teaching ELLs	
None or in the first year	2
1-2 years	1
3-5 years	2
More than 5 years	4
Currently teach ELLs	
Yes	8
No	1
Fluent in a language other than English	
Yes	1
No	8

The participants' experiences reflect a range of time in the field, from first-year novice to others who have taught for more than thirty years. Similarly, the level of training designated specifically to the teaching of ELLs ranged from no training at all to one teacher who is fully licensed in the areas of English as a second language and bilingual education (ESL/BE), though the majority of the participants had little to no specific training.

The school is located in a middle-to-upper class suburb while nearly fifty percent of the student population takes a bus to school from a more urban neighborhood, where the majority of the ELL students live. The majority of the 65 ELLs, making up 12.7% of the total school population, were in a regular education classroom taught by a mainstream teacher and received varying degrees of additional linguistic support from me and one other bilingual resource teacher. The one teacher licensed in ESL/BE taught preschool in the afternoons, and her class had officially been identified as using the bilingual program model, serving 11 of the total 65 ELLs at the school (16.9% of the total ELLs; 2% of the total school population). A bilingual resource specialist, a non-certified position, provided ongoing native language support to students in one of the Kindergarten classrooms every morning, in addition to serving as a bilingual and cultural liaison between the school and home.

Once participants were chosen, data collection commenced. This qualitative research study used ethnographic methods including a teacher survey and a guided interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Teacher Survey

The teacher survey (Appendix A) used Lee and Oxelson's original (2006) as a framework. Teachers indicated their degree of agreement toward statements regarding the maintenance of students' native language, perceptions of bilingualism in academic and social

contexts, and teacher practices in the classroom. Teachers responded to statements about the incorporation of native language in the classroom, the responsibility for supporting the maintenance of students' native language, and how teachers might foster an environment that supports a belief in the benefits of building a multilingual society. Each statement was assessed with a 1 (disagree) to 4 (agree) Likert-type scale. Teachers were encouraged to support their responses by writing comments on the lines that followed each statement. These comments were also analyzed and addressed during individual interviews.

The survey was initially piloted with a program support teacher who provides support for ESL and bilingual programming in fourteen elementary schools in the participating school district. This teacher has expansive experience teaching ELLs as well as educating teachers on language diversity issues. After reviewing the survey with this teacher, revisions were made in order to eliminate any statements that would have led the participants toward a particular opinion.

I distributed the surveys to all participants who were given a week to complete the survey. At the end of the week, participants placed their completed survey in my school mailbox or returned it by hand. All nine of the participants completed their surveys in one week.

Individual Interview

Survey responses were kept confidential but not anonymous in order to use the participants' answers as a guide for individual interviews. The guided interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) targeted teachers' attitudes toward bilingualism in today's society, beliefs about the impact of maintaining students' native languages, and classroom practices they engaged in toward these ends (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Teachers were asked to explain the purposes and motivation for these practices and how they found these to be culturally relevant. Interviews,

lasting from 30 to 60 minutes, were individually conducted in the teachers' classrooms outside of school operation hours. Each interview and necessary follow-up questions were audio-recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed for emergent themes, as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2011).

Data Analysis

Survey responses and interview transcriptions were reviewed and analyzed to find any common themes that might demonstrate a relationship between teachers' training and their attitudes toward the use of students' native language in the classroom. Analysis began with reviewing individual participant responses to the survey statements, first looking at how they scored each statement and then reviewing their written comments. I took note of any scores of 1 or 4, which showed stronger opinions on the given statement. Then, participants were compared to see if they shared similar opinions in order to make a generalized assertion of their perspectives. Additionally, teachers with similar responses were compared with each other to determine whether or not they had similar backgrounds in training that might have led them to their opinions.

After the analysis of survey responses, interviews were analyzed in a similar fashion by looking for common themes. During the interviews teachers spoke about other sources of their opinions. Since the majority of the participants had little to no training that was specifically dedicated to the teaching of ELLs, it was important to determine what other factors contributed to teachers' attitudes and whether or not teachers shared these motivations. For this purpose, it was important to examine the school's vision statement (Appendix B), which is discussed in further detail in the following chapters. The vision statement was analyzed in order to determine

whether it contained language that would hold teachers accountable for using culturally relevant practices. An explanation of the subsequent findings can be found in chapter four of this paper.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This section reports the combined findings from the teacher surveys and individual interviews as they answer the questions for this case study. Data are presented and discussed in terms of the potential sources of teachers' attitudes with a particular focus on any related training regarding ELL education as well as other sources for teachers' attitudes. To preserve anonymity, pseudonyms are used for all participant and student names.

The analysis of both the survey and interview data revealed that while the majority of the participating teachers (seven out of nine) had limited or no training related to the education of ELLs or the importance of using students' native language in the classroom, all participating teachers had somewhat to very supportive attitudes related to that issue. This result came as a surprise; the majority of the teachers in the study had been in their profession for a long time, which would lead one to assume they had had a variety of professional development opportunities that would have included additional training for teaching ELLs. As a result of this finding it was necessary to make further inquiry into the source of the participants' supportive attitudes.

Similar to Karathanos' (2009) study on teachers' attitudes, there appears to be a discrepancy between teachers' positive attitudes toward the use of L1 in the classroom and their self-efficacy for doing so. In other words, while teachers theoretically supported the use of L1, they generally did not consider this an integral part of their practice in the classroom due to expressed limited knowledge or skills, such as not speaking their students' languages.

The survey given to teachers before their interviews provided them with a chance to reflect on their practices and perspectives. In addition to questions about using students' native

languages in the classroom, teachers were asked to respond to questions about who has the responsibility of maintaining students' native languages and the importance of learning English in today's society. The collective responses to selected survey items on this particular theme are displayed on Table 4.1, demonstrating the range of teachers' attitudes on some of the important issues in ELL education.

Table 4.1

Teacher Responses to Selected Survey Items

	1*	2	3	4
8. Schools should help students maintain their native language		1	3	4
9. Schools should try to provide instruction in students' native language.	1	2		6
10. Teachers should encourage students to use their native language at school.		1	2	6
13. Children should spend more time learning English than their native language.	2	2	3	2
14. Everyone in this country should learn English.	1	1	5	2
15. It is valuable to be multilingual in our society.			1	8
18. It is important for students to be highly literate in both their native language and in English.			3	6

* Extent of agreement on a 1 (disagree) to 4 (agree) Likert-type scale

While there are some differences in responses amongst a few teachers, the general attitude of the participants was positive. In response to item #8 regarding the school's responsibility for helping students maintain their native language, one teacher did not indicate her level of agreement, but rather expressed her thoughts by writing in the space provided, "how? So much is required of classroom teachers now. Immersion classes? What about non-Spanish speaking ELL children? How do we provide for all?" Another teacher, who responded

at a level 2, wrote that this was “impossible. Too many languages.” These responses demonstrate a concern for ELL students of all language backgrounds and the dilemma schools face when they provide native language support for one language group but not the others. The first teacher’s comment also shows a growing level of stress that other teachers in this study expressed when it comes to doing what is best for all students; teachers work very hard to provide instruction that helps all students learn within their varying levels of strengths and abilities, but asking them to provide the additional layer of native language support appeared overwhelming for some.

Also, in response to item #14, teachers who strongly agreed that everyone should learn English also commented that everyone should be proficient in at least one other language. One teacher wrote that learning English “allows for better access to resources. But, I don’t like to say people HAVE to learn English in order to be ‘real Americans.’ That’s way too assimilationist.” These comments demonstrate their supportive attitudes toward being multilingual in our society, as sustained by their responses to item #15.

The range of responses to item #13 reflects a mixed opinion about which language students should learn. One teacher commented that there should be a balance between students’ learning of English and their native language, and that it should depend on the students’ needs. One explanation for the range of responses could be due to the wording of the statement. Learning content through a language is different than learning the language itself. Therefore, some teachers may have responded thinking it indicated that students should spend more time learning through English, as in SEI programming, rather than through their native language, as in bilingual or dual-language programming. Other teachers understood the statement to indicate that students should spend more time learning the language of English rather than their native language. Due to this possible confusion, participants were asked to respond to a revised

statement that read “Children should spend more time learning through English than their native language,” and they were explained the difference between learning through a language in contrast to learning a language itself. Of the nine participants, seven responded to the revised survey statement. Their revised responses are displayed in Table 4.2.

The revised responses show a minimal change from their original opinions. Upon reviewing the new statement, teachers who agreed more strongly about students learning through English said they felt students should learn through their native language outside of school while English should be the language of classroom instruction. After analyzing her own language learning experiences, one teacher, who responded at a level 3, said there should be a balance: “I strongly disagree with dropping a native language cold turkey. I just feel that it can sometimes be beneficial [for students] to think in the new language.”

Table 4.2

Teacher Responses to Revised Survey Item #13

	1*	2	3	4
13. Children should spend more time learning through English than their native language.	1		3	3

* Extent of agreement on a 1 (disagree) to 4 (agree) Likert-type scale

After the analysis of the surveys, interviews were conducted to provide participants with the opportunity to elaborate on their perspectives and attitudes. In general, despite the mixed feelings shown in the survey data, most participants supported the use of students’ native languages in the classroom. Teachers tended to give reasons for doing so either for the benefit of the ELL students or for that of the entire classroom. The following excerpt from an interview with Jenny, a Kindergarten teacher, demonstrates the perspective shared by most of the teachers in the study who described using their students’ native language for the benefit of their ELLs:

At the beginning of the year, I would do math stories in Spanish where we would start out with a theme and... I would ask Emily, [the bilingual classroom aide], “How do you say *bear*?” and then “How do you say *big bear* and *little bear*?” and we would make motions for *big* and *little* and *bear*. And “How do you say *sleeping bear*?” *Durmiendo*. So we’d act out some of the vocabulary so some of the ELL kids could be part of the math story. And then I try to say words here and there so they know that I value it. I try to talk to them about how bilingual is smart. It’s smart. And then it’s interesting. Because we’ve made such an emphasis about Spanish, other kids have brought their own experience with that. Like Jordan’s mom travels to China so he’s learning Chinese, he’s talking about Chinese. And Lucas has talked about...some words in Hungarian.

Jenny’s efforts to include the native languages of her students appear to have a positive impact on the rest of her students, even those who are not identified as ELLs. As in Yoon’s (2008) study of teacher positioning in the classroom, the non-ELL students followed their teacher’s model in interacting with the ELL students, which can perpetuate the power relations in the classroom in a positive way.

Tammy, who had been teaching music for 38 years, had no professional preparation to teach ELLs and minimal training regarding multicultural education. However, she also thought that using students’ native language in the classroom was important for the benefit of ELLs:

I just really believe in being as diverse as I can in the classroom. I think it helps the kids from a different culture; it validates them to a certain extent, shows them that we value their language and value the culture. That’s something I feel very strongly, so that’s why I do it.

In this case, Tammy refers not only to ELL students but also all students from non-

mainstream cultural backgrounds. As a music teacher who works with all of the students in the building she has the opportunity to impact a larger number of students than most classroom teachers. Her positive attitude toward showing students that she values their diverse languages and cultures can also influence how non-ELLs and culturally mainstream students address diversity in their own lives (Yoon, 2008).

When Jenny found out that she was going to have Spanish-speaking ELL students in her classroom for the 2011-2012 school year, she took it upon herself to learn more about her students' language by attending a language exchange group that met after school at another elementary school. During this exchange, she and other adults learned Spanish while Spanish-speaking parents learned English. During part of the program, adults from each language group were paired up with those from the alternate language group to work on communicating in one language at a time. When asked about why she participated in this she explained that it was due to her determination to be able to communicate better with her ELLs:

It just seemed like a responsibility that I had. At the beginning of the year I didn't know them at all as people because I couldn't talk to them. But it just seemed...my responsibility was to learn how to communicate with them. It was really hard to have three kids that I could not communicate with at all. I think part of it was I was really worried that I wasn't going to be able to teach them anything because I couldn't talk to them at all. Plus it's just really fun when I learn something, like when I learned *backpack* was *mochila* and I said, "Mochila?" and Antonio went "Yes" (nodding). So I was like, "OK we got something!" I don't know. I felt like it was my responsibility. They had to learn English so I need to learn their language, too.

Jenny's comments bring up some important issues when working with ELLs. First of all,

this demonstrates Jenny's basic understanding that she needed to communicate with ELLs in their native language to create a more welcoming environment in her classroom. She also understands the importance of connecting and communicating with her students in the first place. She feels it is not enough to teach her students, but also she needs to communicate with and reach her students on a deeper level. Finally, it appears that she feels it is her responsibility to learn their language, which is an issue often brought up in many sociopolitical debates that center around the idea that students should only be taught in English (Goldenberg, 2004). She acknowledges her students' role in learning English, and she feels that she should learn their language as well.

Alexandra, who teaches a combined classroom of fourth and fifth grade, feels that using students' native language in the classroom benefits ELLs and serves as an integral part of teaching her whole class about our diverse society. She has spent significant time living in countries of which she did not speak the language, so she feels it is important for students to be aware of languages on a much more global scale:

I think that part of my role as a teacher is to expose kids to things that they might not be exposed to in their daily home life. One [reason for that] is for kids who have a different background, to make that norm so they don't feel like "the other." You know, there's all different stripes. I think the idea of different perspectives is really important. One easy and fun way to do that is incorporate different languages. When I came into teaching I saw as my biggest strength is I have a worldly background that I can come and share. But teaching is more about having kids explore things and grow on their own, it's not about teachers transmitting stuff. But the whole language thing was something that was important to me before I became a teacher.

Similar to Tammy's comments that reflected a need to show students she values their diversity, Alexandra's comments demonstrate the importance of doing this for academic reasons as well. She feels that students will truly learn something from this exposure in addition to students learning how to appreciate, respect and value the diversity around them.

While it was expected that training had a significant impact on teachers' attitudes, this study found that training is not the only factor that contributes to teachers' attitudes. Tasha, who had no training in ELL education until after being a teacher for several years, said,

I think it's [from] my hippie parents. They always taught me that everybody's the same, that you should respect everyone, their family background, their ethnicity, that you should never try to change anybody. [That is why] I've always argued with people that think that English should be the only language.

The way her parents raised her, with an attitude of acceptance, may strongly contribute to her overall attitude toward culturally relevant teaching and the importance of using the students' native language, which demonstrates her feelings about respecting her students' background and culture. Since Tasha was the only participant licensed in the area of ESL and bilingual education, it was important to analyze the remaining teachers' attitudes in relation to their possible sources to better determine if there was in fact a relationship. Since the remaining teachers did not have significant training in ELL education, they were asked to reflect on how they thought their attitudes were cultivated.

As in the case with Tasha, Rita and Tammy both noted that their attitudes were strongly influenced by their own family environment. Rita said that while her father is "very conservative" she has a sister who is "super liberal" and fluent in Spanish. She said her sister "always talked about bilingual education [being] super important, super cool. And there's my

dad who's the flipside, who...thinks it's great learning a new language but you also need to learn English." Rita feels that her opinions about the importance of learning English in order to "function well in our society" probably come from her father and had nothing to do with any of her university coursework.

Likewise, Tammy attributes some of her attitudes to her home environment growing up: I think I had it to start with. My parents would bring [home] kids who were from Africa and Afghanistan, places like that. We lived near a college town, and there would be kids who had no place to go on holidays, and so my parents were always bringing somebody to stay with us for holidays so they wouldn't be alone in a dormitory. So that kind of started it.

These comments made by both Tammy and Rita demonstrate another factor that influences teachers' attitudes about cultural diversity and how they might approach culturally relevant practices. It appears that a teacher's family background and home environment contribute to his or her subsequent attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity in his or her teaching career. It also brings up the question as to whether or not professional training or teacher preparation programs are enough to influence teachers who might have been cultivating negative attitudes since childhood, which is discussed further in the following chapter.

While the majority of teacher's responses appeared to be in support of using students' native language in the classroom, one teacher expressed general doubts in dual-language and bilingual programming. Due to the lack of training on the subject, most teachers acknowledged they did not know whether or not the research showed it was benefiting students, and Marie wonders if bilingual and dual-language programming is meeting everyone's needs:

Why did these families move to the US if they're going to continue to speak Spanish? It

seems as though those families say to us, “I want to learn English” and they say they want to come here for a better life and that things are better here in the US. So I love and respect all that. By us having classes that are 90% in Spanish, are we really meeting the needs of what those families want? I think it meets the needs of the Caucasian families. Is it important to the parents [of ELLs] to hang on to [their language]? Or is it us as educators that don’t want them to lose it?

Marie’s comments demonstrate how teachers like her reflect on students’ family life and how being a parent herself helps her consider how her students’ families might approach their school experiences. During her interview she spoke highly of bilingual programming with regards to maintaining students’ native language, and she acknowledged the cultural relevance in its practices, stating that she would have placed her own children in a dual-language program had they been in place when her children were younger. However, she is still not certain that the programming is what is best for our students and society: “I think it’s neat. I think it’s still too new to formulate exactly how I think it’s going to go, but I’m pleasantly surprised about how well it’s going.”

When dual-language programs became more prevalent in the district, many teachers were worried about their own job security. Reflecting on this, both Marie and Jenny were concerned that the emergence of these programs would pose a threat to monolingual teachers. Marie said,

When I started hearing about the program I was pretty pessimistic. For several reasons: comments that I heard from other people, and it’s still stuck in my mind that those teachers are going to replace the teachers that can only speak English, so that’s a threat.

As bilingual programming grows in their school district, teachers are moved around in order to make room for bilingual teachers who are qualified to instruct in Spanish, leaving some

teachers to wonder how long it will be until they are moved.

While it appeared that most teachers generally had expressed supportive attitudes toward the use of students' native language, some teachers felt like they were not doing enough of this or did not know how to do it more effectively. All teachers in this study, including the one teacher who is licensed in ESL and bilingual education, stated in similar ways that they felt they could do more to improve their practice. This sentiment may be best demonstrated by Alexandra, who makes an effort to expose her students to diversity in a variety of ways:

There are things that I thought I could do that I never follow through with as much as I maybe could. For example, now in our morning meeting we do all of our greetings in Japanese and I've always thought we should do a language a month and... try and use the home languages in the room. Have their parents teach us how to say the greetings, and it wouldn't be maintaining their home language because it would just be a greeting, but at least to have their classmates talking in their language even if it's just for our "Good morning, how are you?" But I've never followed through and made that happen.

Similarly, Marie, a Kindergarten teacher, has a reputation at her school for reaching out to families, having a constant flow of parent volunteers in her classroom, and knowing a lot about where her students come from. In response to statement #26 on the survey regarding the effort teachers put forth to learn about their students' native language and culture, Marie feels that she could "get better at this. It's so much fun learning from the kids and their families."

With regards to using students' languages in the classroom, Jenny feels the same way. After eighteen years of teaching she feels "there's a lot more I could do. I could be a lot better about planning for it. I just don't think like that yet. It usually comes up on the moment."

This finding agrees with those of Karathanos (2009), showing that while teachers, even

those experienced and trained in ESL and language acquisition, theoretically approved of the use of L1, they generally did not implement this practice in the classroom. Looking at this case study in particular, this may be due to the overall lack of training in this area, where teachers might be unsure of how to best do this even though they know it will benefit their students. Furthermore, some teachers expressed doubts in their own ability to implement this in their classroom even when they knew of some strategies to do so.

Indeed, this lack of self-efficacy may relate to other systematic processes. During data analysis the school's vision statement was examined to determine if it contained any language that would hold teachers accountable to using culturally relevant practices, with particular focus on using L1 in the classroom. Currently, the participating school's vision for their students, which can be found as Appendix B, is stated in vague terms featuring the areas of citizenship, living as a community, building a relationship to the environment, academic learning, and growing socially and emotionally. A few points are explained within each area, and the vision states that students will grow in these areas through a school community based upon collaborative relationships. The vision does not make any mention of communicating through students' native languages; therefore, teachers most likely do not feel any institutionalized pressure to do so in the classroom. The implications of these findings, recommendations, and limitations to this study are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Previous research has shown that teacher attitudes significantly affect their teaching practice and have an impact on student participation, engagement and achievement (Karathanos, 2009; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Yoon, 2007, 2008). Teachers who lack appropriate training of basic language acquisition principles often hold common misperceptions about issues relevant to ELL education (Karathanos, 2010), which can contribute to a teacher's lack of self-efficacy and therefore negatively impact students. Due to this relationship one should not accept any amount of negativity in teacher attitudes toward ELLs, as they can have detrimental effects and are certainly cause for concern. Fortunately, this study reveals a generally supportive attitude held by the participating teachers with regards to using students' native language in the classroom. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, in spite of these attitudes teachers still feel like they do not know how to best go about implementing these practices in the classroom. This chapter discusses ways to empower teachers to implement more culturally relevant practices in their classroom, explores possible reasons for teachers' lack of confidence in doing so, and describes some limitations to the study's findings.

Improved Professional Development and a Clear Vision

It appears that the teachers in this study feel appropriate pressure from their administration and the community to meet the needs of all students. To be considerate of this, professional development should be implemented in a time-sensitive manner so as to not overwhelm teachers who already have busy schedules. Moreover, immediate and effective professional development is needed so all teachers are prepared to effectively teach ELLs, rather than waiting until an ELL is placed in their classroom. The one teacher licensed in ESL and

bilingual education, Tasha, said there is no harm to mainstream teachers in learning more about how to better meet the needs of our ELLs: “I know they’re busy with big classrooms, but you can go into small groups and that works. Learning a few words in another language doesn’t hurt anybody. I think we should have a class for them, for other teachers.” For example, further training would show teachers who do not speak their students’ native languages that they can indeed effectively support students in maintaining their native language. Danielle does this by showcasing her students’ languages for the whole class.

I have two girls that are Indian, one for sure speaks Hindi, and her parents do at home a little bit. She doesn’t know a lot of it. But sometimes she’ll ask me, “Can I share this word?” A couple weeks ago she wanted to share how to say *elephant* in Hindi, and I was like, “Sure!”

Teachers who show interest, give encouragement, and treat the language as a resource demonstrate to students that their cultural and linguistic identities are important (Yoon, 2007, 2008). Teachers can do this through verbal comments that indeed spread a positive attitude to non-ELL peers, and showcasing their languages in the classroom by using it in literacy activities such as writing, songs or stories.

The results of this study demonstrate a need for further training and professional development in the area of language acquisition and bilingual education. Teachers would see how bilingual education improves student learning and promotes cognitive abilities as it helps to reduce the sociopolitical subordination of minority languages in our country. Furthermore, quality training can help increase the positive self-efficacy of teachers so they feel better prepared to use students’ native language in the classroom even if they do not speak the languages of their students (Karathanos, 2009, 2010). Appropriate and directed professional

development would cultivate a more positive learning environment that supports linguistic diversity, dispels myths about the language of instruction, and empowers teachers with a strong foundation of best practices in working with English language learners. Due to the steady increase of English language learners in public schools, all teachers, pre-service and in-service alike, need to be prepared with a positive pedagogy and best practices that will help linguistically diverse students attain academic success.

Since the majority of the teachers in the study had little-to-no training in this area yet still had supportive attitudes, it is difficult to conclude with conviction that training would have a direct positive impact on any teachers who might carry negative attitudes. In spite of this, it is recommended that further training is necessary, but one would need to take great care in designing professional development that reaches deeply into teachers' attitudes. Karathanos (2009) suggests that professional development should include critical reflection where "teachers are guided to question common assumptions and misperceptions" (p. 629) they may have regarding ELL education. Pappamihiel (2007) asserts that it is possible to shift teachers' beliefs and attitudes through self-reflection and service learning projects that provide them with meaningful experiences. This type of professional development could open the doors of teachers' emotions so they truly believe in the need for improving their culturally relevant practices.

With this in mind, it is important to consider the backgrounds of current teachers and teaching candidates. If teachers already have a supportive attitude on the issue, then I assume they would easily take to the professional development. The question, then, pertains to teachers who may have learned negative attitudes from an early age. These are teachers who strongly believe that using students' native language for academic purposes does not benefit ELLs in any

way. One may find it difficult to completely erase unsupportive attitudes that were cultivated for many years, but, as mentioned above, professional development should be carefully designed so it not only shows teachers the benefits of culturally relevant practices but also ingrains the belief that they are necessary for the academic health of ELLs.

The school district in which these teachers work is moving forward with initiatives to highlight the need for more culturally relevant practices in response to data that demonstrates an achievement gap between students of diverse racial groups. These initiatives that focus on African American students should also be applied to English language learners. If teachers were to learn about the benefits of using students' native language in the classroom as a reflection of culturally relevant practices, perhaps they might apply this knowledge to their instruction as much as they consider culturally relevant practices for other minority groups. As a teacher in the participating school district, I have seen colleagues who, after learning about culturally relevant strategies for African American students, immediately apply these practices in their classroom and enjoy the success they see as a result. While we cannot deny the data that demonstrates a need for culturally relevant practices to support the education of African American students, I suggest the district focus on including ELLs in this professional development, with particular stress on the importance of incorporating students' native language as a culturally relevant practice. I believe teachers would react in the same way as they do with professional development focused on African Americans.

In some cases, it appears that teachers are skeptical of bilingual programming because it threatens the survival of their career. Marie and Jenny's comments about fearing for their job security made me wonder how that might affect a teacher's attitude toward using students' native language in the classroom. According to Tauber (1998), teachers' biases directly affect their

approaches toward students, and Yoon (2007, 2008) demonstrated that these biases have an impact on student learning. If teachers are afraid to lose their jobs due to the growing presence of bilingual and dual-language programs, I speculate this fear would affect how they approach practices in their own classroom. In other words, some teachers might not support bilingual programming because they see it as a threat to their jobs, so these teachers most likely are not interested in seeing bilingual programs succeed. Consequently, these teachers might find no use for their students' native language in the classroom, which means these teachers struggle to find the benefits of this culturally relevant practice.

At first glance it would appear that these teachers are unsupportive of proven methods, but these attitudes could be the result of systemic processes for teacher allocation that threatens their job placement in the first place. To remedy this issue, I recommend a shift in teacher preparation and professional development requirements that would ensure all teachers have certified endorsement in the education of ELLs. In order to renew their licenses, current teachers should be required to take quality training that improves their practices with ELLs (Craighead & Ramanathan, 2007) and unpacks any biases they may have (Karathanos, 2009). This would ensure that all teachers are highly qualified to teach ELLs, surely a benefit to the students and to teachers' job security. Rather than growing weary as education changes, teachers should be inspired to seek out professional development that makes them better at their practice. While none of the teachers in this study expressed any explicitly negative opinions, I do see a need for further research on monolingual teachers' attitudes toward bilingual programming and how those attitudes affect the way teachers approach instruction for ELLs in their classroom.

In addition to improving professional development, the school's vision statement, as discussed in the previous chapter, should include language that focuses on culturally relevant

practices for ELLs including the use of their native language in the classroom. At the school and district levels, there is not a strong institutionalized reason to be consistent with the use of students' native language. It is not included in any vision statements and teachers are not held accountable to its use either through their own professional evaluations or student assessments. It is no wonder that in spite of their positive attitudes, the participating teachers do not feel any pressure to implement culturally relevant practices in their classrooms either due to pressure from the school district or from their own personal sense of accountability. A clearer vision would empower teachers to focus on practices that address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of limitations. The first is the sample size of its participants; this study included only nine teachers in one school in a large and diverse district. Findings regarding the extent and nature of teacher attitudes cannot be extended across the district nor do they necessarily represent those of the entire school staff. The opportunity to survey and interview a greater majority of teachers at this school would have provided a better view of how the school approaches ELL education and therefore how those attitudes and perspectives contribute to the overall atmosphere in the building. Additionally, it would have helped to interview students and families about their attitudes and how they feel teachers approach their native languages and cultures.

As mentioned in chapter four, Tammy and Rita explained the influence their family and home environment had on their attitudes toward cultural diversity and language issues in society as well as the classroom. One cannot help but wonder how strong an influence teacher preparation programs and professional development can have on teachers who may have deep-

rooted negative attitudes. In the case of Tammy and Rita, what if their parents had raised them to strongly believe in language and cultural assimilation? Would the professional development or training we have available now be effective enough to transmute their attitudes to be more positive? Since the participants in this case study generally have supportive attitudes, its findings and conclusions are limited to teachers who came into their profession with somewhat positive attitudes to begin with. Further research on teachers who went into their profession with negative attitudes about language and cultural diversity could shed some light on how professional development can be improved to essentially change teachers' attitudes.

Consequently, a central limitation to this study involves the level of training and experiences of the teachers as they relate to their attitudes and approach toward using native language in the classroom. Lee and Oxelson (2006) asserted that it is hard to determine whether training and experience directly influence teachers' attitudes. They state that it may be that teachers who already had positive attitudes about language diversity long before becoming a teacher were motivated to take training in this area. However, this study finds that training is not the only factor that contributes to teachers' attitudes. As discussed above, teachers like Tammy and Rita were influenced by their families. Tasha, who has the most training in this area, said that her parents were a strong influence in her positive attitudes toward diversity as a whole. The way her parents raised her, with an attitude of acceptance, may have eventually motivated Tasha to get more training in the area of ELL education, rather than the training being viewed as the source of her attitude.

In summary, research demonstrates a need for improved professional development that unpacks teachers' attitudes through careful self-reflection (Karathanos, 2009, 2010; Pappamihiel, 2007; Yoon, 2007, 2008). Additionally, professional development that allows teachers to

investigate language acquisition theories as they apply to the education of ELLs is necessary in order to provide practical, hands-on experiences for teachers. Meanwhile, as the participating school district implements its initiatives to work toward eliminating the achievement gap, a clear vision focusing on English language learners would empower teachers to reach out to this underrepresented group of students. Further research on teachers' attitudes toward L1 in the classroom would provide more clarity on what teachers need in order to increase the use of culturally relevant practices in the classroom. Now, as the population of ELLs in the United States continues to increase (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2009; Hudelson, Poynor, & Wolfe, 2003; Nieto, 2009; Teale, 2009; Walker, 2004) there is a greater demand for research and professional development that ensures the academic success of this culturally and linguistically diverse group of students.

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Appendix A

Teacher Survey

Please read the statements carefully and rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement. If you have any comments, please write them on the space provided. If you do not currently teach ELLs, please reflect on your previous experiences. If you are not sure how to answer a question, please write so in the space provided.

Your Name: _____

I think that...

- | | Disagree | | | Agree |
|--|-----------------|---|---|--------------|
| 1. It is the sole responsibility of the parents to maintain their child's native language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 2. Frequent use of the native language interferes with students' learning of English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 3. Proficiency in their native language helps students in their academic progress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 4. Proficiency in their native language helps students in their social development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 5. The maintenance of their native language is important for the student's development of his or her identity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 6. The maintenance of the native language is a key to strengthening family ties. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 7. The maintenance of the native language is important for communication with parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |
| _____ | | | | |
| 8. Schools should help students maintain their native language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| _____ | | | | |

9. Schools should try to provide instruction in students' native language(s). 1 2 3 4

10. Teachers should encourage students to use their native language at school. 1 2 3 4

11. Children value their native language and culture. 1 2 3 4

12. Instruction in their native language helps students develop skills in English as well. 1 2 3 4

13. Children should spend more time learning English than their native language. 1 2 3 4

14. Everyone in this country should learn English. 1 2 3 4

15. It is valuable to be multilingual in our society. 1 2 3 4

16. Encouraging students to maintain their native language will prevent them from fully acculturating into this society. 1 2 3 4

17. Children who maintain their native language have a better chance of succeeding in the future. 1 2 3 4

18. It is important for students to be highly literate in both their native language and in English. 1 2 3 4

19. The maintenance of the native language is too difficult to do in our society. 1 2 3 4

20. I tell my students that their native language is important and valuable, but at school they must use English. 1 2 3 4

21. I tell my students how important it is to maintain their native language. 1 2 3 4

22. In class, I have my students share their native language and culture every chance I get. 1 2 3 4

23. I advise parents to help their children learn to speak English faster by speaking English at home. 1 2 3 4

24. I praise my students for knowing another culture and language. 1 2 3 4

25. I allow students to use their native language in completing class work or assignments. 1 2 3 4

26. I make an effort to learn about my students' native languages and culture. 1 2 3 4

27. In my teaching, I place equal value on knowing both English and another language. 1 2 3 4

28. I ask students to leave their home culture and language behind when they step into my classroom. 1 2 3 4

Please use the space below and on the other side of this paper if you would like to elaborate more on any of your answers.

Appendix B

School Vision Statement

Our Vision
 Through a school community based upon collaborative relationships, we are a school in which our students demonstrate growth in the following areas:

- Citizenship-students will:*
- respect each other even when they are different
 - respect the school and take care of its condition
 - respect themselves and work to the best of their abilities

- Living in Community-students will:*
- show compassion toward others
 - help others do their best

- Relationship to Environment*
- experience learning outdoors and appreciate nature
 - grow in appreciation of the earth and learn to advocate for it

- Learning-students will:*
- develop a life-long love of learning
 - improve core skills such as reading, math and writing
 - use ideas and information to construct meaning, think critically and communicate effectively
 - develop and pursue questions that interest them
 - utilize technology tools in their learning experiences

- Social/Emotional-students will:*
- exhibit self-control and manage behaviors across settings
 - believe in their abilities to shape the future, make choices and accept responsibility

