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Instructionally Successful Practices in K-3 Bilingual Classrooms

Gloria P. Arce Vargas
Seton Hall University

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**INSTRUCTIONALLY SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES IN K - 3
BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS**

**BY
GLORIA P. ARCE VARGAS**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University**

512

2008

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

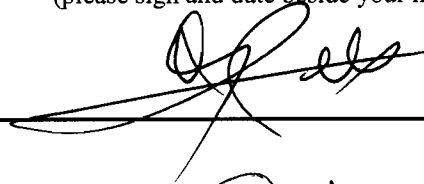
APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

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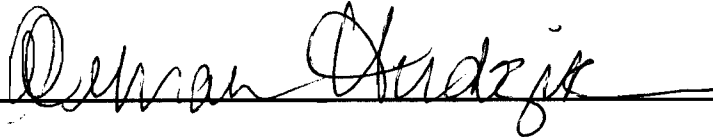
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ABSTRACT

INSTRUCTIONALLY SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES IN K – 3 BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the formation and development of a culture of *successful practices* in an elementary school of New Jersey. The focus of the study was the teaching and learning process of reading in self-contained kindergarten through third grade bilingual classrooms. These *successful practices* were implemented with the purpose of developing fluency in the vernacular language of the students. The objective was to integrate language development and reading instruction in order to prepare Limited English Proficient (LEP) students transition into only-English reading and bring LEP students and their school into compliance with Title III requirements and the State's Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) targets.

The importance of this study is based on the existent need for LEP learners to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets and the state's proficiency standards. LEP students have frequently been shortchanged in their educational opportunities when compared with their English-native speaker counterparts.

The research was conducted using ethnographic methodology. In an attempt to gather data to answer the research questions for this study extensive interviews were conducted with ten informants that included a school principal, a reading coach, bilingual teachers, a parent liaison, and parents. Every interview was tape-recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

As the data were collected and analyzed, it was found that the identified *successful practices* were a set of instructional strategies and activities implemented to teaching and helping LEP students succeed academically. Further, it is important to understand that the *successful practices* were scientific research-based and grounded in proven classroom techniques that included instructional practices for which original data have been collected to determine their effectiveness.

Success in the implementation of the identified *successful practices* was defined in terms of the attainment of two major indicators: Professional development and leadership support. Therefore, professional development and leadership support played a significant role in the development and implementation of the culture of *successful practices* to assist LEP students master a solid literacy and reading foundation in Spanish leading to building proficiency in English and to the overall academic achievement of LEP students.

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First and above all, I thank God for granting me with the opportunity, strength and ability to endure this major undertaking and for a dream come true.

I owe a debt of thanks to my mom for her unconditional love, and for being relentless in her support, help, and encouragement not only during the process of my doctoral degree, but also throughout my life. Thanks to her, there are always wholesome home-made meals at the table and all my needs are being taken care of, so I am “bien alimentada” and could spend endless days researching, reading, and writing.

I am indebted to my mentor, Dr. Cobarrubias for having given me the opportunity to participate in the Fellowship Cohort. Further, I am truly grateful to Dr. Cobarrubias for his time and guidance throughout the dissertation process. I will be eternally thankful for his direction, understanding, and support. May God bless him with many years of good health and wisdom so many people, like me, could benefit from his teachings.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Osnato for being on my dissertation committee. He not only mentored me during my Ed.S, but also during the dissertation process. His confidence, kindness, leadership, and support are truly, immensely, and forever appreciated.

Special thanks to Dr. Hudzik who as a colleague and dissertation committee member made significant contributions to the development of my dissertation. Her time and support are greatly appreciated.

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I had the privilege to work with a wonderful group of educators, learning with them about the “*culture of successful practices*” and how to teach effectively. Deep appreciation to all the informants, whose willingness to share their experiences and wealth of knowledge made the research study possible. My hat goes off to them for their dedication and open-minded attitude to embrace and implement the district new initiatives. I have the upmost admiration for all of them! May God bless you with many years educating our students and making a difference in their lives.

My deepest and most sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Robert H. Holster, Superintendent of Schools for having faith in me, supporting me, and facilitating the completion of this research study. Special thanks to Dr. Lawrence Everett, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, for his continuous encouragement and understanding.

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DEDICATION

A child miseducated is a child lost.
John F. Kennedy

First and above all, I dedicate this study to my two beloved children,

Javier M. Vargas and Angela P. Vargas.

They are the most important people in my life,
a source of pride, joy, and daily inspiration.

They also have chosen careers in education and
this dissertation goes to them as one example of the many
contributions that could be made to American education.

My best wishes for success in their professional endeavors.

I am confident that their accomplishments will make a positive and meaningful
impact in the lives of the youth of future generations that they will encounter so
no child is ever miseducated or lost under their guidance.

Secondly, I dedicate this work to all my past, present, and future students.

They have always inspired me and showed me that possibilities are endless.

I humbly accept this degree along with the responsibility of being an educator dedicated
to the empowerment of students to become the most productive and successful citizens
in this magnificent country of opportunities.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This research study was conducted to understand and analyze the use of teachers' identified successful practices adopted in two schools, from a northern district of New Jersey, as a guide for effectiveness in the teaching-learning process and to enhance reading proficiency in the native language among Hispanic Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. A special focus was placed on how successful instructional practices were understood and implemented by teachers and staff and whether or not they had a significant impact on students' learning. The study analyzed the effect of successful instructional practices on students in bilingual self-contained settings during their kindergarten through second grade years. Furthermore, the study examined the impact on students' performance as a result of the implementation or lack of the same instructional practices as the students moved on to third grade to a neighboring school.

In light of Title III objectives, the achievement of the state's annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAO) targets, the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, and the needs of Hispanic LEP students, local educational agencies (LEAs) must develop and implement a literacy curriculum that would prepare LEP students to meet these expectations. In addition to a curriculum, instructional practices must be in place to maximize LEP students' reading proficiency and higher scores on state standardized tests.

The United States is a nation of immigrants. Immigrant families are migrating on a daily basis to the United States from all over the world. According to the United States Census Bureau (2000), 281.421,906 million people lived in the United States.

According to the data, most of the respondents who identified themselves with “some other race” were Hispanics. Figure 1 illustrates the population for race and Hispanic origin for the United States in 2000:

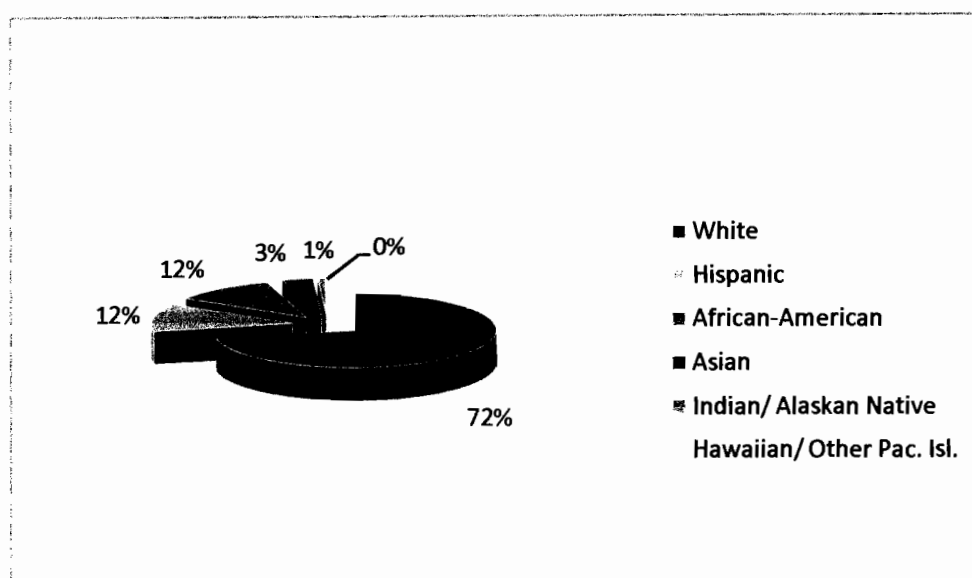


Figure 1. U.s. Population Census 2000

As the figure illustrates, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians are the largest groups of immigrants in the United States. The 2000 Census data show that the Hispanic population in United States has increased a 58 per cent since 1990. Hispanics, according to the 2000 figures, represent 12.5 per cent of US population; a 15 per cent is projected by the year 2010. Nevertheless, Hispanics in United States are not a homogeneous group. They come from different countries; therefore their ethnicity is diverse.

The fact that immigrants in United States come from many different countries has changed drastically the student population in American schools. According to Narro García (as cited in Slavin & Calderón, 2001) this phenomenon has resulted in the development of three concerns for policymakers and school administrators at state and local levels (p. 307):

1. The growing number of students who arrive at school at the beginning and during the year, but are ill-prepared to learn;
2. The growing number of non-native born children and youth who enroll in schools across all grade levels; and
3. The large number of native and foreign-born students who are limited-English proficient (LEP). Increasingly, some states and school districts currently call them English Language Learners (ELL).

According to the reauthorization in 2002 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), previously Title VII, the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are addressed within Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students. The US Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for LEP (2002) provided a preliminary guidance on the implementation of the Title III, which outlines objectives to ensure that LEP students: attain English language proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement set by each state for all of its students.

In order to meet these goals and the requirements of title III, State Educational Agencies (SEAs) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are required to develop an integrated program of English language proficiency standards, assessments, and objectives that are linked to their respective state academic content and student academic achievement standards. This program will, in turn, must be designed to increase English proficiency and academic achievement of LEP students (pp. 6-7).

In The Biennial Evaluation Report to Congress on the Implementation of the State Formula Grant Program, 2002-2004, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (ESEA, Title III, Part A), the US Department of Education (2005) reported the following data regarding LEP students during the 2003-2004 school year:

1. A total of 4,017,504 LEP students nationwide were served through 4,923 subgrants to LEAs.
 2. The States reported a total of 1,218,238 immigrant children and youth, 827,638 of whom were served by Title III.
 3. All States have Title III subgrantees that use at least one type of English as a second language instructional program.
 4. 40 States have Title III subgrantees that use both English as a second language instructional programs and bilingual instructional programs.
- (pp. 5-6)

To ensure achievement and progress of Title III goals, Section 3122(a) (3) (A) requires the States to develop annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) and determine their Title III AMAO targets. The State Biennial Evaluation Report (2005)

provides information on States targets and the progress made towards attainment of AMAO targets during school years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

1. Of the 42 States that provided progress targets and performance data, 33 reported meeting their AMAO targets for students making progress in learning English; and
2. Of 45 States that provided proficiency targets and performance data, 41 met at least some of these targets for students' attainment of English Language proficiency. (pp. 6-7)

Boehner (2005), Chairman of the U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee, commented on the US Department of Education report indicating academic progress for students with limited English proficiency and stated,

It's encouraging to see that students with limited English proficiency appear to be making progress in learning English, attaining English proficiency on state tests and transitioning into mainstream classrooms. By disaggregating student achievement data and increasing transparency, we are ensuring these students and other students traditionally overlooked by the education establishment are learning.

States should be commended for making significant progress in implementing these provisions in three short years. However, there is still much work that must be done before we achieve our long term goals of ensuring all students are proficient in reading and math.(¶4-5)

Nevertheless, Zehr (2005, ¶ 2-3) examined the report from different points of view. One view is that of Leos (as cited in Zehr, 2005), the associate deputy secretary and

senior policy adviser for the Education Department's office of English-language acquisition, a researcher for the evaluation. She reported that states have accomplished a great deal in establishing a foundation to teach LEP students. Further, she emphasized, before the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) in 2002 only seven states had standards for English proficiency in isolation to the academic-content standards. Three years later, all 50 states plus the District of Columbia not only have those standards in place, but they are aligned to the academic-content standards.

Zehr's interpretation of the report indicated, "States have largely failed to meet the law's requirements to ensure that English-language learners master academic content" (§ 4-5). Furthermore, she added, only in Alabama and Michigan ELL students met "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) goals in 2003-2004 school-year in reading and mathematics. Additionally, she reported, all states failed to report all the data required by federal regulations and to meet mandated targets for their ELL students.

Leos (as cited in Zehr, ¶18-19) stated that the Department of Education decided not to be too specific on whether or not states had met AYP goals for ELL students because "it was hard to make comparisons between states." Further, she added, "I don't think you can make any conclusive statements about what achievement gap exists between limited-English-proficient children and native English-speakers."

In response to Leos's statement, Short (as cited in Zehr, ¶21), a language researcher at the Washington-based Center for Applied Linguistics, challenged the Department of Education by asserting, "They should have reported how students were

doing on math and reading to the extent they could so we could understand the challenges these students face when asked to perform in a language they are not proficient in.”

Reading instruction to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students is an issue that is still to be fully resolved in many American schools. Should LEP students learn to read in their native language first and then in English? Should LEP students learn to read in English from the beginning?

To help LEP students become successful in school, educational leaders must provide safe and comfortable environments, as well as sponsor and support an instructional program conducive to student learning. Reports and studies suggest that teaching reading to LEP students without an appropriate preparation is detrimental. Additionally, investigations also suggest that there is a positive correlation between the development of native-language literacy skills and academic success.

Statement of the Problem

Research demonstrates that a large percentage of Hispanic LEP students grow up speaking mostly or only Spanish at home. Most of them fail academically because they are not prepared to function in regular English-only settings. Consequently, this study was completed in response to the needs of many existing or incoming LEP students in American schools. I decided to demonstrate how educators will be able to meet those needs by understanding and analyzing scientific research-based *successful practices*, which have been identified and implemented in bilingual self-contained classrooms to assist LEP students in their learning process, to help them reach high levels of reading, language proficiency and academic achievement.

In an effort to maximize the educational opportunities of LEP students, Title III regulations, state and local educational agencies have tried to address the needs of LEP students, as well as the reasons that prevent these students from achieving academically and/or reaching high levels of reading proficiency. However, as Boehner (2005), Chairman of the U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee, stated, “There is still much work that must be done before we achieve our long term goals of ensuring all students are proficient in reading and math” (§7).

In her analysis of The Biennial Evaluation Report to Congress on the Implementation of the State Formula Grant Program, Zehr’s (2005, §8) cited Crawford who refers to the Program as “a dysfunctional system of accountability.” Moreover, he asserted, “it’s impossible for most schools with significant numbers of English-language learners to meet their AYP targets as the targets get more stringent. This subgroup by definition will never go very far in meeting the full-proficiency target.”

Short (as cited in Zehr, §17) did not find it difficult to believe that LEP students did not meet AYP goals since “It takes four, seven, or even nine years for some students to reach academic proficiency.” As a result, this study was based on the premise that Hispanic LEP students need to build a strong literacy foundation in their vernacular to fully master proficiency in reading before they transfer to English-only reading. This of course, implies the use of a sound and comprehensive literacy instruction program in the native language. Along with curriculum, appropriate successful practices must also be implemented when teaching reading to LEP students. The National Research Council (as cited in Antunez, 2002) emphasized the importance of the development of native language and recommended that in cases where LEP students speak a language for which

the school has instructional guides, learning materials, and teachers proficient in their language, these students should be taught reading in their vernacular while English oral proficiency is being developed, and then extend their skills learned in the native language to reading in English (p. 3).

Recognizing the need of assisting Hispanic LEP students achieve higher proficiency levels in reading, this study investigated how teachers define, use, and implement successful practices in a school, from a northern district in New Jersey, serving LEP students in bilingual self-contained classrooms from kindergarten through second grade. Furthermore, this study examined how and to what extent these successful practices maximized the students' opportunity to reach academic excellence and increase students' scores in reading and language arts. Additionally, the study investigated whether or not, third grades teachers continued implementing the successful practices, in their bilingual classrooms, identified by their counterparts in grades kindergarten through second grades as well as the impact of such or lack of implementation.

The study is based on the following assumptions. Teachers defined successful practices as instructional techniques and strategies that provide students with meaningful activities proven to be successful. Additionally, they considered successful practices as the scientific research-based procedures that teachers utilize in their classrooms to enhance learning beyond the traditional ways. This theoretical framework has led teachers to identify and implement the following strategies and procedures as successful practices in their bilingual classrooms: a school-wide instructional focus; 90 minutes of uninterrupted Language Arts/Reading instruction daily; small group instruction; literacy centers; classrooms libraries; read alouds; guided, shared and independent reading in

class; word walls; integration of technology into the successful practices; ongoing professional development on school instructional focus and identified successful practices leadership support, and parental involvement.

In particular, this study examined how and to what extent these identified research-based successful practices maximized the students' opportunity to reach academic excellence and increase students' scores in reading and language arts. Further, the study investigated whether or not, third grade teachers continued implementing the same or other successful practices, in their bilingual classrooms, as well as the impact of such or lack of implementation. The following questions led the study.

Research Questions

1. What do teachers and staff understand by successful practices?
2. What scientific research-based successful practices have teachers identified as effective in the teaching-learning process of reading in bilingual kindergarten through second grade classrooms?
3. How did teachers use and implement identified successful practices in their classrooms to make a significant difference in their students' learning?
4. What successful practices are implemented in third grade bilingual classrooms?
5. What is the impact of the implementation or lack of successful practices in third grade bilingual classrooms?

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study was completed with the purpose of demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of identified scientific research-based successful practices in the teaching-learning process of reading in self-contained kindergarten through third grade bilingual classrooms. These successful practices were implemented to develop fluency in the vernacular language of the students; to effectively integrate language development and reading instruction; to better prepare LEP students transition into only-English reading; to bring LEP students and their school up to level in order to be in compliance and meet Title III requirements and State AMAO targets. With this purpose in mind, the following issues were investigated:

1. The effectiveness of teaching LEP students in their native language and implementing successful practices for reading instruction;
2. The professional development and training offered to teachers in order to effectively use and implement successful practices in their bilingual classrooms to maximize students' learning and to enhance reading skills in their LEP students.
3. The leadership support given to teachers to facilitate and ensure appropriate use and implementation of the school's identified successful practices.

Importance of the Study

According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2005), “Abbott students are not taught what they are expected to learn” (p. 3). The percentage of students with a home language other than English is 39.1 per cent in Abbott districts. Furthermore, the New Jersey Department of Education considered that many schools were not ready, nor prepared, to meet the needs of LEP students and “are still trying to figure out how to teach them to read and write English well” (p. 4). Conversely, they discovered that in some districts LEP students did well on state tests as a result of a “more exact screening of students’ native and English language abilities who benefited from a broader range of instruction, including sheltered English and native language instruction” (p.4). Moreover, the State of New Jersey has mandated that each school must reach the state’s proficiency standards each and every year until each and every student achieves those standards in 2014.

The importance of this study is based on the existent need for Limited English Proficiency learners to meet their AYP targets and the state’s proficiency standards. It is evident that, in many instances, LEP students have always been shortchanged, as compared with their English-native speaker counterparts, in their educational opportunities.

Rivera (as cited in Zehr, 2005, ¶25), the executive director of the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at George Washington University, considers that the approach of the grant program is an indication of the states or the feds awareness of the existence of LEP learners in American schools and the need of a “systematic approach” to address their needs and maximize their educational opportunities for academic success.

Research and educational programs have demonstrated that the vernacular should be used with students who are linguistically different from mainstream students as the medium of instruction in early years of schooling and maintain it as late as possible. In a report on the use of the vernacular in education, UNESCO specialists (1951) stated that the mother tongue should be used early in children's education. The vernacular will serve as a foundation for second language acquisition, as well as cultural understanding. UNESCO's main proposal is to prepare students psychologically and academically by helping them become literate in the vernacular, and then transition into a second language.

Like any other instructional curriculum, reading programs must be designed, developed and implemented taking into consideration the child population receiving the instruction and the goals outlined by the school community.

This research study was an effort to show the importance and effectiveness of using the native language of Hispanic LEP students when teaching reading and to analyze identified educational policies implemented and successful reading instructional practices used with LEP students. In addition, to demonstrate research based reasoning for using native language when teaching reading to LEP students, this research attempted to investigate the impact of identified successful practices and students' learning and performance. Taking a step further, the study sought to provide educational facts to teachers, educational leaders, and policy makers regarding professional development and the resources necessary to ensure a successful educational experience for LEP students in American schools.

Limitations of the Study

The present study has certain limitations that must be taking into account when considering the study and reviewing its results. Additionally, some of the limitations can be seen as fruitful avenues for future research about the culture of successful practices implemented with LEP students in bilingual classrooms.

First, the study was limited in its scope and research design. The study focused on two schools in one school district that have implemented identified successful practices to maximize the educational opportunities of all students. The research design focused on a comprehensive analysis of ethnographic interviews, which led to investigate and understand the culture of successful practices.

In concurrence with Berg (1998), this qualitative study might be limited by its kind of research design because it was not presented in the form of measurable data as it is the case of quantitative research. Further, even though the data used was in the form of participants' transcripts, observations and artifacts leading to researcher's subjective interpretation and not in the form of numbers and statistics to show precise measurement and objective analysis of target concepts, the study is not far from reality and it could very well be the situation in other schools from other districts.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1999), most researchers use ethnographic interviews and other "background" documents as qualitative data "for putting the research in context" (p. 162). Therefore, the basis and the analysis of this study depended upon the information gathered from the participants' interviews. The methodology of data-collection in qualitative research afforded the interviewer with opportunities to

communicate with and partake in the understandings and knowledge of the participants who were enculturated in the culture of successful practices (Berg, 1998).

Second, the study is limited by the small sample size and the selection of two cases in two schools. The number of participants might be considered too limited for broad generalizations, and therefore the findings may not be widespread beyond the sample. Further empirical investigations and evaluations, however, are needed to replicate the findings in larger samples and in different contexts and environments.

Definition of Terms

ACCESS: Test of English Proficiency that measures the students in bilingual and transitional settings their English proficiency in three domains, oral, reading, and writing.

Action research: School and classroom-based studies initiated and conducted by teachers and other school staff.

Alternative assessment: Use of assessment strategies, such as performance assessment, teachers' observation, anecdotal records, and portfolios, to replace or supplement assessment by machine-scored multiple-choice tests.

AMAO: State's Annual Measurable Achievement Objective targets.

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress targets.

Assessment: Measuring the learning and performance of students. Different types of assessment instruments include achievement tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and alternative assessments.

Basal reader: Textbooks and anthologies (collections of stories or other writings) used to teach reading.

Basic skills instruction: In this study, it refers to the teaching and instruction of fundamental skills needed to succeed in school.

Basic skills teachers: Certified teachers that provide basic skills instruction.

Benchmark assessment: Measurements of group performance against an established standard at defined points along the path toward the standard. Subsequent measurements of group performance use the benchmarks to measure progress toward achievement.

Bilingual education: The use of two or more languages for instruction. In the United States, students in most bilingual classes or programs are those who have not acquired full use of the English language, so they are taught academic content in their native language (usually Spanish) while continuing to learn English.

Bilingual students: Students who have been raised, although not necessarily proficient, simultaneously in two languages. In this study it refers to the students placed in bilingual self-contained classrooms.

Bloom's taxonomy: A classification of educational objectives developed in the 1950s by a group of researchers headed by Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago. Commonly refers to the objectives for the cognitive domain, which range from knowledge and comprehension (lowest) to synthesis and evaluation (highest).

Cooperative learning: A teaching strategy combining teamwork with individual and group accountability.

Core Curriculum Content Standards: The body of knowledge that all students are expected to learn.

Co-teaching: An arrangement by which two or more teachers teach the same group of students. Teachers may teach together in many different ways.

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Test

Differentiated instruction: Instruction that provides students with different learning experiences and materials according to their varied needs, interests, and learning styles in order to maximize their growth and progress.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): U.S. legislation passed in 1965 that provided large amounts of federal aid to states and local districts. ESEA must be reauthorized periodically by the Congress. The 2002 version requires that states administer annual tests in math and reading for all students in grades 3 through 8; schools failing to produce sufficient improvements in student test scores will be subject to sanctions.

ESL (English as a Second Language): Teaching English to non-English-speaking or limited-English-proficient (LEP) students to help them learn and succeed in schools.

Graphic organizers: Visuals to aid reading and writing.

Heterogeneous grouping: In this study, it refers to intentionally mixing students of varying talents and needs in the same literacy group.

Homogeneous grouping: In this study, it refers to assigning students to a separate guided reading group according to their reading level.

Integrated curriculum: A way of teaching and learning that does not depend on the usual division of knowledge into separate subjects. Topics are studied because they are considered interesting and valuable by the teachers and students concerned, not

necessarily because they appear in a required course of study. Integrated curriculum is intended to help students see connections.

Invented spelling: The way young children write some words when they have not yet mastered all the conventions of English spelling.

Job-embedded: Professional development and learning that occurs as educators engage in their daily work activities.

Journals: Students' personal records and reactions to various aspects of learning and developing ideas. A reflective process often found to consolidate and enhance learning.

Learning styles: Differences in the way students learn more readily.

LEP (Limited English Proficient): Students who are reasonably fluent in another language but who have not yet achieved comparable mastery in reading, writing, listening, or speaking English. LEP students are often assigned to bilingual education or English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes.

Manipulatives: Learning materials designed to help students understand abstract ideas by handling physical objects.

Master teacher: In this study, it refers to a role model teacher who offers support and coaching to another teacher. A master teacher has knowledge and experience in an area and shares it with the teacher being mentored.

NJ ASK: New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge state mandated test administered to all students in grades 3 through 6.

Phonics: The relationship between the basic sounds of a language (phonemes) and the way those sounds are represented by symbols (letters of the alphabet).

Portfolios: A collection of student work chosen to exemplify and document a student's learning progress over time.

Professional development: Also referred to as staff development, this term refers to experiences, such as attending conferences and workshops that help teachers and administrators build knowledge and skills.

Rubric: A scoring guide used in subjective assessments. It implies that a rule defining the criteria of an assessment system is followed in evaluation.

Scaffolding: The way a teacher provides support to make sure students succeed at complex tasks they couldn't do otherwise. Most teaching is done as the students go about the task, rather than before they start.

School climate/culture: The sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways. Teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students contribute to school climate and culture. Although the two terms are somewhat and used interchangeable, school climate refers mostly to the school's effects on students, whereas school culture refers more to the way teachers and other staff members work together.

Sight words: Words that are recognized immediately.

Small-group instruction: An approach to instruction that offers an environment for teachers to provide students extensive opportunities to express what they know and helps to tailor instruction to students' needs and abilities.

Standardized test: An objective test that is given and scored in a uniform manner. Standardized tests are carefully constructed and items are selected after trials for appropriateness and difficulty. Scores are often norm-referenced.

Teaching to the test: Preparing students for a test by concentrating on the particular things the test contains rather than on the broader body of knowledge the test is intended to measure.

Team teaching: An arrangement by which two or more teachers teach the same group of students. Teachers may teach together in many different ways.

Thematic instruction: Organizing all or part of the instruction of a particular group of students around a theme.

Thematic unit: A segment of instruction focused on a given theme.

Trade books: Individual novels and storybooks that are available for purchase at most retail bookstores. Some teachers incorporate trade books into their lessons to create more varied and interesting units of study.

Transitional setting: A setting within a bilingual program in which the students are transitioning from a bilingual self-contained classroom to a regular, English-only, classroom.

Word walls: Words on a wall or a bulletin board that include spelling, vocabulary, or sight words that students should know. At the lower-grade levels, word walls display words students meet in their reading and other frequently used words. As students move up the grades, word walls begin to take on other forms and purposes.

Vernacular: In this study, it refers to the mother's tongue, native of first language of students.

Visualization: Mental images used by students that emerge during reading to make connections with text thus aiding in understanding. Teachers sometimes encourage students to visualize situations to help them remember information or to prepare them for creative activities such as writing stories

Wiggle Works: An interactive computer-assisted literacy program.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review current literature and provide background information on the topics presented in this study. The review of the research literature about the culture of successful practices under investigation is presented in five sections:

1. **Use of the Vernacular and Native Language Instruction:** provides an overview and rationale for using the vernacular in the education of LEP students.
2. **Instructional Strategies:** discusses the existent quality of instruction implemented in American schools to maximize the students' academic success.
3. **Professional Development:** explains the importance of meaningful and systemic staff development opportunities to ensure teachers' preparation and readiness to implement district and school initiatives in their teaching-learning process.
4. **Leadership Support:** provides an account of school leadership conducive to the creation and implementation of a school culture for effective teaching and learning.
5. **Parental Involvement:** explains the benefits of establishing a strong partnership between home and school in order to support the school and teachers' initiatives.

The chapter ends with a conclusion that corroborates investigating the culture of successful practices. It is hoped that the findings of the study contribute to the existing research regarding the culture of successful practices in bilingual self-contained classrooms and all the elements associated with the culture.

Section 1: Use of the Vernacular and Native Language Instruction

The U.S. Department of Education (2003, ¶7), quoted U.S. Secretary of Education Paige's important statement at the second annual summit on English language acquisition that says, "Because English language learners face some of the biggest challenges in our educational system, we want to ensure that they get the quality education they deserve."

Hernández Ferrier (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2003, ¶8-9), deputy under Secretary of Education, in charge of the department's Office of English Language Acquisition, stated that LEP students must be exposed to the same educational experiences in order to achieve the same high academic standards of their counterpart monolingual peers. Moreover, she stated, "Research shows that students who cannot read or write in English have a greater likelihood of dropping out of school, and they often face a lifetime of diminished opportunity." Consequently, Hernández Ferrier recommended schools to implement "quality K-12 education" to maximize LEP students' learning experience that at the same time prepares them academically to enter and succeed in higher education.

According to Abedi and Dietel (2004) federal and state legislations presented challenges to school districts, which must address the needs of LEP students, among other subgroups. American schools must provide LEP students with effective academic preparation so they could meet AYP targets, as measured by their performance on standardized tests, or otherwise face severe consequences. If a school does not meet its AYP targets for 2 years in a row in the same area, it will be designated as a "school in need of improvement." Further, they asserted,

The challenges for English language learners are especially difficult, involving both educational and technical issues, including:

1. **Historically low ELL performance and slow improvement:** Abedi & Dietel stated that standardized tests have shown that LEP students' academic performance is between 20 to 30 percent lower in language arts when compared to other students.
2. **Measurement accuracy:** Abedi & Dietel's research indicates that standardized tests scores are not accurate indication of LEP students' achievement. Due to the lack of LEP's language proficiency, these tests not only measure academic achievement, but also language ability.
3. **Instability of the ELL student subgroup:** Abedi & Dietel's also believe that many schools strive for exiting high performing LEP students from their LEP subgroup. This brings about negative consequences for the remaining LEP subgroup, whose performance is measured by new low-achievers LEP students.
4. **Factors outside of a school's control:** The researchers affirmed that there are many variables that affect LEP students' academic performance negatively, which schools are not able to control and/or have solution for (§2-5).

Slavin and Cheung (2004) pondered on the LEP students' challenges formulated by Abedi and Dietel and reflected on the dilemma, "How can ELL students learn to speak and read an unfamiliar language simultaneously?" Many different successful and unsuccessful methods and techniques have been used to approach this predicament. Slavin and Cheung recognized that educators and linguists in favor of the vernacular propose that LEP students must become proficient and be taught to read in their native language first, then develop proficiency in oral English and afterward be transitioned to

English reading instruction. Further, their research suggested that the quality of instruction is a key factor to consider regarding the issue. Nevertheless, most studies found a positive correlation between bilingual education and reading performance. Therefore, Slavin and Cheung suggested that, “Perhaps the Spanish reading instruction served as a bridge from the students’ strong oral skills in Spanish to English reading” (p. 54).

Collier (1995) believed that allocating funds to support and promote academic instruction in languages different than English is an issue that has always provoked “emotional and political debates” (p. 12). Additionally, she felt that the erroneous public perception that instruction in the vernacular of LEP students is a misuse of public funds only explains their ignorance about scientific research on the issue. In reality, since the increase of bilingual education in the 1960’s, many good quality studies have been completed explaining the role of the vernacular and the correlation with second language acquisition and schooling.

According to UNESCO’s specialists (1951), the vernacular language in education plays different roles, it enhances achievement of appropriate children’s self-expression; students will find learning much easier and their progress will be faster; it facilitates the transition between home and school; it facilitates and improves the communication and understanding between parents and school; parents are willing to work and cooperate with schools; and it serves as a tool to learn a second language.

To help LEP students become successful in school, schools must provide safe and comfortable environments. The National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC (1995) stated that our children must be provided with an early

childhood education that corresponds to their families, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Antunez (2002) looked into and cited research that has established a strong and positive correlation between literacy in the native language and learning English (Clay, 1993; NY State Education Dept., 2000). She also studied Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), who asserted that children's proficiency in their vernacular is a key factor and determinant of their English language acquisition and development. Additionally, Collier (1995) reported on some studies that point out "that if students do not reach a certain threshold in first language, including literacy, they may experience cognitive difficulties in second language" (p. 12).

The aforementioned research and that of many others have contributed to educational policy regarding teaching LEP students. The National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC (1995) stated their main goal as their willingness to:

Support equal access to high-quality educational programs that recognize and promote all aspects of children's development and learning, enabling all children to become competent, successful, and socially responsible adults....

Language development is essential for learning, and the development of children's home language does not interfere with their ability to learn English.

Because knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset (Hakuta & Garcia, 1989), early education programs should encourage the development of children's home language while fostering the acquisition of English. (p. 2)

Antunez (2002) acknowledged and explored the complexity of limited English proficient students (LEPs) developing literacy. In addition to dealing with the skills that regular students have to learn, LEPs confront linguistic, cognitive, and academic issues. When students are learning a second language, they use anything at hand, their first language, culture, cognitive ability, and prior personal experiences, in order to intermingle in the new society and school.

Moreover, Antunez cited Hiebert et al. (1998), who carried out reading research for The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) and recommended that, LEP students learn to read initially in their vernacular. The National Research Council's report (as cited in Antunez, 2002, p. 3) suggested that teaching reading to LEP students without an appropriate preparation is detrimental. As a result, the advice calls for two recommendations, which stressed the importance of the development of native language:

1. When LEP students speak a language for which the school has instructional guides, learning materials, and teachers proficient in their language, these students should be taught reading in their vernacular while English oral proficiency is being developed, and then extend their skills learned in the native language to reading in English.

2. When LEP students speak a language for which the school is not able to meet the aforementioned conditions, or the number of LEP students do not justify the implementation of a program that meets those conditions, the initial instructional goal must be the development of the students' oral proficiency in English. However, it is strongly recommended that reading instruction take place only when the students have achieved oral proficiency in English.

Unfortunately, many schools implement and have in place programs and/or materials that, instead of helping LEP students, hinder their success and delay their proficiency in both, English and Spanish. As Honig (1997) explained, many bilingual programs lack of a transition policy, and many times, bilingual students are placed into monolingual third or fourth grades when English curriculums and materials start getting more complex with new words that do not exist in the LEP student's vocabulary and which represent more difficult linguistic patterns. As a result of misplacement, LEP students who have not reached fluency by the end of third grade fall behind in fourth grade because they struggle with many new words, attain low levels in reading and perform low in standardized tests.

Like any other instructional curriculum, reading programs must be designed, developed and implemented taking into consideration the children population receiving the instruction and the goals outlined by the school community. On this note, Antunez (2002) advised that prior to the beginning of any reading program, the following factors must be taken into account: (a) student's vernacular; (b) alphabet and writing forms of the language; (c) grade of oral, reading, and writing proficiency in the language; (d) level of English proficiency; and (e) age of the student.

Research supports student's literacy in the vernacular first before acquiring and becoming proficient in a second language. Therefore, other factors must be considered:

- (a) Teachers' availability to teach students using their vernacular; and
- (b) Awareness among parents and teachers regarding research on effective reading successful practices.

Ramírez (2000) explained that in 1997, the Congress approved the development of a National Reading Panel as an initiative for a complete, research-based, nationwide study on instructional methods for teaching reading and the development of educational policy for literacy. The Panel reviewed the findings reported by the National Research Council (NRC), which had identified three core areas for reading: Alphabets, Fluency, and Comprehension. The National Reading Panel expanded the scope of the areas outlined by the NRC to: (a) Alphabets: Phonemic awareness and phonics instruction; (b) fluency; and (c) comprehension: Vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction.

According to Antunez (2002), in April 2000, the National Reading Panel published the findings and recommendations in each of the readings areas in their Report of the National Reading Panel: Report of the Subgroups. In 2001, the Reading First Legislation under Title I was created. Reading First originated from the National Reading Panel report, and holds schools accountable for ensuring that all students in grade three read at grade level. As it was stated previously, this study aimed to analyze identified successful practices to help and ensure that Hispanic LEP students are successful in American schools and that they reach high proficiency levels in reading.

The National Reading Panel report and Reading First claim to propose the best methods for teaching reading, as well as the establishment for national policy in reading and literacy. Section 1208 (3) of Title 1 declares: “The term ‘essential components of reading instruction’ means explicit and systematic instruction in:” (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) vocabulary development, (d) reading fluency, including oral reading skills, and (e) reading comprehension strategies (As cited in Antunez, 2002, p. 3).

Carrigg (2003) made note of important suggestions from the Early Literacy Task that recognized the importance of using only research-based literacy programs and strategies in the preschool programs and elementary schools. Further, the members of the Early Literacy Task asserted that:

...we believe that the opportunity to learn, or become acquainted with two languages appears to have cognitive, cultural, and economic advantages. Because language flourishes in schools, English Language Learners should be offered many opportunities to learn English while maintaining their home language. (p.5)

It is worth mentioning that the National Reading Panel did not include nor address in the analysis issues concerning second language acquisition or reading (Antunez, 2002). Therefore, she took it upon herself to make suggestions and considerations that schools and teachers should have in mind when teaching the core areas to LEP students.

As noted, studies demonstrate that knowledge transfers between languages. Consequently, it makes perfect sense to respect, recognize, and use students' vernacular, as well as to encourage the development and enrichment of the same for academic success and reading proficiency in both, students' native and second language.

Research and successful programs have demonstrated that any kind of cognitive or academic support in first language through effective bilingual programs in schools, after-school programs, and parents' support for first language cognitive development at home, will benefit students' academic achievement in second language and proficiency in all reading skills. Additionally, with these goals in mind, Collier (1995) invited schools and higher education environments to recognize the value and importance of people's vernacular as critical for second language academic success.

Section 2: Instructional Strategies

McLaughlin (1992) advised teachers to recognize and understand that there are significant differences among linguistically and culturally diverse groups in American schools, as well as considerable differences and learning styles among students within these groups. Therefore, McLaughlin recommended a range of teaching practices, such as “small group work, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and individualized instruction, and other strategies that take the children's diversity of experience into account,” to maximize instruction to LEP students (§37).

In the elementary schools from a district in northern New Jersey where this study took place, teachers in self-contained bilingual classrooms were very much aware of and recognized the importance of using students' native language and culture in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, they identified and implemented several instructional techniques and strategies that are scientific, research-based, and proven to be successful that provide students with meaningful learning and ensure academic success. Teachers referred to these instructional techniques and strategies as “successful practices” to address and meet the needs of their LEP students.

Chrisman (2005) compared successful and unsuccessful schools in California and found that improved student achievement was the result “of how well a school operates and depends on the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of instructional programs and practices” (p. 17). LEP students attending successful schools demonstrated a much more positive experience than their counterparts in unsuccessful schools. Teachers in successful school attributed their success to the changes and focus in the schools' instructional programs. Chrisman concluded her report by recommending and

encouraging schools to “examine their practices and embrace change” (p. 21) in order to not only improve student achievement but also to sustain it.

Reyes and Pazey (1999) found that the school culture of the high-performing Hispanic Schools in their study was “open, friendly and culturally inviting” (p.94). Their instructional approach was conducive to students’ interaction and cooperative learning. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997), Kagan (1986) and Losey (1995) argued that LEP students reap the benefits of cooperative learning (as cited in Reyes & Pazey, 1999, p. 133).

Teachers play a significant role in implementing effective cooperative learning activities. Meloth encourages teacher to carefully plan and organize group activities in order to maximize students’ gains socially and cognitively. Additionally, teachers must develop appropriate learning, meaningful tasks according to the students’ ability, needs and aligned to the target skills or concepts being studied. Monitoring students’ interactions and ensuring their full participation during the activity along with an effective assessment are essential to the success of cooperative learning approach (as cited in González, Huerta Macías, & Tinajero, 2001, p. 35).

In concurrence with the notion of cooperative learning, literacy centers afford students with multisensory activities that promote literacy. According to Stone (1996), the literacy center approach is a child-centered strategy that provides students with many opportunities for hands-on learning activities, socially interaction, and problem solving. Teachers using a literacy center structured approach organize and use different centers around their classrooms. The centers focus on language arts and literacy skills that were

studied during the whole group instruction. The literacy centers usually include reading, writing, library, and computer, vocabulary, listening, and guided reading or intervention.

Rutherford (1999) investigated two elementary schools that created student-centered classrooms with an emphasis in effective reading programs or approaches.

Rutherford identified the following initiatives implemented in both schools categorizing them as high-performing Hispanic schools: (pp. 131-168).

1. Children learn to read by reading a wide variety of materials, therefore the school library offered plenty of book titles of different genres. Students were encouraged to read from an extensive selection of books.

2. Reading instruction was not exclusively based on a basal reader, but included other types of printed materials and activities as well.

3. Students were encouraged to read on a daily basis using different kinds of printed material.

4. Read alouds, in which the teachers read to students frequently. Dickinson and Smith (1994) and Morrow (1990), (1992) claim that read alouds have a positive and significant impact on students' expressive language skills, comprehension, decoding, and receptive language skills (as cited in Rutherford, 1999, p. 132). Additionally, according to Elley (1989) and Routman (1994) read alouds promote vocabulary learning and development (as cited in Rutherford, 1999, p. 133).

5. Reading comprehension skills were of great concern in the process of reading instruction. In the schools studied by Rutherford, significant amount of time during reading instruction was dedicated "to helping students develop new meanings and understandings from print materials." In order to do this, teachers relied on the use of

Spanish and English to connect new knowledge with the students' background knowledge (p. 133).

6. Teachers were willing and worked hard to address and meet the needs of their students. Teachers were sensitive to the individual needs and interests of their students. Therefore, they modified curriculum, learning activities, developed new materials, and interventions according to the students' needs and learning style. According to Tomlinson (1999) when teachers recognize students' background, knowledge, readiness, language, learning styles, weaknesses and strengths to plan and deliver instruction, they differentiate instruction. Through differentiated instruction, teachers maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is, and assisting in the learning process.

7. A reading curriculum was adopted and in place, but teachers made decisions as to how to implement the curriculum. Some teachers developed thematic units around the reading stories, skills and concepts outlined in the basal reader and used trade books and/or stories to supplement the units.

8. Both schools allotted from 90 to 120 minutes daily for reading and literacy instruction. Reading skills were taught in all content areas. Students have additional time of reading time in the computer lab. Time for developing writing skills was also included during the literacy block of time.

9. Teachers started their lessons with a reading selection. Vocabulary words were introduced and discussed before reading. A class discussion followed the reading to focus on a target skill or concept. Students engaged in writing assignments based on the reading. There was always emphasis on vocabulary development and comprehension

skills. A good portion of the literacy time was spent in whole group dealings. However, students also engaged in shared reading and individual activities, allowing the teachers to work with small groups and/or individual students who needed her assistance.

Additionally, the students worked in collaborative activities or projects related to the thematic units at hand and connected to the target skills and concepts.

During reading, the teachers led the students to make text connections, thus enhancing text comprehension. Also, teachers allowed students to choose reading materials that addressed students' individual interests in order to make reading relevant and meaningful.

10. In one of the schools, teachers implemented reading centers to teach and reinforce skills and concepts. The center activities included listening, reading, and writing incorporating multisensory visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile approaches.

11. Teachers used manipulatives and provided the students with hands-on activities to approach reading instruction.

12. Technology was infused in the teaching-learning process of reading.

13. Both schools offered additional instructional opportunities beyond the regular classroom. Bilingual and ESL classes were available for LEP students. Many teachers in the schools spoke both, English and Spanish. Interesting enough, most of them came from the same country or area of origin of their students. Teachers demonstrated great respect, understanding, and appreciation for their students' language and culture.

14. Reading Recovery teachers provided remedial services to first grade students who needed additional help in reading. In one of the schools, special reading teachers offered specialized tutoring in reading and writing to a diverse group of students with needs in both areas.

15. “Teacher collaboration and cooperation was a way of life in both schools” (p.138). Regular meetings were scheduled at least two times a week, but teachers met informally every day for various reasons, to plan instruction, develop lessons, create materials or share experiences.

16. Teachers agreed on and developed common instructional goals, which became their focus of instruction. Kannapel, Clements, Taylor, and Hibpshman (2005) also looked at high-performing high-poverty schools and found that one of the characteristics for success was the development of a strong academic and instructional focus.

17. Teachers at both successful schools used an array of assessment tools to monitor and assess students’ progress and needs. They used informal assessments, such as “teacher observation and judgment” on a regular basis. Semiformal assessments that included running records and informal reading inventories assessed students’ reading performance. Teachers used portfolios as alternative assessments to assess students’ progress in writing (p.143).

Vecchio, Gustke, and Wilde (as cited in Rutherford, 1999) regarded portfolios as “powerful methods” of alternative assessments when carefully planned and organized. Further, they suggested, “portfolios are an ideal method of assessing various linguistically/ethnically diverse group groups. Furthermore, Vecchio, Gustke, and Wilde viewed anecdotal records as “an informal method used to capture evidence of cognitive processes and behaviors (p 144).

Gunning (as cited in Rutherford, 1999) recommended that teachers consider two principles for effective reading instruction: teaching of target skills and concepts should be integrated with meaningful reading, as opposed to teach them in isolation, and

teachers should help students make connections between prior background knowledge and new knowledge and concepts (p. 132). Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003) agreed with Gunning and recognized the importance of prior knowledge in providing LEP students with “rich clues to meaning” (p.92).

Section 3: Professional Development

According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2007) standards for teachers’ professional development, district and schools must provide teachers with high-quality professional development that help them acquire “the content knowledge and teaching skills they need in the subjects they teach to effectively support student learning of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.” (p. 3). In compliance with the state’s professional development guidelines, district and schools should take into account key elements when planning and developing staff development and training in order to make a significant difference in teachers’ professional growth and ultimately in students’ academic achievement.

Chrisman (2005) looked at successful schools and found that when planning and developing staff training, they promoted teacher leadership by allowing teachers to share in the decision-making regarding their professional development. Teachers selected and decided on their staff development needs based upon student data and their particular academic needs. Furthermore, successful schools provided teachers with opportunities to meet at grade level meetings, on a regular basis, for collaborative lesson planning, review students’ work and data, and discuss instructional strategies.

At Rutherford's (1999) successful schools, teachers used every opportunity available to learn about instructional strategies that would lead to their students' academic achievement. Teachers, often, stayed after school hours to tutor students who needed extra help, to plan lessons, or to participate in parental involvement activities.

Professional development for teachers and staff is not exclusive of workshops, meetings, or conferences to gain professional growth. Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) recommended action research to educators interested in exploring different instructional strategies and methods to discover what worked best for their students. Further, authors Davis, Resta, Miller & Fortman (1999) noted that in recent years teachers discovered and recognized action research as an effective way to find answers to questions related to their classroom's needs. According to their studies, action research allows teachers to find ways to strengthen their teaching, and learn strategies to become better teachers and to improve their instructional practices.

Chrisman (2005) described how teachers in successful schools collaboratively participated in various forms of action research to continuously improve instruction: "Teachers engaged in various forms of informal action research. They used the results of their students' assessments to compare different instructional strategies and different classroom environments to see which strategies and environments encouraged student learning (p. 17).

Additionally, Chrisman noted that teachers "developed their own internal leadership structures," that consisted of team teaching, mentoring programs, and common planning as ways of supporting each other and to maximize students' educational opportunities (p. 17).

Keller (2007) investigated the role of coaches working with classroom teachers to help students learn and reported that teachers benefited from the assistance of an “accomplished colleague” and students’ achievement soared (p. 16). Keller cited Hanushek, an education economist, who compared coaches with other programs that claimed to increase student learning and found that “the gains from coaching would be about six times more than those for class-size reduction” (p. 17).

In 1999, Rutherford studied two successful schools and found that content mastery teachers provided support and assistance to classroom teachers and students. The main purpose of the content mastery teachers was to help teachers and students with supplementary instruction focusing on specific individual needs.

In 1999, Brooks and Kavanaugh identified best practices to develop and maintain effective school-community relationships implemented in selected schools in South Texas. They believed that professional development programs should be sensitive to and reflect the cultural and economic characteristics of the schools’ community. Moreover, professional development should provide opportunities to empower teachers, staff and the community. In agreement with the authors, some of the schools established a partnership with local universities to provide teachers with professional development and training, and students with opportunities to improve academic performance.

Section 4: Leadership Support

Reyes, Scribner, and Paredes Scribner (1999) argued that high-performing Hispanic schools, in fact, exist with elements and components that contribute to the academic success of Hispanic students. They claimed that the principals of those schools

“care about children and seek to surround themselves with adults who care about children” (p.5). Further research indicated a correlation between actions and behaviors of school leaders and school culture and achievement. Based on this theory, Wagstaff and Fusarelli (1999) investigated the governance, leadership, and administrative support offered in high-poverty, high-performing schools. The authors’ criteria were reflected in the following principals’ behaviors of the schools studied:

1. Principals acted as facilitators of the resources needed by teachers, parents, and students to achieve success.

2. Principals were highly visible throughout the school, were available for teachers’ needs, and willing to assist the students. The authors illustrated this behavior by quoting a staff member who said: “When administrators are out in the hall or in the classroom, visibility is high, the kids and the faculty see that, and it shows that they care. It helps with classroom discipline. It helps with the teachers” (p.21).

3. The principals of effective schools exhibited an ethic of care. They showed sensitivity, dedicating, and caring attitudes that were permeated throughout the school and shared by the entire staff of the school.

4. Principals worked hard to build trust among all stakeholders, which led to a positive school culture. In 1997, González examined the role of principals in the development of a supportive school culture serving Latinos and discovered that according to those principals, “building relationships and trust at all levels must be established for stakeholders to speak honestly with one another.” Additionally, they expressed high expectations for all school community members, staff, students and parents (p. 9).

5. Principals were aware of the individual needs and styles of teachers and students and tried to accommodate those differences to achieve success.

6. Principals shared the decision-making with the staff and respected their professional judgment. Teachers credited this trait as one of the most critical element to the success of their school. One of the teachers on the school site-based decision-making team stated, “The decision-making process is helping me in the classroom. I’m... able to make decisions for my students” (pp.22-23).

7. Principals provided on-going professional development, which was identified as an essential component of continuous school improvement. They encouraged teachers to exchange and share ideas, and allowed them to visit other schools for that purpose. They endorsed the “trainer-of-trainers” approach for staff development, instead of sending teachers to attend workshops. Using this approach, the consultants stayed in the school to provide support and follow-up sessions.

The principals of the schools that González (1997) studied made professional development a priority and one of the major initiatives in their schools.

8. Principals made an emphasis on accountability. Everyone accepted responsibility for the success of the school. Principals studied and analyzed data to improve school success and effectiveness. This principals’ behavior was looked by Chrisman (2005) in principals of successful schools in California and found that those principals developed programs, interventions, and professional development to improve student achievement based on student data. As she noted, those principals “were comfortable using data and making changes when the data demonstrated that student achievement had not risen (p. 19).

Dinham (2006) conducted a study on the effect that principals had in creating a culture of effective teaching and learning and found that "While there is little doubt as to the importance of the individual teacher, based on these findings, principals can play key roles in providing the conditions where teachers can operate effectively and students can learn" (¶8).

Research indicates that it is of utmost importance that principals support district and school programs and initiatives and vice versa. Chrisman (2005) noted that one of her study's successful elementary school implemented a new English language development program, which received more support from the central office than the support given to the program in the unsuccessful school. The district provided professional development for teachers during the first year of the program and training for new teachers in subsequent years. The school's principal engaged in daily classroom walk-throughs to ensure constant and proper implementation of the program. In addition, she provided materials and additional training, as needed.

Section 5: Parental Involvement

Parental involvement has been recognized as one of the most essential components in schools to ensure students' success. Schools strive for bridging the gap between home and school and create opportunities to involve their students' parents and families in school's functions and activities. Further, teachers and principals claimed that students reap the benefits of their families' active participation in their schools. This belief was supported by Tomczyk (2006) who stated that involving parents in the education of their children "is what makes long-lasting improvement possible" (p. 29).

Ortiz and Ordoñez-Jasis (2005) developed a sociocultural framework for family literacy programs and suggested that “an understanding of Latino family dynamics, cultural traditions, and ways of knowing helps such programs be more successful” (p.110). The authors’ study revealed that Latino parents were, to some extent, involved in their children’s various literacy development. However, they believed there is still more work needed to enhance the effectiveness of parent early literacy involvement. Their recommendations included: Helping parents and teachers recognize and understand the role that families play in their children’s education and creating strong home-school partnerships “based on mutual respect and trust that support the attainment of literacy skills and goals” (p.115).

Fitzsimmons (2003) conducted a longitudinal study to better understand how Latino parents’ aspirations for their children evolve over time. She reported that Latino immigrant parents involved in the study demonstrated genuine interest in participating in their children’s schooling. Parents’ motivation, however, was not in itself an indication of parental involvement, added Fitzsimmons. She believed that the schools must first have a clear understanding of what a meaningful and effective parental involvement should be and then, create and facilitate opportunities for its occurrence. Fitzsimmons final conclusions indicated that “Latino immigrant parents, whose children are often ELLs, hope their children attain high levels of education and want to participate in that process” (¶10).

Acknowledging Fitzsimmons recommendation, it is important that schools share with the students’ families their programs and initiatives. Further, schools may use their selected school practices as framework for community involvement. On this note,

Chamot (1993) asserted that “effective bilingual and ESL teachers” use and implement instructional practices that recognize and incorporate students’ native language and culture.

In two successful schools studied by Rutherford’s (1999), parents supported the school’s initiatives and instruction. “They helped in a classroom or lab, they helped make teaching materials, they worked in the library, they read to children, and they assisted in mobilizing parent support for reading programs” (p.137).

Scribner, Young, and Pedroza (1999) studied high-performing Hispanic schools and looked at their ways of building collaborative relationships with parents. They noted that in all elementary schools they studied, parents, parent specialists, teachers, and staff actively participated in formal and informal activities. Volunteer parents assisted teachers in their classrooms, tutored students, monitored hallways, helped out in the library, participated in field trips, and assisted in the office. Parents were also invited to share in decision-making of the schools. They participated in Parent Advisory Councils and the Language Proficiency Council. It was interesting to learn that the parents’ lack of English proficiency did not prevent them from volunteering and being involved in school.

Spanish-speaking parents conducted their meetings and informal activities in Spanish. Their counterpart English-speaking or bilingual parents were primarily the members of formal committees, such as the school site-based or the Parent-Teacher Organization.

According to Scribner et al. (1999) as a result of parents’ volunteerism, the school staff provided a “nurturing environment” and an inviting and welcoming school climate (p.48). Administrators, staff and parents concurred on the fact that having parents in the school, on a daily basis, contributed to the enhancement of the school climate. In

agreement with the authors, Lucas (1999) stated that, "Schools are missing out when they fail to involve the rich heritage and cultures of the new student populations and their families in their schools" (p. 319). To facilitate Lucas' idea, she recommended schools should have the lines of communication open with the ethnic groups represented in the school. In order to do this, schools should send notices, newsletters, and hold meetings and programs in the families' first language. Additionally, schools should offer educational programs to teach recent immigrant families the values and expectations of the American education system, the school's curriculum and initiatives as well as basic academic and literacy skills, they might need.

Conclusion

This chapter presented existing research and school programs that espouse the importance and need of identifying and implementing certain key elements that contribute to the success of students in American schools. The research and work already done in some schools serve to corroborate this study's intent of investigating successful practices that can contribute to reading, language proficiency, and academic achievement of LEP students in bilingual settings.

Most of the literature researched included specific aspects that had an impact in the education of students in general and some geared towards the success of Hispanic students. They focus on topics such as, school culture, leadership support, student-centered classrooms, parental involvement, and alternative assessments. All of them offered significant evidence of their benefits when appropriately approached; however, there is not much research available regarding comprehensive work that included all or

some of the different components included in the research study that combined contributed particularly to the reading and language proficiency, and academic achievement of LEP students in self-contained bilingual classrooms.

In sum, this chapter presented valuable information on separate issues, vernacular and native language instruction, instructional strategies, professional development, leadership support, and parental involvement that have been identified, studied, implemented and proven to be effective in American schools. The goal of this research study is to investigate the impact of different successful practices that when combined maximize the educational opportunities leading to the academic success of LEP students in reading and second language acquisition.

Along with the benefits rendered to students, this study aims to examine other key elements that may have facilitated and supported bilingual teachers with the implementation of the identified successful practices in their bilingual classrooms. The next chapter presents and describes the methodology used in an attempt to answer the research questions.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study aimed to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of identified scientific research-based successful practices in the teaching-learning process of reading in self-contained kindergarten through second grade bilingual classrooms. Furthermore, this study intended to show how teachers could help LEP students reach high levels of reading and academic achievement in state standardized tests through the use and implementation of identified scientific research-based successful practices. Additionally, the study examined other factors that could be considered to bring LEP students up to level, so they could meet state's annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAO) targets.

This chapter describes the procedure and method used in the development and conduction of this research study. Qualitative data were required for conducting this study. In concurrence with Myers (1997), qualitative research allows me to understand teachers' perceptions of their instructional successful practices as well as the educational environment in which they lived.

Based on the review of the literature, which supported use of LEP students vernacular and suggested the use of identified successful practices for teaching reading to LEP students, the data were collected in bilingual self-contained kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classrooms in a northern school district in New Jersey.

Instruction was done in students' native language in reading and math and English as a second language (ESL) instruction was integrated in the other subject areas.

Classroom teachers plan, develop and implement their lessons based on and around their identified successful practices. Hence use of the students' vernacular and scientific research-based successful practices are the focus of this research. The following questions led the study.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers perceive successful practices?
2. What scientific research-based successful practices have teachers identified as effective in the teaching-learning process of reading in bilingual kindergarten through second grade classrooms?
3. How did teachers use and implement identified successful practices in their classrooms to make a significant difference in their students' learning?
4. What successful practices are implemented in third grade bilingual classrooms?
5. What is the impact or lack of successful practices in third grade bilingual classrooms?

Statement of the Problem

This study was completed in a northern school district in New Jersey where there is a constant influx of Hispanic students whose dominant language is their vernacular. Consequently, administrators, teachers, and parents are always concerned and look to identify and implement instructional ways in order to increase the educational opportunities of LEP students, which at the same time would help them achieve high

levels of proficiency across subject areas, with a special interest in language development and reading proficiency in both their first and second languages.

In addition to these concerns, schools with large percentages of LEP students were not meeting their annual adequate yearly progress (AYP).

In an effort to maximize LEP students' academic achievement, to help them improve their scores on state standardized tests, and to meet the state annual measurable goals (AMAOs) and adequate yearly progress (AYP), district and school administrators, teachers, and school staff in general have developed and implemented strategic plans, instructional programs, and professional development plans to achieve the goals.

This study was based on the reorganization of the district bilingual program, with special interest in the reading curriculum to address and meet the needs of LEP students in Kindergarten, first, second, and third grades, to then, analyze its impact on students' state standardized test scores. Although the district recognized the needs for LEP students and invested time and energy in restructuring the bilingual program for this student population, it is the actual implementation and interaction in self-contained bilingual classrooms that influenced and determined the success of the program, and ultimately, the success of the students. This of course, implied the use and implementation of a sound and comprehensive literacy instructional program in the native language, along with curriculum, appropriate instructional practices and professional development.

Research Design

Answers to the research questions were found by using qualitative data.

Ethnographic interviews were used as a form of qualitative research for this study. As

Spradley (1979) pointed out, ethnographic research has been used in many fields, including education. In an attempt to study the successful practices that made a difference in the teaching-learning process of reading, I used this methodology to understand the needs, experiences, viewpoints, and goals of bilingual teachers and their LEP students in self-contained bilingual classrooms. As a result and in agreement with Labuschagne (2003), the data obtained from the ethnographic interviews consist of direct quotations from informant bilingual teachers about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge.

This research process will result in what Glaser and Strauss (1999) call “grounded theory” generated from collected empirical data of cultural description as well as illustrated by relevant examples of data. Spradley (1979) identified ethnography as “an excellent strategy for discovering grounded theory” (p.11). The methodology is explained in order to demonstrate how it assisted, influenced and determined researcher’s findings.

Qualitative Research

Through the use of qualitative methodology, this research study described and documented the use of native language for reading instruction to LEP students, and research-based successful practices implemented by bilingual teachers with their LEP students in their self-contained bilingual classrooms. As Labuschagne (2003) proposed, qualitative data provide researchers with detailed information through direct quotation and comprehensive description of situations, events, interactions and observed behaviors. Further, according to Labuschagne “qualitative data begin as raw, descriptive information about programmes and people in programmes” (¶8). Therefore, open-ended interviews

with the school principal, literacy coach, bilingual teachers, and parents were done on regular basis in order to obtain data regarding the use of native language and the implementation of the teachers' identified successful practices when teaching reading to LEP students. According to Patton (1990), a qualitative research design led me to, study the use of the native language during reading instruction in bilingual classrooms, as well as to formulate inductive hypothesis. Most researchers use interviews and other "background" documents as qualitative data "for putting the research in context" (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, p. 162). Multiple sources of information, such as copies of lesson plans, teacher's made materials, instructional curriculum, conversations with the staff, and formal tape-recorded interviews generated the data gathered for analysis and completion of the study.

The Setting

There are 31 Abbott districts or districts with special needs in New Jersey. One of the largest Abbott districts in northern New Jersey was selected to conduct this research study. According to the New Jersey State Report Card statistics (NJ State Department of Education, NJDOE, 2008), the district student enrollment for the school year 2006 -2007 was 13,535. The breakdown of the students' ethnicity was as follows: Hispanic 85.9%, African-American 9.1%, Asian 3.4%, White 1.5% and Native American 0.1%. Of the total student population, 9,755 students qualified for free lunch, 983 for reduced lunch, and 3,269 were identified as LEP students.

Data from the district's report card statistics (NJDOE, 2008) indicate that 74.4% of the total student population comes from homes where a language other than English is spoken. Of these students, who total almost eleven thousand, 28% receive some form of

English language instruction. At 28%, the percentage of LEP students in the district being studied is over twice the percentage of LEP students in other Abbott districts (13%) and a startling almost six times the percentage statewide (5%). Sadly, over 20%, or about 640 of the district LEP students are over age and enter the schools having had sporadic or even no schooling in their home country. The cost of educating students of limited English proficiency is appreciably greater than that of educating monolingual students due to the additional materials needed for ESL instruction and for instruction in the native language, not to mention the additional specialized staff required to provide this instruction.

The district has been able to develop and implement a sound and comprehensive educational program and instructional initiatives with additional funding allotted under the conditions of Abbott district and relying on federal and private grants. Whereas the total cost per pupil in the district being studied was of \$15,860; other two Abbott districts reported spending the most per pupil, \$19,976 and \$18,337. One of the non-Abbott suburban district with a .2% of LEP students, reported \$18,652 as the total cost per pupil. The comparative figures were obviously considerable higher amounts than the total cost per pupil in the district under study (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2008).

The Education Law Center (ELC, 2007) analyzed the spending data by district factor group (DFG), a ranking of districts by income, property wealth, and community and educational factors. According to the analysis, the most academically successful and wealthier districts serve a very small percentage of students who are poor (3.6%) or Black and Latino (9%), yet they spend an average of \$12,000 per student.

Interesting enough, the ELC's analysis indicated that Abbott serve the most poor students (65.5%) and Black and Latino students (87%). The average of money spent per

pupil is \$14,700. But, according to the ELC:

Unlike other districts, Abbott school spending is affected by Court-mandated programs, such as full-day kindergarten and early literacy, to address the intense concentration of poor and minority students. Abbott districts are also under Court order to provide high quality preschool to thousands of 3 and 4 year olds, which adds to their overall spending level. (¶ 7)

The data serve to confirm the purpose of *Abbott v. Burke* rulings, which allocates greater state aid to the Abbott districts where New Jersey's low income and LEP students are most heavily concentrated. Further, added the ELC (2007), "It is also important to recognize that, while adequate and equitable resources are essential, more is necessary to provide a high quality education" (¶ 12).

A small K-2 elementary school from the district was the target school to collect the data for this study. Bilingual/ESL education was an important part of the school's educational and instructional program; therefore the school had a strong bilingual program in place. The school was comprised of monolingual and bilingual kindergarten to second grade classes. According to the ambiance of the school and the respectful, friendly, and collaborative traits of the staff as described by the participants of this school, for the purpose of this study, the school received the fictitious name of "Collegial School", and as such will be identified throughout the study.

When the study was conducted, there were 10 classrooms consisting of two bilingual and one regular kindergarten classes, two bilingual and one regular first grade classes, and two bilingual, one regular, and one transitional second grade classes. Second grade students move to a third-to-sixth grade school located one block away. Therefore,

the school sites used in this study shared the same characteristics in terms of geographic location and student population. This school will be identified as the neighboring school.

The student population included students functioning below grade level, special education, students from socio-economic disadvantaged families, new immigrants to the United States, students from broken families and students from families with low levels of education, the majority of whom are Hispanic or of Hispanic descent. Parental support in academics was minimal due to the language barrier as 85% of the students are from non-English dominant homes.

Bilingual self-contained education offered at both schools allowed me to conduct this research. The instructional programs developed and established at both schools provided me with opportunities for classroom observations and contact with teachers and staff for data collection.

The Informants

Spradley (1979) suggested the following criteria for selecting “good” informants: (a) thorough enculturation, (b) current involvement, (c) an unfamiliar cultural scene, (d) adequate time, and (e) nonanalytic.

The informants (see Table 1) in this research study were bilingual classroom teachers of two elementary schools, the Collegial School, a kindergarten to second grade and the neighboring school, third-to-sixth grade schools. The principal and literacy coach were staff members of the Collegial School. All four-classroom teachers have been assigned to their respective schools and grade level for at least 5 years. All classroom teachers held elementary, bilingual, and ESL certifications, and have been identified as highly qualified teachers. The principal of the Collegial School had an extensive

background and experience in the bilingual field not only as a teacher, but also as a former head person for the district bilingual/ESL department. The Literacy Coach, a Reading Specialist, has been in the school for 3 years. The Parent Liaison appointed to this position for 3 years, at the time of the interview, has been a key element in bridging the gap between home and school. Two parents of the Collegial School spoke about their involvement in school as well the use and benefits of the school's successful practices.

All selected informants knew their culture so well that they were thoroughly enculturated. Additionally, the informants were so knowledgeable and currently involved in the cultural scene that they became "teachers" to the 'unenculturated' researcher (Spradley, 1979).

Table 1
Participants by age, Language Spoken and time in the current assignment

Participants	Age	Language Spoken	Time in Assignment
Participant A	43	English & Spanish	16 years
Participant B	46	English & Spanish	11 years
Participant C	33	English & Spanish	5 years
Participant D	34	English & Spanish	2 years
Participant E	32	English & Spanish	7 years
Participant F	51	English & Spanish	3 years
Participant G	35	English only	4 years
Participant H	29	Spanish & some English	1 year
Participant I	34	Spanish only	2 years
Participant J	31	Spanish & some English	3 years

Permission from the district's superintendent was granted to conduct the study in the two elementary schools selected in the district. An overview of the study was given to all informants. I explained the interview process, which included 4 tape-recorded interviews of about 1-hour long each. The informants were willing to contribute with adequate time to participate in the interviewing process. Through the interviews, I tried to lead the informants to talk about their culture from a non analytical point of view.

Upon receipt of informants' acceptance to participate in the study, each teacher was presented with a statement of confidentiality to ensure that their information and/or artifacts would not be shared with other people or used for other purposes different to those of the research.

The Interviews

As Spradley (1979) stated, "the ethnographic interview is one strategy for getting people to talk about what they know" (p.9). Furthermore, Glaser and Strauss (1999) regarded "caches of materials" as interviews of a sample of people as sources of important qualitative data. Additionally, Spradley emphasized that "rather than *studying people*, ethnography means *learning from people*" (p. 3). Using this rationale, a series of extensive interviews with the school staff were conducted in order to obtain information about the culture of bilingual teachers and their successful practices.

Patton (1990) identified three types of qualitative interviewing:

1. Informal, conversational interviews: These interviews occur in an informal, spontaneous, and conversational setting. The questions are open, but not predetermined.

2. Interview guide approach: Using these types of interviews, the interviewer approaches the interviews with a focus and an idea of the issues to be addressed. Nevertheless, the tone of the interview is still informal; the questions are open and not prepared in advance.

3. Standardized, open-ended interview: The interviewer asks a specific set of open-ended questions or script, prepared in advance, to all informants.

Since the objective of this research study was to describe and document the effectiveness of research-based successful practices for reading instruction to LEP students implemented by bilingual teachers in their self-contained bilingual classrooms, the guide approach was used to cover the same general issues with all the informants. In spite of having a general focus, open-ended questions were used to allow flexibility in the process of obtaining the information from each informant.

Through the use of ethnographic open-ended questions, I was able to learn and find out the informants' cultural knowledge of their instructional successful practices (Spradley, p. 60). Ethnographic questions led me to discover what teachers perceived as successful practices, how they identified and selected their successful practices, the implementation of the successful practices in their classrooms, and to what extent bilingual students benefited from the use of successful practices identified and implemented by their teachers in their classrooms. Additionally, the information led to discover key elements that contributed to the effective implementation of the successful practices.

Four interviews were scheduled with each of the staff members. Each staff member was interviewed for about an hour. Every interview was tape-recorded,

transcribed and analyzed. The ethnographic analysis led me to discover the meaning of the culture of successful practices, as well as their relationship with the teaching-learning process. The interviews focused on the following fundamental elements of the instructional practices:

1. Use of the students' native language as a medium of instruction.
2. Advantages of having a school instructional focus.
3. The curriculum in place was fully aligned with the NJCCCS.
4. The curriculum was based on 8-week units and includes benchmarks for measuring progress through the period.
5. Assessment of student work was continuous, measured, and set against curricular and instructional standards that were clear, specific, and known by teachers.
6. Use of portfolios to measure student's growth and as an alternative method of assessment.
7. Development and implementation of instructional practices, such as: (a) 90 minutes of uninterrupted Language Arts/Reading instruction daily; (b) classroom libraries with a minimum of 300 high-quality books that were aligned to the NJ CCCS and the school's comprehensive reading program; (c) small group instruction; (d) learning centers for at least reading, computers, writing, and math; (e) read-alouds to the whole class at least once daily; (f) plenty of time for guided, shared, and independent reading in class; (g) technology was integrated into the instructional practices; (h) classroom computers were adequate in number and configured as a learning center; (h) computers were networked, connected to the Internet, and had sufficient broadband to permit individualized student use; and, (j) use of manipulatives.

8. A strong school leadership and bilingual program support
9. Ongoing professional development around the instructional focus and instructional practices

Interview Questions

The interview process consisted of open-ended questions conducted in an informal and friendly conversational setting. “Ethnographic elements” were gradually introduced to effectively lead the “informants to respond as informants” (Spradley, 1979, p. 58). Spradley identified three main categories of ethnographic questions with specific functions within the interviewing process. The following are types of ethnographic questions used during the interview sessions.

1. Descriptive Questions, which allow the interviewer to collect an ongoing sample of the informants’ language. Examples of descriptive questions are: “Can you describe to me what goes on a regular school day?” (Informant A, Interview 1). “Can you talk about the major highlight or event of today’s day? (Informant B, Interview 2).

2. Structural Questions, which leads to the discovery of the “domains” in which the informants have organized their knowledge. Examples of structural questions are: “Can you think of any other parts of the room?” (Informant B, Interview 2). “What types of centers do you have in the afternoon?” (Informant A, Interview 1).

3. Contrast Questions assist in the discovery of differences among the various terms used by the informants’ language about their instructional successful practices. Contrast questions helped me discover the dimensions of meaning that teachers use to differentiate the successful practices used with their LEP students. Examples of contrast

questions are: “What is the difference between whole group instruction and centers oriented instruction?” (Informant A, Interview 1). “What is the difference between guided reading and shared reading?” (Informant B, Interview 3).

Data Collection

Data were collected from four bilingual teachers (Kkndergarten, first, second, and third grades) the school principal, and the Literacy Coach who played a major role in identifying and implementing research-based successful practices in the bilingual classrooms. Additionally information was collected from two parents and parent liaison of the Collegial School. The data collection methodology used in this study is considered an ethnographic research. Qualitative data and analysis provided me with meaningful and thorough information of bilingual teachers’ experience in their own terms. An in-depth analysis of informants’ detailed descriptions and verbatim quotations not only revealed the informants’ feelings, thoughts, experiences, basic perceptions, but also an understanding and meaning of their culture as bilingual teachers and the identified successful practices used in their bilingual classrooms (Labuschagne, 2003).

According to Spradley, “an ethnographic record consists of field notes, tape recordings, pictures, artifacts, and anything else which documents the cultural scene under study” (p.69). Therefore, the major component of my ethnographic study consists of recorded interviews with bilingual classroom teachers and school staff; interview transcriptions, and lesson plans. The ethnographic record became the source of evidence to answer the research questions and to learn about the culture of teachers’ identified successful practices in bilingual classrooms.

All selected informants received a “Letter of Solicitation for a Research Study” inviting them to participate in the study on a volunteer basis. The interviewer contacted them, later, to confirm their participation and set up the first interview. The interviews took place in the informants’ classrooms and/or in the interviewer’s office. Once the intention of the study was again communicated to the informants, they received and signed an “Informed Consent Form,” which included anonymity and confidentiality statements. Each informant contributed with four interviews of about one-hour each, which began in April 2006 and ended in May 2007.

The interviews were exchanges between the person conducting the research and the informants in friendly conversations where the interviewer led the informants to speak in their “own language” becoming teachers for the interviewer. The informants defined what was important to discuss making this ethnographic study depend on the language of the informants. Thus, the questions formulated developed from the informant’s culture (Spradley, 1979).

The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. In addition to the interviews, condensed accounts, and artifacts were the major components of the ethnographic record. Spradley (1979) recognized fully transcribed tape-recorded interviews as the most comprehensive expanded accounts and the resulting data as the end product of the ethnographic interviews. In turn, the interviewer analyzes the data, which is the written cultural description. In this research study, the tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and thus became part of the data for the research study.

In the process of this ethnographic analysis, I aimed to discover the system of cultural meanings used by the teachers and staff within their cultural knowledge of

instructional successful practices. In order to achieve this, I conducted interviews and analyzed the data using several types of ethnographic analysis that led me to the discovery of the cultural meaning of instructional successful practices.

Analysis of the Data

This study was completed with the purpose of demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of identified scientific research-based successful practices in the teaching-learning process of reading in self-contained kindergarten through second grade bilingual classrooms.

According to Spradley (1979), “Ethnographic analysis is the search for the parts of a culture and their relationships as conceptualized by informants” (p.93). Therefore, the analysis of this study was mainly based in the assessment of informants’ interviews. The ethnographic analysis led to discover the meaning of the culture of instructional successful practices, as well as their relationship with the teaching-learning process.

The developmental research and analysis sequence proposed by Spradley was followed. When the informants accepted and recognized the role of teaching and the research about their instructional successful practices, they took a more forward attitude towards the interviewing process. In turn, the interviewer’s role was to keep the informants talking using ethnographic questions suggested by Spradley.

Descriptive questions were the first set of ethnographic questions introduced during the first interview. Descriptive questions were used to obtain a large sample of utterances in the informants’ native language and to encourage them to talk about a particular cultural issue. Descriptive questions include:

1. **Grand Tour Questions:** Through typical, specific, guided, or task-oriented grand tour questions the researcher leads informants to verbal descriptions, in terms of space, time, events, and/or people, of the cultural scenes.
2. **Mini-Tour Questions:** Same questions as the grand tour questions, but describe a much smaller unit of experience.
3. **Example Questions:** Very specific questions leading to the description of very interesting events.
4. **Experience Questions:** These questions lead informants to describe their experiences in a particular setting.
5. **Native-Language Questions:** These questions enable the researcher to discover the terms and phrases that informants most commonly use to describe a cultural scene.

Native-language questions minimize the influence of informant's translation competence.

According to Spradley (1979), descriptive questions form the backbone of all ethnographic interviews" (p.91) and are used throughout the interviewing process. After the first interview, which is conducted using descriptive questions, for the most part, the researcher analyzes the data collected. This analysis guides the researcher to develop questions for future interviews. It also indicates what things mean to the informants. An important job of the researcher is to discover the informants' unspoken knowledge. Spradley referred to the ethnographic analysis as "the search for the parts of a culture and their relationships as conceptualized by informants" (p.93). Consequently, shortly after the first interview, the researcher begins to review field notes, analyze the initial data, and search for cultural symbols and possible relationships among those terms. The cultural symbols are included in larger categories or domains according to their similarities.

Domain analysis is the searching process for domains, which are the largest units of the informant's cultural knowledge. Spradley regarded domains as "the first and most important unit of analysis of ethnographic research" (p. 100), which have the following structure: *cover terms*, which are the names for a category of cultural knowledge; *included terms*, which are the folk terms that make up a particular category of knowledge labeled by the cover term; *semantic relationship*, which is the link between the cover term and all the included terms in the category of knowledge; and a *boundary*, which is the informant's decision as to whether a term belongs inside or outside the domain.

After the preliminary search for domains, the researcher introduces *structural questions* to discover the organization of the informants' cultural knowledge, to verify the domains and find out about folk domains, cover and included terms for the domains.

Structural questions include:

1. **Verification Questions:** The researcher asks domain, included term, semantic relationship, and native-language verification questions to verify hypotheses about a folk domain.
2. **Cover Term Questions:** These questions are used when the researcher has a cover term, so informants confirm whether or not the term belongs to their cultural knowledge.
3. **Included Term Questions:** These questions are asked when the researcher has several terms to confirm they belong to the same domain.
4. **Substitution Frame Questions:** This is a way of asking structural questions, in which informants substitute other terms for a single term removed from previous statements.

5. Card Sorting Structural Questions: Folk terms written on cards facilitate discussion and verification of domains.

At this point in the interviewing process, the researcher has identified many different domains in the cultural scene of the study by asking descriptive and structural questions. The domain analysis (see Appendix C) and the questions have assisted the researcher in discovering the meaning system of the cultural scene in its own terms. Spradley (1979) advised ethnographers to limit their investigation in some way as some domains of the culture will require a more detailed and in-depth study than others. Therefore, the researcher selects a focus in the ethnographic research; studies selected domains in-depth keeping in mind the research goals, and yet tries to obtain a surface understanding of the culture in 'holistic' terms. In order to achieve this, researchers must implement and maintain a balance between strategies for both in-depth and surface analysis.

When domains have been verified and folk terms included in those domains have been obtained, the researcher looks for the internal structure of the domains. Taxonomic analysis (see Appendix D), the second method of ethnographic analysis, assists the researcher in identifying subsets within a domain and the relationships between these subsets. Spradley suggested that each domain of a culture includes contrasting folk terms, and in turn, each subset of terms within domains is made up of a contrast set. Contrast questions, the third major kind of ethnographic questions, help researchers explore the differences and relationships among folk terms. Contrast questions include:

1. Contrast Verification Questions: These questions are asked when a difference between two folk terms has been discovered and the researcher wants to verify that

difference. They also confirm differences and similarities among large groups of folk terms.

2. Directed Contrast Questions: These questions confirm if any other terms in a set contrast with a particular known characteristic of a folk term.

3. Dyadic Contrast Questions: The researcher does not suggest any differences between folk terms to the informants, but asks these questions to find out of any differences between terms. As a result, the informants uncover differences that are meaningful to them.

4. Triadic Contrast Questions: Considered the most effective types of contrast questions, the researcher presents the informant with three folk terms and he/she identifies the two that are alike and the one that is different from the others.

5. Contrast Set Sorting Questions: The researcher presents the informant with all the terms in a contrast set written on cards, and then the informant sorts the cards into piles according to differences and similarities among them.

6. Twenty Questions Game: The researcher leads the informant to elicit many different questions that disclose the underlying contrasts they use to code a particular set of folk terms.

7. Rating Questions: Through these questions, the researcher finds out the values that informants place on sets of symbols of their culture.

All the differences that surfaced from the contrast questions lead to a componential analysis, which is the third method of ethnographic analysis. A componential analysis allows researchers to organize all the discovered contrasts in a systematic fashion, identify missing contrasts, and represent the components of meaning

for any contrast set. Spradley (1979) defined a componential analysis as “the systematic search for the attributes associated with cultural symbols” (p.174). Since attributes are always associated to folk terms by virtue of different semantic relationships, a componential analysis is a good tool to represent multiple relationships between a folk term and other symbols. The approach taken with the componential analysis used in this ethnographic study aims “to discover the psychological reality” of the informant’s cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1979, p. 175).

In making a componential analysis (see Appendix E), the researcher follows the following steps: (a) selects a contrast set for analysis, (b) compiles a list of contrasts by recording all contrasts previously discovered, (c) prepares a paradigm worksheet that contains the folk terms in the contrast set with all the attributes associated to them, (d) identifies dimensions of contrast which have binary values, (e) combines closely related dimensions of contrast into ones that have multiple values, (f) prepares contrast questions to elicit missing attributes and new dimensions of contrast, (g) conducts an interview to elicit needed data, and (h) prepares a completed paradigm.

A completed componential analysis is the end result of an in-depth analysis of domains, which in the case of this ethnographic research has helped the researcher to accurately map out the psychological reality of the participants’ cultural knowledge about instructional successful practices. At this point, the developmental research sequence suggests going back to the surface of a cultural scene to construct a more holistic view of the culture being studied.

Discovering cultural themes is the fourth method of ethnographic analysis outlined in Spradley’s (1979) developmental research sequence where cultural themes are

perceived as 'relationships' among domains. The ethnographer compares and contrasts domains to find some relationships. In the case of this ethnographic study, theme analysis is about searching for the relationships among identified domains and their connection to the whole culture of instructional successful practices. This method will allow me to discover cultural themes and will assist me in "pulling together the major outlines" of the instructional successful practices cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1979, p. 201).

Spradley (1979) believed that getting involved in the particular culture is the most proven method of finding themes. Further, he suggested writing a description of the culture is a way of gaining greater engagement into the ideas and meaning of a culture. Consequently, upon completion of all the analysis proposed in the developmental research sequence and the treated data, the process of writing the ethnographic description of the culture of instructional successful practices as part of the process of ethnographic discovery began. Next chapter presents and describes a detailed analysis of the data compiled through the interviews with the participants of the study.

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The primary focus of this study was to investigate and understand through ethnographic research the components of the culture of successful practices as described by the bilingual teachers of two elementary schools of a Northern district in New Jersey. Specifically, this study was an attempt to describe and interpret what the participants of the culture regarded as successful practices, what successful practices consisted of, and what was the impact of identified successful practices on LEP students' reading, language proficiency and academic achievement. Later on, interviews with the Reading Coach, the Collegial School Principal, Parent Liaison and parents were added.

LEP students attending American schools come from different backgrounds and not only are they at different proficiency levels in their native language, but also in English, their second language. The students' educational experiences in their native countries, the opportunities provided for English acquisition, their family life and support are all significant factors in the academic success of LEP students in American schools.

Teachers implement new practices to assist and meet the needs of LEP students and to guarantee their academic achievement. This ethnographic study intends to describe and interpret the cultural knowledge of teachers and staff regarding "successful practices" implemented in self-contained Bilingual classrooms. The described successful practices were suggested by teachers and staff as participants of the culture of the two

schools where the study was conducted to target academic skills and the needs of their LEP student population. For this purpose, data were collected in the form of ethnographic interviews with the participants of the culture of successful practices. The interviews were conducted from April 2006 through May 2007 and transcribed to facilitate the data analysis process.

It is worth noting that all the successful practices identified in this study were implemented in both schools, amongst other research-based instructional practices, but the ones described in this chapter were implemented by the participants on a daily basis in their bilingual classrooms. They also were recurrent themes throughout the ethnographic interviews.

This chapter describes the results of a qualitative analysis of the participants' descriptions about the successful practices used in their bilingual self-contained classrooms. This chapter also provides an interpretation of the cultural knowledge of participant bilingual teachers regarding the successful practices implemented in their bilingual self-contained classrooms.

The culture of successful practices, like any other culture, is made up of a system of meaning that is incorporated into the larger culture of an effective Bilingual Education for LEP students in American schools. In order to understand this larger culture, the study identified recurrent themes in the following five areas:

1. Native Language Instruction: The LEP students attending American schools have to deal with new information in a foreign language and therefore, are imposed a double burden. Therefore, their progress will be much slower. Studies have demonstrated that in order to ease the burden on the students, the vernacular should be used as the

medium of instruction in early years of schooling and maintain it as late as possible. The students' first language should be used in the early stages of education. It will serve as a bridge for learning the second language providing a foundation of culture as well as one of language.

Ultimately, students must learn to think, speak, read, and write in the second language. However, this goal is, UNESCO proposed (1951, p. 9), psychologically and pedagogically best achieved by becoming literate in the vernacular, and from literacy in the mother language to literacy in the second language.

In agreement with the existing research, the schools in this study offered instruction in the students' mother tongue, Spanish, in all grades. The staff of both schools makes every effort to create the conditions, which will make the transition from the vernacular to second language acquisition as smooth and as psychologically harmless as possible.

At the Collegial School and according to the philosophy proposed by UNESCO (1951), the LEP students begin their schooling using their vernacular language because they understand it best and because it will make the break between home and school as small as possible. Further, the completely developed and use of vernacular language enhances achievement of adequate children's self-expression.

Cummins (1979) supports native language instruction for LEP students and believes that students must develop a strong first language in order to ensure academic and linguistic proficiency in their second language. Moreover, according to Cummins's *developmental interdependence theory*, a successful second language proficiency depends upon a solid-strong foundation in the native language.

Antunez (2002) agrees with Cummins and claims that development and literacy in the student's first language create a strong foundation of knowledge, concept, and skills that facilitate transfers from native language reading to reading in the second language. Based on this premise, the participants of the culture of successful practices were committed to help their LEP students develop native language literacy while acquiring oral English proficiency before teaching them to read in English. In order to achieve their goals successfully, the analysis of the data collected indicated that participant teachers identified and used specific instructional strategies in their bilingual classrooms, which they deemed successful.

2. Instructional Strategies: The staff of the two schools participating in this study selected research-based instructional strategies or practices to maximize the students' learning opportunities. The main focus was on the development of a comprehensive literacy program to assist all students achieve high levels of proficiency in Language Arts and Literacy.

The implementation of a 120-minute uninterrupted language arts literacy block was implemented in the classrooms of LEP students. The instruction during the literacy block was approached through the use of research-based identified successful practices, which included, but were not limited to, small group instruction, guided reading, literacy centers, word walls, journal writing, hands-on activities, use of manipulatives, thematic units, and a co-teaching approach.

The teachers had opportunities to meet, discuss, and analyze students' progress, assessments' results to develop action plans leading to the improvement of the teaching-learning process in their bilingual classrooms. In order for teachers to learn and be able to

implement their identified instructional strategies effectively, they participated in sustained, systemic, supported, relevant, and intensive training and professional development on a regular basis.

3. **Professional Development:** Based on the observations, it was clear that teachers' training and professional development was the engine and a key element in the development and implementation of the culture of successful practices. Through a partnership with a local university, the teachers received a minimum of 25 hours, per year, of training and professional development. The workshops included training on the implementation of the identified instructional strategies and successful practices and the new assessment procedures. To complement the workshops on the different reading skill areas, Bilingual and ESL teachers received professional development on instructional strategies for LEP students.

In addition to the professional development offerings through the local university, each school had a Literacy Coach certified as a Reading Specialist or Teacher of Reading to work with the teachers. The Literacy Coaches worked as mentors, coaches, and models of instruction. They demonstrated lessons and assisted teachers with the implementation of instructional strategies and the school's identified successful practices through workshops and day long trainings. The Literacy Coaches scheduled regular grade level meetings to help develop lessons and strategies around the core reading skills and the identified weaknesses of the students. The Literacy Coaches provided professional development to staff and parents.

4. **Leadership Support:** Instructional leaders set the tone and play an important role in successful schools. An effective instructional leader develops a keen sense of

responsibility for school improvement, students' achievement and success, and facilitates resources leading to the overall improvement of the school community. González (1997) believed that many school leaders do not have the knowledge or understanding of the particular needs of their Latino population, including LEP students. Further, she added, school principals must possess and show "skills and knowledge to effectively lead a school in providing the quality education legally guaranteed to Latinos, in order for them to become successful, productive citizens in the 21st century" (p. 3).

Based on the Collegial School principal's interviews, it was evident that she was a real instructional leader. The following principal's statement indicate how confident she felt about her knowledge about bilingual education and her commitment to train her teachers,

I find that sometimes teachers who are in Bilingual classes might not have as extensive the training as I had, and all of the field work that I had. So it falls into my hands to give them professional development, to let them know what I want them to do, because I know what has worked all these years, and what the research says, and I do back it up.

The data revealed the principal's knowledge and command of the school's successful practices, use of the students' data to drive instruction and to develop a meaningful professional development for teachers, and conducting daily school walkthroughs to monitor and assess the implementation of the school's identified successful practices (Cudeiro, 2005). In concurrence with Gonzalez (1997), this principal actively participated in leadership practices that facilitated a teaching-learning process to ensure successful academic achievement for all students. Further, in González's (1997) terms, this principal

could serve “as a model in promoting the education of culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students” (p. 4).

The teachers, staff and parents participating in this study not only talked about the different activities used by the Collegial School’s principal to provide leadership, but also described ways she used to support her staff, students, parents and school’s successful practices and initiatives. One of the first grade teachers enthusiastically illustrated the principal’s leadership by stating,

I feel that our principal from day one has been very positive, has reinforced the importance of reminding us every day that this isn’t about us, it’s about the children, and their future, and also the principal coming to the grade level meetings, and listening to us, and sharing with us her ideas, her feelings, and listening to us as individuals. If we had a problem or even a special need that we were concerned about she’s always been there to listen, and give us advice.

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that the principal demonstrated effective and strong leadership strategies for creating a safe environment conducive to academic success for teachers and students. She created and promoted a collaborative, results-oriented school culture committed to constant improvement

González (1997) described principal’s leadership in elementary schools successfully serving Latino students. The Collegial School’s principal, portrayed in this study, mirrors the principals highlighted in González’s work. They all had the knowledge, were dedicated and committed to the teaching-learning process in their schools, particularly of their Latino population. The Collegial School’s principal

displayed the following threads perceived by González (p. 23) as essential concepts and skills linked to the success of principals and effective leadership:

1. Transforming the school: The principal transformed the school from the traditional and old practices that were in place upon her arrival to new and successful practices.

2. Being a learning leader: The principal modeled a constant search and enhancement of knowledge about curriculum and scientific research-based instructional practices to be implemented in classrooms and maximize the students' educational opportunities.

3. Being an advocate of LEP students: This principal considered the education of the LEP students as a fundamental part of the school's educational program. Having the knowledge and experience in bilingual education, she assumed full responsibility of the bilingual/ESL program and made sure it was correctly implemented in the bilingual classrooms. Batsis also recognized this thread of knowledge in his study of principals in language minority students. He referred as good principals, those who had "a commitment to bilingual and multicultural education as an integral part of the school's curriculum and an understanding of the technical and complex issues in language minority schools" (as cited in Gonzalez, 1997, p. 24).

As suggested by Gonzalez, the principal's level of commitment was exhibited in the voluntary extra time, including evening, weekend and summer hours, dedicated to school work leading to successful initiatives.

4. Providing professional development: The principal provided her staff, including parents, with training and professional development opportunities about the school's instructional focus and identified successful practices.

5. Having and endorsing a philosophy that is evident in all decisions and activities: The principal's philosophy was shared and followed by the staff. They respected, valued and took into consideration the language and culture of their LEP students. As explained by Gonzalez, this principal used her command of the Spanish language to involve parents in school and established a strong home-school partnership. The principal as well as teachers and staff created a culture of care and welcoming environment for the entire school community. Along these lines, Pedroza believes that a major role of a principal serving Latino students is to focus and build on the diversity of the community. She asserted that "Recognizing the richness of diversity and a willingness to act as a culture broker between the school and the community defines the culturally competent administrator" (as cited in Gonzalez, 1997, p. 27). As a result, the students' families became an important component of the school; they participated in all school functions, activities, workshops and in turn, worked together with teachers supporting their classroom practices.

According to González, the principal of the Collegial School had the knowledge and skills to create an environment where LEP students and their families could succeed. Collier regarded this principal's trait as an effective management practice in his research about positive school climate for LEP students:

In schools with strong support for language minority students, researchers have found that administrators and all schools staff have a commitment to empowering

language minority students through providing bilingual/bicultural role models, serving as community advocates, providing bicultural counseling support with knowledge with post secondary opportunities, being available after school and organizing meaningful extracurricular activities and creating a school climate that values cultural and linguistic diversity. (as cited in Gonzalez, 1997, p. 26)

5. Parental Involvement: In both schools of the study, parents were considered important members of the school community. According to the verbatim, there is clear evidence of the school personnel's willingness to reach out to parents and establish a strong and effective partnership with them to support the students' education. One of the parents interviewed stated how happy and satisfied she feels about the school, she said: "Estoy muy contenta porque cada vez que vengo a la escuela me dan una bienvenida que es lo que yo estaba buscando... donde puedo venir a la hora que yo quiera, puedo ir a los salones, puedo ayudar a las maestras si necesitan algo..." The translation in English is as follows: "I'm very happy because every time I visit the school, they welcome me and that's what I was looking for... I'm allowed to visit anytime, I'm allowed in the classrooms, I can help the teachers if they need something..."

It was transpired through the interviews that both schools had strong relations with the parents and the community leading to a positive school climate and high levels of parent support. It was stated that in both schools, the administrators had an "open door policy" to encourage parents to participate and be involved in their children's education.

The themes previously described were the result of a careful study and analysis of the data and identified in many domains as recurrent cultural themes throughout the different components of the culture of successful practices. They all were recognized as important factors that play a meaningful and effective role in the education of LEP students and that are intertwined with all the different components of the culture.

Searching for recurrent themes led me to identify not only the relationship among the domains but also between all the different components of the culture and the larger culture. The search for recurrent cultural themes, in turn, led to a classification of components of the culture of successful practices.

The analysis of the components of the culture and their relationship revealed the participants' cultural knowledge of the culture of successful practices in bilingual classrooms. It is through the search of recurrent cultural themes that this study acts as the voice of participating bilingual teachers. It provides readers with their feelings and factual information about their experiences throughout their teaching career, a comparison between the teaching-learning process prior and after the implementation of the identified and described successful practices.

In the process of finding out all the components of instructional successful practices, the role and the impact of professional development, parental involvement, and leadership support in the teaching experience of the participant bilingual teachers, it was also discovered that the development and implementation of the culture of successful practices did not happen overnight. It was rather a dynamic and changing culture. The consensus among all of the participants indicated that all the components of the culture of identified research-based successful practices evolved from traditional and stagnant

methodologies of teaching reading to a redesigned data driven and research-based teaching-learning process of reading.

The development and implementation of the culture of successful practices is explained in the following chronological account of the process during four years of implementation.

First and most importantly, it was determined that the decision for implementing change, particularly in the schools' literacy practices had to be based on the schools' and students' performance data. Consequently, data study and analysis indicated not only the needs and areas of improvement, but also the development of instructional strategies and successful practices designed to meet the needs of the student population. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the implementation of successful practices assisting LEP students attending bilingual self-contained classes.

Both schools in the study were Abbott schools and as such were required to have a School Leadership Council (SLC) to work with the principal in the assessment and improvement of the instructional culture of the school. The main function of this team was to serve as the "school improvement plan committee." Additionally, the SLC served as the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to develop and monitor the implementation of the school's identified successful practices and a school-wide instructional focus.

Kannapel and Clements (2005) found that one of the characteristics of high-performing high-poverty schools was the development of a strong academic and instructional focus. In agreement with Kannapel et. al., the ILT of both schools studied and analyzed the students' data to determine their instructional focus.

Focus on Results, an educational consulting group contracted to work and assist the district in designing a program of improvement, set the groundwork for the district's instructional leadership teams. According to Focus on Results, the school's instructional focus had to be based on students' learning needs as indicated by different sources of data. The instructional focus was to be addressed and evidenced by the entire school, by each and every staff member, in each and every classroom, every single day of school. Further, the principal along with the staff were equally responsible and accountable for the students' growth in the area of the school's instructional focus.

In order to support the schools' academic focus and to address the needs of the students as indicated by their performance data, the district and schools identified and selected actions and instructional strategies to be implemented on a daily basis. The district established a 90-minute literacy block to be implemented in all regular education classrooms and a 120-minute literacy block for bilingual and transitional classes. The district and the schools reviewed and developed their professional development plans aligned with the needs and interests of the teachers and students, the academic focus, and the instructional strategies selected and implemented across the district and schools. The district hired Literacy Coaches for each school to assist teachers during the language literacy block on a daily basis. The role of the literacy coaches was not to supervise or evaluate teachers, rather, they built relationships with the teachers and staff of the schools, so that they could change practice and the culture of what was happening. Having in mind, that this goal would not be achieved over night, they were included in the school's ILT, they became sources of information for staff members, they met with teachers according to grade level, and worked as mentors, coaches, and models. They

also received training and attended workshops to assist teachers with the implementation of their selected instructional strategies and successful practices.

The first year of the development and implementation of the schools' culture of successful practices began by developing an Instructional Focus Statement that reflected their schoolwide instructional focus. The ILT of the Collegial School selected vocabulary and reading comprehension as their instructional focus while the neighboring school's ILT selected reading as their instructional focus.

The ILT met on a monthly basis and provided strong leadership around the schoolwide focus. Further, based upon the students' data, the ILT identified and selected successful practices to support the instructional focus and to address the academic needs of the student population. The staff of the Collegial School selected a 90-120 minute literacy block, daily read alouds, storytelling, literacy centers, and graphic organizers. The neighboring school selected literacy centers, mapping strategies, and higher order thinking questioning.

During the first year the teachers received 5 full days of in-service on the different reading skill areas and new assessment procedures. In addition, the Bilingual/ESL teachers received professional development on successful strategies for language learners. Chrisman (2005) observed that successful schools allowed teachers to make decisions about their professional development, thus enhancing their teacher leadership. Teachers and staff welcomed and appreciated the new approach to professional development offerings. As a result, teachers have an input as to their needs for training and professional growth. They have a voice on the development of the school's

professional development plan, which is used to develop the district-wide professional development plan.

Regular education teachers continued using the basic basal reading series. The bilingual teachers used the Spanish version of the basal readers used with regular education students. Additionally, during the first year, the bilingual teachers received components of the English version to help their students transfer to English. Learning centers were introduced in the school to give students an opportunity to practice their reading, writing, and listening skills in small groups and the instructional level of the students.

The district and school made available materials and supplies to facilitate the implementation of their academic focus and successful practices. The first and most significant addition to all classrooms was the development of classroom libraries that contained between 200 and 300 books selected around the themes of each grade level across the curriculum. These books were developmentally appropriate and met the reading abilities of the students. The classroom libraries included big books, little books, decodable books, books from different genres such as story books, fables, award winning literature, picture books, counting and A-B-C books, information, fiction and non-fiction, et al. Further, the classroom libraries included culturally and linguistically diverse books. The bilingual classes received books in both languages, English and Spanish.

By the end of the first year, it looked like both schools had a solid ground for the new initiatives and strategies to be implemented. Unfortunately, as the participants indicated, most teachers had not bought into the new ideas and were not ready for the transition. The teachers believed in having vocabulary and reading comprehension as

their instructional focus and yet not much was being done to support it. Most of the teachers had been using whole group instruction for too long and did not feel comfortable with learning centers or small group instruction approach. The reading coach was performing her job to the best of her ability; the teachers were attending the professional development, but the culture of what was happening in the classrooms was not changing. The teachers believed that learning centers would compromise their authority and control in their classrooms. In short, it took a lot from each and every staff member to buy into the new culture of successful practices. Except for the professional development and a good rapport between the reading coach and the teachers, the first year ended with little progress. The actual and effective implementation of the culture of successful practices began in the second year.

The second year of the development of the culture of successful practices started with a new school leader in the Collegial School. Since day one, the new principal expressed support for the school's initiatives and identified successful practices to be implemented. She was determined to creating a culture of academic improvement. For this purpose, the principal visited the classrooms regularly, provided in-school professional development in the areas where teachers needed it the most, modeled, supported, and monitored the use of teaching strategies and the school's identified successful practices.

To supplement the training that the teachers were receiving outside the school, the principal created mini-workshops before school and during lunch. The teachers met and watched educational hands-on videos to learn how literacy centers were created and ran in different classroom settings. They also held discussions and exchanged ideas about

their own experiences implementing the school's identified successful practices and improving classroom instruction.

The Reading Coach continued and deepened her work with the teachers in groups and individually. She held grade level meetings to review, discuss, and analyze students' work and data. The reading coaches also continued receiving training to be able to train the teachers and provide them with follow-up coaching. The participation of the principal in the teachers' grade level meetings was meaningful and important for both, the teachers and the principal, as well. The teachers were able to discuss and clarify issues about their particular grade level with the principal. Especially, in the beginning of the process of the implementation of the school's identified successful practices, the grade level meetings with the principal afforded teachers with more time and opportunities to talk about what was expected of them and ways of implementing their instructional practices effectively. The principal was instrumental in creating time for common planning for teachers of the same grade level. Consequently, they were able to share lessons, teaching experiences, or just support one another.

The principal of the Collegial School used the grade level meetings to build trust and quality relationship with her teachers and staff. Robbins and Alvey (2004) sponsored building trust and quality relationship as concepts linked to the success of principals. Moreover, as recommended by Gordon (as cited in Robbins and Alvey, 2004), trust and collaborative efforts amongst school personnel are elements that make a difference for students and make a positive impact on learning. By attending the teachers' grade level meetings frequently, the principal was aware of the teachers' needs, interests and concerns. The principal knew what she could do to help them.

The professional development was planned around the identified successful practices and tied to the instructional focus. The professional development was characterized by school-based, ongoing, and frequent opportunities for learning, practice and coaching. As the teachers described it, the professional development helped them build expertise and was the engine that changed the culture in their classrooms. The combination of the district and school-based training and professional development provided teachers with the information and knowledge to begin proper implementation of their successful practices. The teachers started opening up to the new ideas and began implementing the 90-120 minute literacy block and the literacy centers.

During the second year there was clear evidence that the school had a schoolwide instructional focus. All teachers, students and parents were able to articulate the schools' selected focus. The parents started to be informed and attended workshops regarding the school's academic focus and successful practices. The principals were recognized as strong supporters of the schools' focus. The Instructional Leadership Team continued meeting once a month and provided leadership around the instructional focus and successful practices.

Each and every staff member was accountable for their consistent use and implementation of the successful practices leading to changing the existing culture to the new culture of successful practices. Very soon into the school year, the principal, central office supervisors, and teachers themselves visited classrooms and participated in school walkthroughs; formal and informal observations by the principal and supervisors took place on a regular basis to observe, monitor and ensure implementation of the practices.

ILT walkthroughs were new practices intended to observe, monitor, and study the evidence and rigor of the use and implementation of the school's instructional focus and successful practices. At first, teachers rejected ILT walkthroughs and regarded them as judgmental and threatening observations. Some teachers refused to have their colleagues, members of the ILT, observe, criticize, and make suggestions insofar to the implementation of the school's focus and successful practices. It took a couple of faculty meetings to explain and convince teachers that the real purpose of walkthroughs was not only to ensure rigorous implementation of the school's focus and identified successful practices, but also to provide assistance where it was needed. Once teachers had a clear understanding and accepted the instructional walkthroughs, they did not care anymore about having people in and out of their classrooms on a regular basis.

By the first half of the second year, the Collegial School had gained a reputation of being a frontrunner in the process of successfully implementing the literacy centers, small group instruction, and their identified successful practices. Central office supervisors and Focus on Results consultants visited the school to observe and praise the work done by the principal, teachers, and staff of the Collegial School insofar to the improvement made in the implementation of the successful practices and the change of the school culture. Identified successful practices were shared with the parents and used as the structure for parental involvement and professional development for all stakeholders. The teachers and assistant principal of the neighboring school visited the Collegial School to observe the literacy centers in action. They met and discussed with the teachers their experiences and learned from them what they had done to effectively implement literacy centers in their classrooms.

The instructional focus initiative at the neighboring school had been implemented the previous year. However, the implementation of their literacy centers and small group instruction started to take effect half way through the second year. Once the teachers saw it in action at their neighbor school, witnessed that it was possible, and that it worked, they started using the training and professional development received, the ideas collected from their colleagues of the Collegial School, and were more open to the assistance of their reading and English Language Development Coaches.

Throughout the second year, the teachers continued receiving differentiated, district and school-based professional development that included follow-up coaching and peer visits. They met with their grade level colleagues to share and exchange ideas and personal experiences. Materials and supplies, such as furniture, rugs, manipulatives, library books, software, and center activities were purchased to facilitate the implementation of literacy centers. The reading coach and the school principal continued providing support through regular classroom visits, coaching, modeling, and monitoring the school's identified successful practices. According to the description of the events that took place during the second year, one could determine that by the end of the second year the transition to the new culture had taken place and the teachers were fully enculturated into the culture of successful practices in the Collegial School.

As in the previous years, the culture of successful practices continued to be dynamic and evolving. In September of the third year, the teachers of the Collegial School came back from the summer vacation to re-modeled classrooms. The school principal had replaced the individual students' desks in all first and second grade

classrooms with tables or “collaborative workspaces,” to facilitate the implementation of literacy centers, cooperative learning, small group and differentiated instruction.

As the data revealed, by year three, the teachers felt much more comfortable and confident in terms of continuing using and implementing the school’s successful practices. Most importantly, all teachers of the Collegial School had bought into, accepted, and enculturated in the new culture of successful practices. The first grade teacher said, “I love it. I really, really like it. At the beginning, it was a struggle, because it was a struggle.” The kindergarten teacher explained how the implementation of the successful practices, especially the small group instruction approach, changed her teaching experience “tremendously because I am more aware when I do small group instruction with the children. I am more aware of the needs of each child. I can deal with their needs....”

According to the participants, during this year there was a stronger, clear, and obvious evidence of the implementation of the schoolwide instructional focus and use of successful practices on bulletin boards, students’ displays, lesson plans, delivery of instruction, creative writing activities, professional development offerings, and parents’ workshops. All teachers at the Collegial School indicated receiving positive feedback as a result of walkthroughs and visits from other district and out of district schools, central office supervisors, the New Jersey Department of Education representatives, and the Office of Urban Literacy.

One of the major highlights of the third year’s professional development was the occurrence of job-embedded learning in the schools. The job-embedded training was a result of all the opportunities teachers had to share their teaching experiences, to reflect

on specific teaching-learning practices leading to new understandings, to observe each other engaged in teaching activities, which created new insights and learning. The principal and reading coach used faculty and grade-level meetings as opportunities for professional learning. Further, common planning meetings afforded teachers with opportunities to share and exchange their lessons and/or learning centers activities, thus distributing the task of developing lessons amongst their colleagues and during the process, become aware of new strategies, and effective teaching-learning processes. One of the first grade teachers expressed her satisfaction and that of her colleagues by saying, “we’re all happy. All our test grades were excellent, and we work together well, and we plan together, we share together. It’s about sharing, listening, and communicating, and if you have those three things you can do anything.”

Clear statements from the participants indicated that by Year 3, the teaching practices, instructional delivery, and materials supported the school’s focus and identified successful practices. Teachers used data to plan, deliver and differentiate instruction, as well as to improve students’ achievement.

The teachers described their principal as an instructional leader who collaborated, supported, and actively participated in achieving excellence in each and every classroom. Basically, it could be concluded that this was the year in which the Collegial School sustained their success in effectively using and implementing their identified successful practices.

By Year 4, all bilingual teachers in the two schools of the study were using and effectively implementing their schools’ identified successful practices. Even though they considered themselves fully enculturated into the culture of successful practices, they

continued growing professionally through the district and school-based professional development.

The teachers continued networking around their instructional focus and identified successful practices with all the teachers within their schools and other schools within the district. The schools' focus and identified successful practices rose in terms of implementation and effectiveness in maximizing the students' learning and academic achievement. This was evidenced by the participants' description of their daily classroom and instructional practices, students' performance and satisfaction, as well as in the use of the educational resources and materials.

The teachers continued delivering reading instruction using instructional techniques that reflected scientifically research-based reading strategies. The teachers' instruction was aligned with established grade-level standards, the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996, and benchmarks that defined student expectations. Furthermore, the teachers were committed to differentiated and small group instruction in their student-centered classrooms to meet the needs of individuals and small groups of students.

A major emphasis during Year 4 was the use of data and various assessments, on a regular basis, to monitor students' progress and learning, to differentiate instruction according to the students' weaknesses and strengths, and to modify the school's instructional focus and successful practices, if needed.

Parental involvement was a very strong component in both schools. The parents were cognizant of the school's focus and successful practices. They attended regular

workshops to learn about the school's educational and instructional practices and ways of supporting them at home.

In conclusion, by the end of Year 4, the teachers expressed satisfaction with the change of culture in their schools. They recognized the benefits of the components of the culture of successful practices as strategies that maximized and enhanced the ESL students' teaching-learning process of reading in their bilingual classrooms. One of the first grade teachers credited small group instruction for her students' improved test scores. As she explained,

Three years ago my students did well also. I have to say that my students always do well, but this year the children exceeded, and I can relate to the fact of the success and the test scores, is because of the small group instruction, because you can work with them better, you can meet their needs, and you can really focus on that group, and what is needed.

The results of this study are interpretations of the participants' verbatim regarding successful practices implemented in bilingual classrooms. Chapter IV describes and analyzes the participants' verbatim while at the same time answers the study's research questions.

What follows are the answers to the study's research questions, which include a comprehensive and detailed description of the use and impact of the identified research-based successful practices implemented in the bilingual self-contained classrooms of the participating bilingual teachers.

Results of the Study

Research Question 1

What do teachers and staff understand and define by successful practices implemented in their bilingual classrooms?

The school district where this research study took place required that all schools used and implemented instruction based on scientific research. According to the United States Department of Education (2004), scientific research-based instructional practices equate the consistent use of instructional strategies and methods that have been proven effective.

Gray and Fleischman (2004-2005) observed that in spite of the array of “effective approaches” suggested by researchers and policymakers to best meeting the needs of LEP students, educators still confront daily challenges in teaching their “large and growing” LEP student population. The quality and effectiveness of the education provided to LEP students depend upon many different factors ranging from educational materials and resources, availability of highly qualified teachers, class size and, according to Gunter (2005), most importantly, the instructional approaches used to teach LEP students. Therefore, educators must find and implement research-based best practices to help their LEP students.

The main goal of this research study was to demonstrate that several research-based successful practices were identified and implemented in bilingual self-contained classrooms by highly-qualified bilingual teachers to reach their LEP students so that they could succeed academically while acquiring and achieving higher levels of proficiency in their second language, English.

A first grade teacher described the instructional successful practices as “instructional ways, strategies that are proven to be successful in the classroom.” The kindergarten teacher joined the first grade teacher in her appreciation about successful practices; both of them believed they are effective ways of addressing their students’ instructional needs and getting the best out of them. As it was the participants’ consensus the successful practices implemented in their school and in their bilingual classrooms, led to students’ strong academic foundation in their native language while acquiring English proficiency, motivation for being in school, enhanced self-esteem, teachers’ satisfaction, appropriate professional development, strong parental involvement, and leadership support.

The principal of the Collegial School recognized a connection between successful practices, as teaching strategies, and the instructional delivery along with the improvement of their delivery. She also noted that in her school, the teachers tried out the successful practices in their classrooms, and they “have phased in as effective in classrooms over time preceded by professional development, which teachers do appreciate before implementation, and then a lot of feedback throughout.”

A first grade teacher referred to successful practices as the different educational strategies or techniques she used in any subject for the benefit of her students. Further, she stated that as a result of professional development offered by the district and working together with other teachers, she was using more successful practices on a daily basis than she used in the past.

As indicated by Gray and Fleischman (2004-2005), the accountability requirements of the United States Department of Education adds a new dimension to the

challenge faced by teachers dealing with LEP students because these students are included in the federal testing requirements. Their test scores are factored into the determination of whether a school is making adequate yearly progress (AYP).

The bilingual teachers participating in this study implemented their identified research-based successful practices to not only meet the academic, linguistic, and cultural needs of their LEP students, but to also improve their test scores. For instance, the school principal believed that successful practices “are the teaching strategies that are proven effective because they improve the students’ test scores.” She added that she learned about most of the successful practices through professional development offerings, which teachers welcomed and appreciated.

From the point of view of the Literacy-Reading Coach, the successful practices used in her school were the “scientifically research-based strategies known to work to implement reading and that are proven to work to increase readability and comprehension in both, monolingual and bilingual classrooms.” As the school’s Literacy Coach, it was her responsibility to ensure proper implementation of the school’s identified successful practices. As she explained, the successful practices are different ways or different techniques brought into the classrooms, “so that the needs of all the children are being met in small group, so that they’re getting more individualized attention.”

After 4 years of having introduced and implemented their identified successful practices, the Literacy Coach noted that the teachers have accepted these new initiatives. As she described it, the level of acceptance was so high and positive that she equated the use of the successful practices to differentiated instruction. As she commented, all teachers, including her, were not only teaching tasks related to the skills, but also

teaching the tasks according to the ability on the individual student. She compared their teaching process using their successful practices with almost like providing an Individualized Educational Plan for every child in the classroom. After all, she expressed, “the instructional tasks were all broken down that far, so students could master specific skills.”

Interpretation. All participant teachers concurred on the definition and understanding of successful practices as those strategies, which are deemed research-based by scientists and researchers. Further, the strategies have been shown through significant research and evaluation to be effective and to drive high-quality education for LEP students in self-contained bilingual classrooms leading to academic achievement in both, the students’ native and second languages.

Based on a clear understanding of scientific research-based successful practices and the purpose of using and implementing them in their classrooms, the participating teachers identified certain successful practices as teaching strategies to maximize and enhance their LEP students’ learning process of reading in their native language and second language acquisition. The next study’s research question is an interpretation and description of the identified successful practices as described by the participants of the culture of successful practices in the Collegial School.

Research Question 2

What scientific research-based successful practices have teachers of the Collegial School identified as effective in the teaching-learning process of reading in bilingual kindergarten through second grade classrooms?

Native Language Instruction.

The students' vernacular language has an important role in education because it should be the medium of instruction. Studies have demonstrated that providing native language instruction allows students to develop and maintain academically. Furthermore, in the case of immigrant students, a student's primary language serves as the foundation on which English proficiency is built. Research supports the participants' cultural knowledge of the use of their students' native language. On this note and for the purpose of this research study it is of great importance that principals and school administrators support bilingual programs in American schools.

The Principal of the Collegial School regarded native language instruction as a research-based teaching strategy, which at the same time serves as a technique of introducing English as a second language. According to her philosophy, teachers must teach to fulfill the needs of their students and consequently, Spanish dominant students need to be taught in their vernacular. In concurrence with research, this school principal believed that educators build upon the students' prior experiences and knowledge, which in the case of the bilingual students is their native language.

The Principal of the Collegial School expressed a strong position in favor of bilingual education and native language instruction. She did not even endorse transitional settings in the primary grades. "The transition into English takes place immediately in

Bilingual classes....” She believed that the students coming from kindergarten or pre-school “are not ready to transition into any other language than the language that they hear at home. It’s very, very important that we continue to teach that language in school as the primary focus.” Therefore, the students enrolled in this school’s bilingual classes receive instruction in their native language.

The participants who were completely bilingual teachers and certified in Bilingual Education and ESL instruction shared the students’ culture and language. Some of them have even faced their students’ experiences as immigrants. When bilingual, perhaps immigrant teachers as well, share their personal experiences with their LEP students; they are able to relate to them. Their teachers become their role models and inspiration to do well in school and succeed in life.

A first grade teacher used the students’ native language as the medium of instruction and regarded bilingual education “as the most beneficial, because children are taught in their native language every day.” Moreover, she expressed that her students came to school only knowing their native language, and for them to “be successful in the English language, they have to be successful first in their own native language.” Further, a strong English Language Development component along with the native language instruction provides a “balance” of the two languages leading to students’ development of literacy skills in both languages. Bilingual teachers participating in the study teach reading, language arts, and mathematics in the students’ native language. English as a Second Language, ESL, is integrated in the content areas, social studies, and science. Additionally, the students are exposed to the English language in music, art and physical education as these classes are taught by English speaking teachers.

The principal explained that throughout the day certain periods were dedicated to teaching English through the students' curriculum. The English is very basic, but age appropriate. Further, she claimed that as soon as the students start establishing a foundation in their own language, English can be introduced and taught through the content areas. In this fashion, the principal believed, "there are concepts that they can build on as well, not just individual words that is meaningless, really."

Additionally, the kindergarten teacher explained that as the year progressed, ESL instruction becomes more intensive. Towards the end of the school year, the students have mastered skills in their native language; consequently, the teachers focus more on the development of the students' English language proficiency. On this note, the school principal added that in the beginning, 80% of the instruction is done in the students' native language, and about 15%-20% is allotted for English instruction. Then, by mid-year, the 20% could be increased to 40% of English instruction when the majority of the students are ready to master more English skills; some students begin to make higher order connections, and others to transfer from Spanish into English. Further, she explained, the teachers introduce new concepts in the native language, and later in the week, they can review them in English. This approach, allows the students to not only review and reinforce the concepts in Spanish, but also to learn new vocabulary and facilitate transferring of skills from L1 to L2 (first language to second language).

A first grade teacher felt that when bilingual children are given a chance, they can be successful, but "they will learn the English when the time is right. You cannot push a child when they're not ready, because they become failures." In a report on the use of students' native language in education, UNESCO specialists (1951) sponsor the use of

the mother tongue early in children's schooling. Studies done by The Summer Institute of Linguistics Philippines (2004) found that introducing English before students master basic literacy skills in their native language hinders the learning experience of the children. To illustrate this notion, a first grade teacher stated that,

LEP students that are pushed out too early do not have the same success rate as the children that stay in the program the way they're supposed to...but many times they're pushed too early, and they're not ready, and then it causes other kinds of difficulties with the children, because they're mixing two languages, there's confusion, there's frustration level, and who knows somewhere along the way, maybe a child that just wasn't ready once, might end up having to need special resource room, which they really didn't need to begin with, because of the language.

UNESCO's report (1951) also supports students' first language as a foundation for second language acquisition. It prepares students academically by helping them become literate in the vernacular, and then transition into the second language. As it was stated by the first grade teacher, while her students learn in Spanish, they also focus on the development of communication in English. By the end of the year, "they are able to read guided level readers on their level, and write simple sentences, and that's just the beginning of them transferring those skills next year to becoming more successful, and fluent in English."

A study completed by UNESCO, regarding early childhood policy in Papua New Guinea in 2002, recognized that developed countries facing cultural and linguistic diversity are implementing bilingual education to meet the challenges of educating

immigrant students, refugees, and international students. They furthermore asserted that the goals established in bilingual education policy could not be achieved without the use of vernacular languages in the educational system. A review of the vernacular preschools indicated that the children who attended a vernacular preschool had a greater educational experience. Elementary school teachers recognized that students who attended preschool in their vernacular transitioned much easier into English-only classrooms than students with no educational background.

All participants, bilingual and ESL certified teachers, strongly supported and believed in bilingual education. They all agreed that their students come to United States only knowing their vernacular language, and for them to be successful academically, they must be successful in that language first. This only is possible when the students are enrolled in appropriate bilingual programs where the language used for instruction is the students' native language.

Additionally, all the bilingual teachers stated that when children are taught in their native language, "they're comfortable, confident, successful in their own native language, and they have better skills to transfer into the English. So if anyone asks me, I will always say the same thing, I am 150% believer in bilingual education" (First grade teacher, Interview 4).

According to the kindergarten teacher, the LEP students must become very strong in their first language because the stronger they are in their native language, the stronger the transferring process becomes. She also felt that as their teacher, it is her responsibility to help her LEP students improve in their native language, so they would be able to successfully mainstream into the regular monolingual classroom.

The school principal was a former bilingual teacher and department head of the district's Bilingual/ESL department prior to becoming school principal. She believed in, supported the bilingual program in her school and stressed the importance for teachers to use the appropriate methods and approaches to help the students become proficient in English. She was knowledgeable about curriculum and had a strong bilingual and ESL foundation. Therefore, she was able and qualified to train her staff to implement a correct and effective bilingual program. She was very well known as an advocate of bilingual education for LEP students. Moreover, she recognized, honored, respected, and valued the LEP students' language and culture. In agreement with Gonzalez (1997), this school's principal trained her staff in issues dealing with the "strengths that cultural and linguistic differences bring to a school" (p. 13).

The Collegial School principal's support for the bilingual program established in her school is manifested by her activities and daily behavior. This principal shared the beliefs, practices, and policies described by Gonzalez (1997) in her work about principals serving Latinos in successful schools, whose advocacy for Potentially English Proficient students included, among others "Continuous communication with students and families and providing more flexibility and adapting the curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of Latino students" (p. 13).

For example, she encouraged teachers to teach the second language "through other medium, either songs, or content," never in isolation. The principal emphasized the use of music in teaching English sounds and regarded this method, as "an effortlessly way to learn sounds... children may not understand what they're singing, but they're pronouncing it perfectly." Additionally, she emphasized the importance of using listening

stations where the students listened to different people read to them in English. As the principal stated, “English is a very diversified language,” and students must be exposed to different pronunciations. The students of both schools were exposed to the English language through different means, listening centers, computer software, and various teachers who taught the special subjects, such as music, art and physical education.

The teachers explained using manipulatives, hands-on activities, picture cards, computer activities, and described different strategies used in their classrooms to teach ESL.

1. Total Physical Response was developed in the 1960’s by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California. This language learning method is based on the coordination of speech and action. It is a way of teaching a second language that requires the students to perform actions to show that they understand what they’re being asked to do. The teachers enjoy using this technique because it allows for different routines to be acted out with the students.

2. Sheltered English as an instructional approach to teach English to LEP students was also endorsed by the Collegial School’s principal. According to her philosophy, the students must be provided with opportunities to develop grade-level content-area knowledge and academic skills in order to increase and sharpen their English proficiency. Therefore, the principal encouraged teachers to use scaffolding strategies to introduce vocabulary and concepts through the content areas. As she suggested, teachers help their students acquire English when they re-teach concepts that they have introduced in the students’ native language and that the students have already mastered. As she explained, the teachers are building and expanding on a base or prior knowledge, in her own words,

“Children always benefit from a review, and when a review is conducted in sheltered English, children are bound to reinforce ideas that were taught in that subject, and also learn new and useful words, and ideas in English.”

Following their principal’s recommendations, the teachers engaged the students in meaningful grade-level learning activities that allowed them to activate their prior knowledge and make connections to enhance their English proficiency skills.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (*SIOP*) Model was a new strategy of sheltered instruction being implemented by bilingual teachers who integrated content areas (social studies and science) and ESL instruction. Using this model, teachers make the subject matter comprehensible while promoting English academic language acquisition and proficiency. The SIOP model was developed by Echevarria and Short (2005). It is a lesson-planning and delivery approach composed of 30 instructional strategies grouped into eight components.

As the kindergarten teacher explained, teachers used the instructional strategies embodied in the SIOP Model to help their LEP students develop and improve their academic English skills while learning grade-level content. They have received professional development on the SIOP Model to learn to plan and deliver lessons that incorporate these strategies on a daily basis in their bilingual classrooms. Furthermore, she described the eight different components of the SIOP model: (a) preparation, (b) building background, (c) comprehensible input, (d) strategies, (e) interaction, (f) practice and application, (g) delivery of the lesson, and (h) review and assessment.

Along these lines, the Collegial School’s principal noted that SIOP, as Sheltered Instruction, makes input more comprehensive through the use of thematic units. The

delivery of the units is accomplished through various activities, including but not limited to, listening, technology, a lot of students' participation, oral language development, and visual aids. Additionally, the school's identified successful practices used and implemented during the literacy block are as equally effective for teaching English. The use of content area units to teach English provides children with "a wider base, and a bigger set of comprehension objectives," which make the English proficiency more meaningful and permanent. In addition, children learn to use English not only to communicate language, but also to understand language.

Instructional Strategies

All participants agreed that the combination of students' native language, as the medium of instruction, along with the implementation of scientific research-based instructional successful practices assisted them in the teaching-learning process in their self-contained bilingual classrooms. A first grade bilingual teacher commented that all of the successful practices being implemented in her school and in her classroom were a compendium of research-based instructional practices learned through professional development or mutual collaboration amongst her colleagues. The school principal attested to the fact that all teachers, including bilingual teachers, utilized and implemented the same successful practices in their classrooms, and planning together ensured that, in fact, it happened.

Interestingly enough, the Collegial School's principal shared that the most enjoyable and rewarding experience at this school was watching teachers taking upon new instructional strategies and initiatives that at first made them feel hesitant and in some cases, antagonistic about utilizing and/or mastering them. After 3 years into the

process, it was enjoyable and rewarding watching them be successful and listening to them saying, “They could never go back to the old way.”

The following is a description of the different instructional strategies that participating bilingual teachers used and implemented in their classrooms to make a significant difference in their bilingual students’ learning.

1. School instructional focus. A report completed about six schools in California that have improved the lives of their students claimed that one of the contributing factors to their success was the development of a schoolwide focus on literacy. Under this concept, the teachers used the students’ performance data on standardized tests to identify goals and an instructional area for academic improvement. The findings led them to develop an instructional focus to concentrate their energy and efforts on improving instruction in that particular area (Cudeiro, Palumbo, Leight, & Nelsen, 2005).

Similar to the schools in California, the schools in the district where this study was conducted reviewed their students’ assessment data and selected an instructional focus based upon the most prominent instructional need of the school. Most of the schools selected an area of literacy as their greatest need for improvement.

In turn, the teachers and staff of the two participating schools identified and implemented a school-wide instructional focus. As a result, teachers and staff concentrated improvement efforts on an academic area as their instructional focus. The teachers networked around instructional issues and strategies to address their instructional focus. The staff identified ways to chart progress using assessment procedures that benchmark progress. Different strategies were used to make parents aware of the school’s instructional focus and their role in supporting it.

Participant teachers from the Collegial School described how the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), which consisted of a team of teachers and staff representatives, met, discussed, and did extensive research on "instructional best practices" so that the teachers could focus on those areas within their school. Based upon the instructional need of this school, the ILT selected vocabulary and comprehension, as the school's instructional focus. They felt that increasing the students' vocabulary would lead to enhancing the students' comprehension skills. This school's team met on a regular basis and provided strong leadership to the instructional focus. Along these lines, the school principal added that the lack of teaching and/or reinforcement of vocabulary development and comprehension strategies as well as data and feedback from test results were used as the rationale for selecting the school's instructional focus. She recognized how beneficial it had been helping teachers concentrating on the school's instructional focus. The teachers developed activities around the focus, which acted as a "main drive" for reading as well as for all the other subjects. Literacy Coaches in both schools provided support and were instrumental in the implementation of the schools' instructional focus.

After 3 years of their instructional focus being on vocabulary development and comprehension, the kindergarten teacher believed that the children's vocabulary had increased, "they speak better and I feel they're comprehending as they progress through the years." In her classroom, she explained, she worked a lot with her students in decoding and comprehension skills because she found out that some students were able to decode, but did not comprehend, which affected their reading negatively. She highly suggested building those two skills hand in hand. Further, she asserted the more, rich and

strong vocabulary the bilingual students acquire; the better and easier their transferring into English language would be for them.

To this effect, a first grade teacher regarded her school's instructional focus as valid and important. She recognized that as students' performance data indicated, reading comprehension was a major weakness of all of the students in her school. Further, she commented on the need for the students to understand what they read, in order for them to read right and appropriately. She also agreed on the significance of having a school-wide instructional focus as a guide and a point of reference to approach teaching. Besides, vocabulary development to enhance reading comprehension is reflected in all content areas. According to her experience, the benefits of the school's instructional focus had manifested in the improved writing benchmark assessment results. The students were able to write more and better because their vocabulary had expanded.

As a result of the improved students' reading comprehension skills, the first grade teacher also explained that the students were able to understand math because they were able to read. As she pointed out, "Math is not just numbers." The students must be able to read and understand word problems.

There was observable evidence that both schools in the study established a solid schoolwide instructional focus. In the Collegial School where development of vocabulary and reading comprehension skills were the instructional focus, all participant bilingual teachers agreed on providing a rich print environment in the school. A rich print environment was evident throughout the hallways and in classrooms, as well as in teachers' plans and development of literacy center activities, and the implementation of their identified successful practices that supported their school's instructional focus.

Every classroom had word walls. The monolingual teachers had word walls in English while the bilingual teachers had two word walls, one in Spanish and one in English to focus on ESL. It was the Literacy Coach's belief that in "about 90% of the 90-minute literacy block there was quite a function of vocabulary or a noticeable amount of vocabulary development taking place."

The evidence indicated that the school's instructional focus was not only part of reading and language arts, but also infused in all other content areas. Since vocabulary was the main focus, the Literacy Coach explained that teachers spent extra time developing and engaging the students in different vocabulary activities. They might have focused a little more on the vocabulary before a read aloud, for example. Additionally, they used a vocabulary kit that helped improve the students' vocabulary across the board.

Furthermore, the parents were not only aware of the school's instructional focus, but also trained on how to support it and ways of helping their children increase their reading and vocabulary at home. All participants explained that parents who were very involved in school were aware of the school's instructional focus. The students also knew about the instructional focus of the school. As the kindergarten teacher explained, since the beginning of the school year, parents were informed at the meetings what the school's instructional focus was. Additionally, they received flyers, in English and Spanish, about the school's instructional focus. Additionally, she expressed that all students knew about it, "...we're constantly stressing words, and vocabulary, and we want them to improve their vocabulary."

The kindergarten teacher explained that vocabulary and comprehension had been the school's instructional focus for the past three years and she identified it as one of the

top five successful practices in her school and bilingual classroom. According to her, “the instructional focus is always guiding, is helping us, the teachers... Showing us that the most important in our instructional focus is vocabulary, and with vocabulary we’re going to improve their comprehension. So that would be high on the list also, the instructional focus.” Additionally, she commented on the role of the Literacy Coach since she worked with teachers in the implementation of the instructional focus. As a result, the students’ vocabulary had increased, their verbal skills had also improved, they comprehended more as they progressed through the years, and they were able to comprehend their skills a lot better.

The kindergarten teacher described what she did in her classroom in order to implement and support the school’s instructional focus:

We do a lot of vocabulary with the coding, because we have found that through the years some of them have been decoding, but they can’t comprehend, and if they can’t comprehend, they are not able to acknowledge what they’re reading. So we have to build those hand in hand. Also, as they progress through the years, if their vocabulary is strong, they’re able to transfer that when they start mainstreaming into the regular program.

Rutherford (1999) corroborated the participants’ efforts in enhancing students’ comprehension skills. He suggested that effective readers comprehend what they read, and an effective reading instruction increases the knowledge that students use when reading. Therefore, the role of teachers is to create experiences for students to develop, enhance their vocabulary, and activate their schemata, which in turn lead to increasing the students’ capacity for new learning.

In conclusion, the Instructional Focus was evident throughout the building at the Collegial School. The main entrance, the hallways, and classrooms offered a rich print environment. The word walls in all the classrooms supported vocabulary development and facilitated the students' writing. They were used in Language Arts as well as in all other subjects. There was print everywhere around and throughout the school. The students were very well aware of the school's instructional focus. Moreover, the teachers, principal, literacy coach, and parent liaison made every effort to make parents aware of their instructional focus. Therefore, the students' vocabulary development and comprehension skills had been extended to the home and supported by the parents.

2. Small group instruction. All the bilingual teachers participating in the study agreed on the major emphasis placed on small group over the traditional whole group instruction in their classrooms. All participant teachers said that when teachers approached instruction with the whole class, especially with large class sizes, it was very difficult to meet each individual student's needs.

According to the Collegial School's principal, effective teaching was about providing students with a personalized, one on one, type of teaching. In tune with this idea, small group instruction allows to work with students in smaller settings. Further, it was during the small group instruction that "teachers get to know their children better, and get to know their strengths, and weaknesses on a more intimate level."

One of the first grade teachers in agreement with the principal's idea of effective teaching believed that teaching in small groups, "the children have a better understanding, better self-confidence, and I feel that it's a positive learning environment now, because I know who every child is, what they need, what they don't know, and what

they need extra practice in.” Her kindergarten teacher colleague concurred with this appreciation and shared her personal experience in regards to small group instruction,

Now with small group instruction, which is what we have now, I have approximately 5 kids to a table, 5-6 kids to a table, and I feel that I can get to each child’s needs. I can focus. I can get from them what they know, and what they need extra help in... (Participant B, Interview 2).

The kindergarten teacher recognized that approaching the teaching-learning process in small groups made a big difference in her classroom and in the way her students learned. The students’ knowledge and learning increased significantly.

One of the first grade teachers referred to the whole group instruction as the “old fashion way,” which the studies and the statistics have indicated that...

...the quiet, shy, special need child does not necessarily meet all the skills that they need, and with the instruction where we do now where it’s all center oriented, which means that the children work with different skills in groups of five to six children you’re able to reach those skills to better service those children.

According to the participants, small group instruction offers an environment for teachers to provide students with extensive opportunities to express what they know and to also tailor reading instruction to the students’ needs. All participants attributed benefits to small group instruction, such as, increased instructional time, more opportunities for students to interact with their peers, and more and improved teacher-student contact.

A first grade teacher felt that working in small groups facilitates the teacher-students interaction, the students tend to talk more to their teacher and she felt closer to

her students. All participants believed that with whole group instruction, their instruction was not differentiated. All the students approached learning the same way. One of the first grade teachers felt that “everything was the same. Everybody did the same, and it was boring.”

You couldn't really, really feel what child was in more need than the others... I think it was boring to the children, because everything was being taught the same, and either you got it, or you didn't get it, or you sank, or you knew how to swim, and now everything's more appealing to the children. (Participant A, Interview 2).

In concurrence with the teachers, the principal of the Collegial School highlighted the importance of the small group instruction in terms of addressing not only the needs of the “20% lower students but also children that are in that higher 10%,” who could be considered advanced or possibly gifted and talented students. This approach would allow teachers to develop and assign challenging activities that are usually “above and beyond what is called for in the classroom.” Therefore, these identified students would excel and also serve as “peer tutors” for other students in their classroom or in the school.

All the bilingual teachers participating in this study concurred on using different strategies in their bilingual classrooms to address the individual needs of their LEP students. They considered small group instruction as a way of creating various opportunities for students with different learning abilities, interests or needs. A first grade teacher recognized small group instruction as a *successful practice* that changed her teaching experience. She considered this approach to teaching as a better and easier way to focus on the children. She added that,

You can listen to the children. You get to know the children. You get to focus on their needs, on their abilities, and their disabilities. Even the Special Ed. Children that go to Resource, they're successful, and I feel that because we're working in small groups we can focus more on a small group opposed to a whole instruction that maybe that one child that was shy, or was having difficulty would never raise their hand. Now I hear everyone. Whether if you're the high, the middle, low, it doesn't matter, everybody has something to say. Everybody has something to share, and everyone is learning.

Additionally, participants claimed that grouping students powerfully influence the level of individual students' engagement and their academic progress. The first grade teacher stated that teachers who work with small group of students know "who's on level, who's struggling, and who needs more reinforcement, more review, and when you work with a small group you can do more with them." The other first grade teacher stated that during whole group instruction where most of the times the teacher stands in front of the classroom, teachers lose those students sitting in the back. She considered small group instruction as a "more personalized" type of instruction. Further, it assists those students who are shy, who do not feel comfortable participating in class or expressing that they do not understand. Small groups provide those students with a comfort zone and a friendly setting.

The participants identified small group instruction as a successful practice in their bilingual classrooms that facilitated an effective implementation of quality reading instruction. For a first grade teacher the switch to small group instruction "it's the best thing that could have happened." Her colleague, also teaching first grade, exclaimed,

“I felt that in the whole group I was against the world. Now, I feel like it’s me against five kids.”

Reyes and Pazey (1999) found that high-performing Hispanic schools provide instructional strategies that allow students to interact amongst them through collaborative learning techniques. In agreement with Reyes and Pazey, one of the first grade teachers described that, “in the small groups everybody participates. Everybody talks. Everybody has something to say from the very low child to the very high skilled oriented child. Everybody has something to say. Everybody has something to share.”

According to all participants, their bilingual classrooms were busy places where students engaged in different activities with teachers assisting them, students moving from one center to another. Those classrooms were also described as happy places where a lot of interaction took place.

...it’s a pleasure to hear the conversations that the younger children have with each other, and it’s about learning, and how they’re ready for second grade, and how in September when they came they couldn’t read, or write, and they’ve learned so much, and they’ll mention (*Ms. _____*) really taught us a lot. She really got us ready for second grade, and just they’re proud of themselves, that’s the main factor here, that they’re proud of themselves. (Participant A, Interview 3).

Along these lines, Lindsey (2003) suggested that in classrooms where differentiated instruction is implemented and the learning activities are aligned to the students’ interests and their cognitive ability, the students stay on task, thus reducing discipline problems and maximizing the students’ opportunities to achieve proficiency on

state standards. According to a first grade teacher, her bilingual students' scores have increased tremendously. The teacher very proudly expressed that her students usually did well, but with the implementation of the small group instruction and differentiated instruction, the students' standardized test scores have really soared.

3. 90-Minute Literacy Block. Both schools and throughout the district a 90-minute Literacy Block was built into the daily schedule for reading and language arts instruction. Bilingual classes implemented a 120-minute Literacy Block in order to incorporate reading in English. The Literacy Block had different components. It usually started with a read aloud, which was greatly emphasized in all classrooms throughout the district. According to a first grade teacher, "a read aloud is an opportunity for every child to be read too. A lot of children are not read to at home."

The read aloud served different purposes in the bilingual classrooms, where not only the students were being read to on a daily basis, but also as the school principal explained, it was used as a medium to connect the themes that were being studied in the literacy block or in the other content areas. The teachers selected a book, a story, or even a part of the story to target a particular skill and used it as a mini-lesson with the whole class before the students broke up into small groups for their differentiated instruction.

The read aloud was followed by a mini-lesson where the teachers addressed all the students as a group. This was the only time where whole group instruction took place. It was the only point during the Literacy Block where the teachers introduced target skills at grade level. After the read aloud and mini-lesson, the students were divided into groups and engaged in different literacy center activities and a guided reading. At the centers, the students worked in small groups with either their teacher or in groups of students alone. It

was also the opportunity for students to receive differentiated instruction according to their level and ability.

Both first grade teachers felt very fortunate to have a co-teacher, so that “there are always two teachers in the room helping the children.” In the first grade teacher bilingual classrooms, the co-teacher started the literacy block with the read aloud allowing the classroom teachers to organize all the center activities on each table and the guided reading.

As the interviewer observed, the read aloud in the bilingual classrooms took place in a large carpeted area. This set up, according to all participants allowed all the students to be together. A first grade teacher believed the read aloud for the students was, “personal, they’re sharing, and they’re together, and I enjoy it because they’re all cluttered together, and whether they had a bad day or good day, they will get along and they share, and they get along with each other.” This teacher regarded the read aloud as an opportunity for oral development and conversation amongst the students. There was plenty of comprehension questioning, as well. As an example, she described,

Through read aloud they read a book, and they were asked questions about the book. They were asked the author, the illustrator, the main characters, the sequence of events, and they wrote vocabulary words on a chart. Those vocabulary words then they were asked to alphabetize them. Then they discussed how they would have changed the ending of the story.

The Kindergarten bilingual teacher used stories related to the reading story in her Scott Foresman reading series for her read alouds. Thus, she incorporated learning skills in the read aloud and the mini-lesson. The teacher also explained how she used the read

aloud as an opportunity for the students to make connections and relate the story to their personal lives and experiences. Upon reading a story and during the mini-lesson, she engaged the students in different activities that included, but were not limited to, webbing where the students discussed what the story was about and other target skills.

The Literacy Block was a district initiative, and the principal of the Collegial School made her business to ensure it was well implemented throughout her school. In order to do this, she explained, she walked around the classrooms to make sure everybody was on time, and on task. At the beginning of the literacy block, she looked for the students sitting at the rug and that the read aloud had begun, or it was about to begin. It is worth noting that according to the participant teachers of this school, they were not intimidated by their principal's walk-throughs. On this note, the principal described her teachers' reaction as "They're kind of used to me walking around at this point. Nobody gets upset anymore, and I'll walk into classrooms, and sit in."

4. Literacy centers. Literacy and learning centers were used in all bilingual classrooms under this study for small group instruction. The terms literacy centers and learning centers are used interchangeably, but for the purpose of this study, literacy centers refer to the center activities that took place during the Literacy Block. Learning centers will relate to those center activities developed in other content areas. In the Collegial School, literacy centers took place during the literacy block in the morning and in the students' native language. In the afternoon, science, social studies, and English Language Development (ELD) were approached thematically through learning centers in English.

Participant bilingual teachers expressed that switching from whole group instruction to implementing literacy centers was not an easy transition. It took intensive professional development, as well as a lot of planning and preparation. At first, they all felt overwhelmed, hesitant, and skeptical, some of them even resisted the change. Fortunately, 3 years after the implementation, the teachers realized that this approach was making a difference. They acknowledged how much their students have grown and the benefits that students were receiving as a result of approaching learning in literacy centers.

Participant bilingual teachers not only recognized the benefits of using literacy centers in the classroom, but they also enjoyed implementing them. A first grade teacher loved developing and implementing literacy centers. She described this practice as something ever changing and improving, since the activities and skills changed on a weekly basis. It was clear throughout the interviews that all teachers believed that literacy centers were a good and wonderful practice in their teaching experience. Another first grade teacher expressed her feelings about literacy centers instruction by exclaiming,

Because when I saw the children's faces, their reactions about when they started to read, and when they were able to write, were able to express their ideas in writing, and just the smiles and how good they felt about themselves, that's when I felt that this was for the children, and if that makes them happy then it makes me happy, and I had to change my thinking, because education is not about what we feel, it's what works for the children, and when I go home everyday if I made a little bit more difference in their life, I feel like I've done my job, and these children are very happy, and they're hardly ever absent, and they love school, and

they love coming to school, and I just feel that the centers has made a whole change in instruction, because everyone learns, even the special ed. child learns.

(Participant A, Interview 1)

This participant's vivid and inspiring comment was a clear manifestation of the benefits that literacy centers rendered to LEP students in the classrooms of the bilingual teachers interviewed. All the teachers shared their feeling about the difference that the literacy centers made in their students' learning, how much they enjoyed learning at the centers, how much their knowledge and learning increased, and how well the teachers themselves were able to address the individual needs of their students, as opposed to whole group instruction. All teachers expressed their students' love and willingness to working in centers. As the teachers stated, the students felt that they had more freedom because sometimes they were able to select the center activities. Further, they were able to learn from each other. In instances when they had not gone to the centers and they missed working in centers on a particular day, they reminded their teachers.

The set up of all classrooms facilitated cooperative learning and center activities approaches. The opportunity for diverse learning opportunities was obvious in all classrooms. As all participants explained, all literacy and center activities were planned and developed as purposeful learning opportunities leading to the mastery of target skills. One of the first grade teacher described her centers as work in progress, "My centers don't necessarily always stay the same, because I feel that as they're progressing, and they are learning, and they're obtaining more higher level skills the centers will rotate or change."

All students were accountable for their work. A first grade teacher explained that it was of utmost importance that the students were responsible for their work at the centers. All participant teachers had center rules, and made their students aware of consequences if they were not responsible for their work assignments or did not comply with the center rules. Additionally, the teachers used center folders to monitor and screen the students' work. Upon completion of a center activity, the students left their work in the center folders, which later were used by the teachers to assess students' progress, weaknesses, and strengths. Unfinished or incorrect activities were an indication that the student did not master a specific skill. The teachers then took note of the deficiency and addressed the student with the particular need at the guided reading center and/or during the mini-lesson.

Along these lines, the school principal commented that the center activities must be planned and presented, so the students are able to work independently. In cases where students required constant help with a particular task, chances were that the activity was not adequate for the students. "If a child gets up continuously, that particular activity was not good for that child, or too short, or too long, or not well explained, or not easy enough, and yet challenging enough to do on their own." According to her, teachers must develop a very keen sense to plan and develop activities that are age and level appropriate for their students.

The principal also explained that in order to address the Language Arts Literacy New Jersey Core Curriculum Standard 3.3, which states that, "All students will speak in clear, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes" (p.1), the students participated in numerous school assemblies throughout the

year. In addition to the school programs, every day at the end of the reading block, the students had 5 minutes of “shared time.” During “shared time” a group of students, randomly or selected by the teachers, shared with the rest of the class their experience during the literacy block on that particular day.

Along with a monitoring system, the teachers used management charts to let their students know the groups they belonged to and the centers they were going to work at for the day.

...all the groups are posted, one through five, and they look for their group number, and they look for their name, and they know which three groups are going to work with myself, and which other two groups are going to work with the cooperating teacher. So they find their name, and they know where they need to go. (Participant A, Interview 1)

A first grade teacher also rotated with her students, “I have to see what the other kids are doing. To me it keeps me alert. It keeps me alert. It doesn’t let me get bored.” All the teachers made every effort to monitor the students and their progress at the centers.

In the Collegial School, the implementation of the literacy centers was uniform across the grade levels. The consistency in the implementation of the literacy centers throughout the school was beneficial for receiving teachers because the incoming first and second grade students were familiar with the centers routine. The teachers had almost the same kinds of literacy centers, and the students rotated through all the centers on a daily basis. Daily rotation through the centers provided the students with various opportunities to review and practice because every center had a skill that they needed to master successfully, so they were exposed to their target skills on a daily basis. This

uniformity was also possible due to the professional development offered to all teachers. A first grade teacher claimed that all teachers needed to be on the same page because all teachers, “go to the same workshops, and learn the same techniques, or how to implement this, or how to implement that. So we should be doing it at the same level in our classrooms.” On the other hand, this teacher expressed uncertainty about her incoming first graders who attended kindergarten in other schools. She wondered whether or not other schools implemented the centers routine as they did at her school and she was concerned about the readiness of these students to work in centers. On this note, she added, “if they didn’t, then I’m going to have to ask, you know or lean on the ones from our building to help me rotate, help me to for them to understand the directions of centers and things like that.”

Since the teachers had opportunities to meet with other teachers of the same grade level at district workshops and professional development, they had an idea of how the different successful practices were being implemented in other schools. One of the first grade teachers felt very confident regarding the level and effectiveness of the implementation of literacy centers in her school. In talking and exchanging ideas with other first grade teachers in the district, she was certain that the way literacy centers were implemented in her school was not only different but better than the centers’ approach in other schools. The reason being, explained the teacher, was due to the fact that the Collegial School had implemented literacy centers right from the beginning, the teachers bought into this practice much earlier than the teachers in other schools, and they had the support and assistance from the principal and reading coach.

The use of timers made the center rotation run smoothly. The teachers set them up for 20 minutes and as soon as the bell rang, the teacher said, “switch”, and the students got up, cleaned and left the area ready for the next group, and they switched until they went through all the centers. Sometimes teachers gave students a warning notice 5 minutes before the time was up, so they could wrap up and complete their activity.

The teachers trained the students to work cooperatively at their centers, sometimes they moved freely around the classroom as they worked on different centers and talked with their classmates regarding their assignments. While the literacy centers activities were systematic and purposeful planned, the students were able to make some choices and still be on task. The first grade teacher believed that the children in the same way that the adults, sometimes “don’t want to be bothered, either,” therefore, she allowed her first grade students to sometimes choose the place of work, either at their desks or at the rug area. Although the moving of students from center to center might have produced some noise in the classroom, the teachers reported minimal discipline incidents. The teachers allowed students to have some freedom during their center activities, yet they indicated enough overall conformity to assure order and productive work. The first grade teacher explained that her students went to every center, every day. They spent about 20 minutes at each center, but...

...if there is a group that’s having difficulties I may extend that center a little bit longer while the other children are doing leveled readers, or another skill. There’s always plenty to do in the room so that they know that if one group is having difficulty the other children are polite enough to wait until it’s time to switch.

The center activities were designed to keep the students meaningfully involved on cognitive and academic tasks. Since students were grouped heterogeneously, they worked cooperatively and learned from each other or together as they completed their tasks. The participant teachers described their students as highly motivated and very eager to complete their work at the centers. The teachers added that the students used a lot of manipulatives to complete most of the center activities. According to a first grade teacher, “sometimes children learn better with hands-on, because they’re seeing it, they’re feeling it, they’re touching it, they’re thinking. Not everyone learns the same.”

The participants’ descriptions of the center activities conveyed the idea that this approach provided a meaningful learning environment filled with fun and cooperative work appropriate to students’ level and cognitive ability. The first grade teacher shared how, in the beginning of the school year, she was very concerned about meeting the needs of each individual student when her class was a mix of different levels. She made a high priority to enhance her students’ self-esteem and made them feel successful, to the point that she commented,

...today, this day of April 18th I am so proud of these children, because in spite of the mix, these children have had a positive learning experience, they feel good about themselves, and their self-esteem is so high that it didn’t even matter that they were all mixed levels. They just blended in, helped each other, and they’re all reading on the same level. (Participant A, Interview 1)

All participant bilingual teachers claimed that their students not only reaped the benefits of the literacy centers approach during the literacy block, but they also fully enjoyed approaching learning in this fashion. The first grade teacher stated, “My students

love it! If I, for whatever reason, skip one center, they remind me and tell me that we haven't done something at a particular center." According to this teacher, if the observer were sitting in the back of her room, she would have heard the students saying,

'This is fun, it's easy now, and we don't need Mrs. (Teacher's name) to do this.'

So, I tell them, if you don't need me, then I'll go home. Then, they say, 'No, not that way.' They look happy that they're able to read. They encourage each other to read.

The students were very well trained and were very knowledgeable of their daily routine in their classrooms. The first grade teacher was very excited to say that her students loved their center work, they knew how to follow it, and they never wanted to miss it. In cases when their teacher was absent, they were in charge because they knew exactly what to do. When people visited the school and interviewed the students, they very comfortably explained what they were doing or were able to talk about their classroom routine. As the teacher explained, these were indications of the effectiveness of the implementation of their successful practices. Further, the students responded positively to the implementation and one could say that indeed, it made a significant impact in their learning.

The students' love and effective training for working in centers facilitated their transition into a bigger school when they left the Collegial School. The students of the Collegial School transferred to a school, two blocks away, where they attended grade 3 through grade 6. The bilingual third grade teacher who received the incoming students, stated, "The children like the centers. The advantages since they came from the Collegial

School, well actually from second grade, they were familiar with rotating in the centers. So that was a big help, and they like it, they enjoy it.”

The participants explained and described the different literacy centers they had in their classrooms. Some of the centers were the same in all bilingual classrooms, but some had been designed by teachers' choice according to their preference or needs of their students.

Guided Reading Center as the participants explained, was based under the premise that not all children learn to read the same way or at the same pace. Guided reading provided instructional opportunities to support and address students' needs according to their reading ability and level. Therefore, this was the only literacy center where the students were grouped homogeneously.

In order to identify the guided reading level of the students, a placement test was given to all students prior to the beginning of a reading series. The teachers used the results of the placement test to form their guided reading groups. Throughout the year and after each unit, the teachers administered reading benchmark tests, which included reading comprehension, a writing piece, as well as specific target skills covered in the particular unit. The results obtained from the benchmark assessments were used to pinpoint students' weaknesses and strengths as well as to reconfigure the composition of the guided reading groups.

While the classroom teacher did the guided reading with a homogeneous group of students, the rest of the class was actively engaged in activities at the other centers either independently and/or with a co-teacher. The bilingual first grade teacher started the year with a guided reading center, in which the teacher used leveled readers with a small

group of students who were at the same reading level. As she explained, this was the moment in which a small group of students read with her and she focused on their reading skills and needs. The other first grade teacher also used the literacy centers time to meet with the students individually. They read to her any book of their choice, so she was able to identify their reading deficiencies and weaknesses.

Most of the teachers expressed the excessive amount of testing and assessment that must be administered in their classrooms. The Literacy Coach, however, expressed that progress monitoring done on all children is a very good idea, although the time constraint is immense. She described "Running Records" as an instrument to evaluate the guided reading level of a particular child. Through Running Records, the teachers were able to identify specific errors and strategies that the student used to get through a particular text. The results of the Running Records were used to evaluate and base the guided reading level of the students

Shared Reading Center in a bilingual first grade classroom was described as a center where the students sat in a small group and read aloud to each other a creative writing piece generated by a picture prompt or a book of their preference. Additionally, they discussed it, asked questions, or compared it in case someone else wrote or read something similar.

The other first grade teacher shared another benefit to the shared reading center. At this center, besides the students reading to each other, they were exposed to different people reading out loud to them. For example, the BSI and ESL teachers, the reading coach, and parents read to them. As the teacher explained, she thought it was important that students listened to the different ways people read. Also, it was motivating to those

who were struggling seeing their classmates reading. And she added, "...it makes them want to do it, and a lot of times that's what you need to see how somebody else does it".

Independent Reading Center allowed the students to choose the books of their preference. The Collegial School's principal strongly recommended having numerous books in the native language available to students, as well as to teachers. They all must have a lot of experience with different kinds of books and texts in the native language. As she added, a good classroom library with a lot of titles in the students' native language is fundamental for an effective bilingual program.

At the Collegial School all classroom libraries had at least 300 books, which were organized by genres. The teachers used the books in many different ways and for different purposes. They may have used them for read alouds, guided reading, or independent reading. The students selected the books from the classroom libraries by looking at the stickers that indicated the level of difficulty, whether the book was low, middle, or high level of difficulty. The teachers might have chosen some books, prior to the lesson, for the students to make their selection or they might have been able to select the books from the entire library. In any case, the activity following the reading was always related to the learning skills on hand.

The students also borrowed and took books home, so they could read to their parents or with their parents. Expanding on this idea, the Collegial School's principal added that "it's always a positive when the child takes a book home." As she explained,

There were cases, in which the parents were illiterate even in their native language. So the child wound up interpreting the book, even if he did not know all the words, for the parents and it turned out to be a very positive experience for

the parents, and the child, and particularly their older brothers, and sisters, or younger brothers, and sisters, the child had an audience.

Computer Center is not only used as part of the literacy centers, but also used during math, ESL, and other content areas. Wiggle Works was one of the main components of the computer center, which was used as a literacy center during the 90-minute literacy block.

Wiggle Works Center in Spanish is an interactive computer-assisted literacy program, which incorporates the following components: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. The teacher selects the target learning tasks and prepares the learning environment.

The kindergarten teacher used Wiggle Works at her technology center. With this program, her students were able to practice and reinforce their reading, alphabet, writing, and drawing skills individually. Likewise, a first grade teacher planned her daily computer center activity using Wiggle Works. At the first grade level, this program involved different leveled readers of different thematic units corresponding to different subjects. Basically, the students used Wiggle Works to focus on reading skills, sight words and listening to stories. Additionally, the students were able to engage in writing activities, which they were able to print out. The first graders “really enjoy seeing what prints out of the computer.” (Participant B, Interview 3)

The Writing Center had everything the students might have needed to write. The first grade teacher had a basket with papers, writing tablets, and pencils. As in the other centers, the students also had manipulatives available. They used tiles to manipulate

letters and form words. Sentence strips allowed the students to write sentences, cut them, mixed them all up together like a puzzle, to finally put them back together.

The writing center activities varied according to the grade and level of the students. At a Kindergarten level, the students copied words from the board, so they could practice their penmanship. Later on into the school year, the teacher might have prepared a worksheet in which the students generated words that began with a letter being studied, or they might have gotten three or four words to be used in sentences. According to the kindergarten teacher, in May when she was interviewed, the students should have been able to write complete sentences taking into consideration the use of capital letters and punctuation. These types of activities, she added, allowed for continuous reviewing, practicing, and reinforcing of writing skills.

Graphic organizers, webs, and the word walls helped students brainstorm and generate ideas to compose their writings. The writing center activities, in the first grade teacher's classroom, usually consisted of writing or picture prompts to which her students responded to. To facilitate the writing activity, the teacher provided her students with a picture and a list of generated key words related to the picture, which along with their creativity, the students used to create their writing piece.

Looking in retrospect, the first grade teacher remembered that back in the beginning of the school year, her LEP students were able to only write couple of words, and for the most part, they used invented spelling in their writing. They could not read what they had written. By January, the students had already demonstrated great improvement. They were writing much more.

By almost the end of the school year, the first grade students in this classroom wrote individually and were capable of following the writing format used in first grade, capitalization, punctuation in a detailed and creative paragraph. When they finished writing, they read it to the teacher, then, the teacher read it with them to correct any mistakes. In May, the students were capable of writing extensive creative stories. Their creativity had grown much more since the beginning of the school year. The first grade teacher attributed her students' accomplishments to their "self-confidence in their writing, because they feel they're better readers, and they understand, and they write more." (Interview 4)

As the teacher described it, this was a very exciting moment for her students as they loved observing the picture, thinking about what they would write, and finally reading their creation.

The vocabulary ABC Center where the first grade students were able to use and practice their vocabulary words for the week. As a routine activity, the students wrote the vocabulary four times each, and then, they wrote sentences. She also explained how her activities were more about recognizing and reading out loud the vocabulary words. From here, the students went on to putting tiles in alphabetical order or memory games to practice the vocabulary words. At almost the end of the school year, the students were "very good readers and writers," they got 15 new vocabulary words introduced every Friday or Monday, and they were able to write complete and meaningful sentences.

The bilingual first grade teacher had a very fun and creative vocabulary center, where the students used a projector to project different images onto a paper, which they traced and colored. Then, they had to write something about the picture. According to the

teacher, the students loved this activity, which they could only do on cloudy days, so every time that it was cloudy, the students anxiously looked forward to going to this center.

All the participants of the Collegial School admitted that through the vocabulary and writing center activities not only were learning skills targeted, but the instructional focus of the school was supported. As a first grade teacher stated, her students were constantly reviewing sight vocabulary words, which in turn helped them study for their dictation, enhanced their comprehension skills, as well as prepared them for their vocabulary tests. The students had definitely improved their sentence structure, as the teacher expressed with excitement,

They know about capitalization. They know about ending punctuations and question marks. If it's an exclamation, a declarative sentence, they know the difference between them. They know their pronouns. They know their adjectives. They know their verbs. They know their nouns.

The Listening Center included a CD-Cassette Player/Recorder, six headphones, one 6-position jack box with volume control, and a storage case. From all the interviews, it was gathered that the listening center activities, in all grades, were about listening to the story of the week on tape, or to a story related to the target skills. Individually, the students used the earphones to listen to the story while following along in individual books. Usually, the students answered comprehension questions following the story. According to the teacher, the first graders in one of the first grade classroom were able to:

...listen to leveled readers of the week and then, they write about the favorite part of the story, or they'll select vocabulary words that are new to them, or they had

difficulty with during the week, and they write them down, and then when they're finished there's leveled readers in the baskets, and they're able to choose a different leveled reader to read out loud to each other.

Participant teachers always prepared an extra activity on each center, in case the students finished what was assigned to them.

English Language Development Center provided the students with meaningful activities according to their English proficiency level. Since most of the K-2 students were beginners, the activities focused on vocabulary and language development, as well as improving listening skills. All participating teachers expressed the importance of providing manipulatives and/or hands-on activities, such as letter tiles and blocks, stamps and puzzles, at this center.

5. Word walls. All participant teachers had word walls in their classrooms to assist their students become better spellers and decoders. Word walls helped the students recognize, identify, and spell sight or high-frequency words that they encountered in their daily reading and writing activities. Mastery of the words posted on the word walls, in turn; helped the students follow the patterns in well-known words to decode and spell unfamiliar words. Since the participant teachers taught bilingual students, they at least had one word wall in English and another wall in the students' native language. Some teachers had more than two walls, one for math, one for science, and one for social studies, depending on the particular needs of their students. For example, one of the first grade teachers had more than two walls, "one is for vocabulary, and one is for frequent use of words, and the syllables, this stays up, and the vowels." All participant teachers agreed on not mixing words in both languages in a single word wall. The Spanish and

English word walls were separated from each other and in most cases, they were built on opposite sides of the classroom. A Cognate Word Wall enabled the students to make connections between English and Spanish words, which the School Principal considered as a valuable strategy for the students to discover associations and realize that they were able to master several languages. These types of discoveries are sources of encouragement to the students, the principal added.

Word walls were for both schools one of their successful instructional practices in place. As the Collegial School's principal noted, the words posted on the word walls were derived from the vocabulary used by the students in class, or from a particular story that they had read, and later on used in all other activities that involved language study in different subject areas. Therefore, word walls became an effective and useful tool when the students wrote in their journals or engaged in free writing activities.

At the Collegial School where their instructional focus was vocabulary development to enhance reading comprehension, there was evidence of a rich print environment. As the participant teachers of this school noted, both their school and their classrooms offered rich print environment not only as a way of supporting their instructional focus, but also to expose the students to printed material. Consequently, the word walls not only provided a rich print environment, but also supported the school's instructional focus. The first grade teacher remarked that her students were always able to read something regardless where they were sitting. This teacher very creatively built a word wall behind her classroom door. As she explained,

My door. A door is a door. It's boring. I made it a word wall. So the children come in they see words. They leave to go maybe to the restroom; they're reading as they're turning the doorknob.

As a result, the bilingual students in the first grade teacher's classroom had words everywhere around them. The other first grade teacher noted that "sometimes I see them sitting at their desks and looking at the word wall, and going up and down the words reading them." The students manipulate these words constantly and use them for various purposes, to write sentences, stories, to practice their alphabetical skills, or as the teachers indicated for students' review, reinforcement, and memorization. For these reasons, a teacher referred to her word walls as "interactive word walls."

The ESL word walls became visual aids that the bilingual students used to increase their English vocabulary and enhance their reading and writing skills in the second language. A kindergarten teacher took a step further and used the word wall to introduce first grade words to her kindergarten students towards the end of the school year. Thus, when the students became first graders, they had a basic knowledge of the first grade vocabulary words.

The word walls were usually based on the vocabulary words from the reading stories and generated by the students according to their needs. In a first grade teacher's classroom, the word wall was built in alphabetical order and it was color coded, "so they can see it, they can be more visual to them." This teacher assisted by her students placed the vocabulary words from her reading selection and from the other content areas on the word wall. The words were categorized as important words, words that students used all the time and that were difficult to spell. Therefore, when students were writing one of

those words, they just looked up and found them on the word wall instead of guessing the spelling. These word walls were a work in progress, by the end of the school year the walls looked pretty much full. A first grade teacher described the building process of the word walls in her classroom as follows,

Well in September we start plain, empty. It's like what they call when we were in college, "Tabula Rasa," "Empty Board," and you start building. So we start fresh, nothing. Every day that goes on it's a new learning day, and I start building site words, vocabulary. I start putting them up; it could be the words for the week. Also it could be science key words. Key vocabulary that the children need to know also in social studies, and ELD. So it's constantly a buildup. You start in September, and it's empty, and by June it's so enriched in here that wherever they sit there's something to read.

As the teachers stated, in the past, they also had vocabulary words posted on a wall or bulletin board. The main difference with the word walls was based on the fact that in the past, the words changed on a weekly basis, or once they finished the story being studied. This was not the case of the word walls, they were a work in progress. The words stayed there to be read, reviewed, manipulated by the students and used them in the students' work. It was only when the teachers knew for sure that the students had mastered a word that they took it down.

Consequently, by the end of the school year, the word wall was very extensive and comprehensive. A first grade teacher shared a conversation she had with her students regarding the amount of words they had learned throughout the year,

“Ms. (Teacher’s name) if we think back since September all the reading tests that we’ve had with the reading words those are a lot of words that we learned from September.” So they actually made me calculate how many new words they had learned, and they were amazed when I told them that it was hundreds and hundreds of words, and they were excited, because they said, “We learned how to read, write, and we know a lot of words,” and because since this room is print rich they’re always reading, and they’re always reviewing, and writing in the vocabulary center, writing the words four times each, and writing sentences also stresses the skills of understanding the meaning of a word. You’re not just reading a word, and writing it, you’re understanding the significance meaning of that word, and how properly it’s going to be written in a sentence.

It was obvious that all the participants recognized the importance and benefits of using word walls in their bilingual classrooms. When a first grade teacher compared how she used to assist her students with spelling and learning their vocabulary words, she recognized that although the words were posted every week, they did not stay long enough for those students who did not learn them. Every week the words changed according to the reading text. Now, the words stayed for as long as the students needed them.

It is interesting to note that in the first grade teacher’s classroom the words stayed up on the wall even during spelling tests. As she explained, “If they don’t know how to write them they don’t know how to read them, so even if they’re looking at them they can’t do it.” Once all the students had mastered a particular word, that word may be

removed from the word wall. In this classroom, the students determined the word(s) that should be posted on the word wall.

6. Journal writing. Throughout the interviews, teachers commented on the importance of giving their students many opportunities to use their native and second language in different ways. Writing was one of those opportunities. All participant teachers engaged their students in different kinds of writing activities, as a whole, small group and/or individual activity. Writing activities occurred in so many forms. Journal writing being one of them, which had slight variations depending upon the nature of the lesson, goals, needs or interests of the students.

In the lower grades, journal writing started in the form of free writing in September. The children's writing became more intelligent, extensive, and with a certain degree of coordination instruction, as the teacher introduced and worked with the students in the implementation of the writing process. The School Principal encouraged teachers to plan for and develop writing activities, as she felt it was very important to engage the students in free writing, journal writing, prompts that students used to generate ideas for brainstorming, writing, and developing first and second language.

González (as cited in González, Huerta-Macías and Tinajero, 2001) suggested that kindergarten teachers using journals should, in the beginning, leave the activity open so the students could reflect on their experiences. Later in the year, the teachers may guide the writing activity focusing on a particular skill, concept, or experience taught during the week. Further, she recommended that teachers should provide some students with a lot of support, especially to those that did not feel comfortable writing or for whom writing was not a familiar experience. Thus, in time and with practice, the students will become more

expressive in their writing activity. According to González, the teachers should read all of the journals and provide their students with meaningful feedback. As she stated, research has demonstrated that journal writing is “a positive incentive for sharing ideas between teacher and children and among the children as well” (p.98).

Teachers explained that they used journal writing in different ways. Sometimes, it was used to target specific skills, meet specific goals, or other times it was used as a free writing to allow the students to express their feelings and thoughts. The kindergarten teacher explained that her students wrote in their journals first thing in the morning. In concurrence with González (as cited in González, Huerta-Macías & Tinajero, 2001), journal writing is free writing at first, where the students choose the topics to write about. The students used the words posted around the room in their writing. The teachers may have chosen to check journal writing to identify their students’ weaknesses, which they used for reteaching later on.

Picture prompts were used district-wide to help students produce writing. The Collegial School principal found that children preferred pictures of real people from magazines or newspapers. They wanted to talk and to write about things they saw and experienced. They wanted to make personal connections and comment and write about it, without any starter words or sentences.

Teachers used graphic organizers as tools that helped and facilitated students’ writing. The use of graphic organizers allowed students to brainstorm and to map out their thoughts and ideas. Eventually, the students learned to use and build on those small thoughts and ideas to incorporate them into sentences, which ultimately became a cohesive story.

Word walls were very instrumental and useful when students were writing. Since they were interactive, the students used them when they were engaged in their journal writing. It is essential that students learn vocabulary, sight, or high-frequency words, but it is as equally important that they use it with their writing.

7. Hands-on activities and manipulatives. Huerta-Macías (as cited in González, Huerta-Macías and Tinajero, 2001) recommended the use of hands-on experiences for Latino students and especially for recent immigrants who are learning to adapt to the new ways of the macroculture. As she stated, in spite of the traditional assumption that hands-on activities have been deemed appropriate for preschoolers, they are suitable for older students as well.

The teachers of the two schools used hands-on activities and manipulatives in almost all the subjects to address the different learning styles of their students. They found manipulatives very useful to teach mathematical concepts and skills. Additionally, hands-on activities were used to teach English. Consequently, teachers planned and provided the students with hands-on learning activities, including some of the literacy center activities.

The kindergarten teacher used a lot of manipulatives, which she referred to as all the materials her students can put their hands on. As she described it, a kinesthetic approach was very important and helpful for her kindergartners. They used a variety of manipulatives related to the alphabet; some students need to feel the letters to associate the sounds and/or the pictures that begin with that letter. She also provided her students with sentence strips that had different words written on. The students used them a lot when they began to formulate sentences.

One of the bilingual first grade teachers felt that sometimes children need to feel or to touch to learn, consequently, she provided her students with flashcards, tiles, cards, and counting bears, among others. Different hands-on science projects took place in her classroom like planting beans, where the students learned about how plants grow. They also learned about mealworms, which was an interesting experience for them. At first, they did not want to touch a worm and by the end, they were observing, manipulating, and analyzing the mealworms, which led them to a journal writing activity about mealworms.

The other first grade teacher shared her colleague's thought regarding hands-on activities and added that when the students "do things with their hands," they would remember more and better. On this note, she offered an interesting insight as a result of using manipulatives and hands-on activities. Her students loved using tiles and they believed they played when they used them. As she shared,

The students, sometimes, they tell me, 'Ms. (Teacher's Name) we want to play with the tiles.' Play? 'Play with the tiles?' We don't play. What do we do here? 'We're learning.' Exactly! You know because they're doing it with their hands, I guess they associate it with playing. So to them it's playing, but sometimes, it's good that they see it as playing, because they don't take it so seriously. So they don't stress over it, and they learn with fun.

8. Thematic Units. Throughout the interviews, teachers agreed on the benefits of using a thematic approach to teach a variety of topics related to a major topic or unit. The teachers regarded the thematic units as the instructional units that they developed and designed to teach a large topic, such as farm animals, weather, seasons, space, the

community or friendship. Within the unit, they planned and developed activities and/or lessons corresponding to content areas, such as mathematics, science, social studies, reading, writing, health, music, art, and even physical education.

According to the Collegial School principal, the use of thematic units allows teachers to cover more material throughout the day. Once teachers decide on a theme, they brainstorm on ideas in social studies, science, applications through math, fiction and non-fiction reading, and ESL lessons that are related to the selected theme. As she explained,

If the seams are tied together throughout the subject areas teachers have opportunities to make more connections for children, and that has proven, research has proven that the more connections you make, and the more things are repeated the more children understand.

The principal's main objective for grade level meetings was for teachers to be able to plan together. As a consequence, teachers met to plan and develop the lessons and activities for their thematic units during the grade level meetings. According to the first grade bilingual teachers, it was "truly team work," in which each teacher developed and designed lessons and related activities for each specific content area, so the task of preparing for all subject areas was not so overwhelming. This approach, according to one of the teachers, "makes our job much easier and enjoyable. We also take into consideration our students' needs and interest when developing the lessons."

The Literacy Coach and principal of the Collegial School were also members of the teachers' team effort described by the first grade teacher. The teacher claimed that their coach was always instrumental in the development of the thematic units.

Additionally, their principal collaborated on this task by providing them with ideas and resources that included the internet, commercial books on units, trade books, and the curriculum guides. Further, everything was aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996.

In terms of consistency across the grades and since all the teachers planned, developed, and designed their units together, the same thematic units were taught in all the classes regardless of being bilingual or monolingual. Nevertheless, there might have been some slight variations taking into consideration the particular needs of the students, the teacher's teaching style and/or students' learning style. But the main ideas and activities were the same across grade level. Sometimes, they might even have switched classes and taught a lesson in another class of their same grade level. The school principal extended this thought by stating that although the instructional objectives and activities were almost the same; the instructional delivery varied according to the experience and teaching style of each particular teacher.

Several of the teachers noted that most of the target skills and concepts were integrated across the curriculum and around a theme, thus deviating from a traditional isolated approach of teaching around a specific subject area. Further, they felt that their students learned better when they made connections between subject areas, what they were learning at the moment and the real world. As result, their learning tasks became more meaningful and easier to remember.

From the administrative point of view, the school principal was aware of all the units being planned and implemented, "So when I walk into a classroom I already have

their lesson plans memorized, so I know what they're supposed to be doing in there, and how Science is being utilized, and Social Studies as well, and all the strands.”

9. Co-Teaching. The bilingual first grade teacher felt that in order to be a successful educator, teachers must be able to work collaboratively with their colleagues and other teachers that deal with their students, share the love for teaching and for the children. It is very important to understand each other and be flexible, but most of all keep in mind that the children's needs come first. She called herself fortunate to have a wonderful co-teacher that, “I may start a sentence and she finishes it for me.” She feels that together with her students and the co-teacher, they make a great team and therefore a successful class.

In the kindergarten classes, the paraprofessionals played the role of co-teachers. They sat with the students at a particular center during the literacy block while the teacher conducted the guided reading.

Professional Development

Reading First, a federal initiative, provides guidance for schools to establish an effective reading program. They recommend an aligned and strong professional development that helps teachers understand, use, and implement instructional practices that “reliably foster high student achievement.” A professional development that supports the specific and identified instructional strategies used by teachers as well as the state core curriculum standards. As a result of the professional development, the teachers receive the support needed to implement their instructional successful practices with the students, learn how to assess the strategies, and obtain feedback on how they are using and implementing what they have learned (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Along the lines of the Reading First suggested professional development and after many years of traditional, unsuccessful, and unrelated professional development and teachers' training, the district in which this study took place revamped its professional development opportunities. At the time of the data collection, the participating teachers agreed on having a say and input on their professional development needs and interests. Teachers had more control of their own training and staff development opportunities. The kindergarten teacher described the professional development needs as the workshops and training that help teachers improve their teaching strategies and skills in order to meet each child's needs.

Based on that premise, the professional development offerings in both schools were based on their school needs assessment taking into consideration their instructional focus, identified successful practices, and students' performance data. Teachers worked together to study and analyze data, their identified successful practices, to connect their training to their schools' issues, and the improvement of the teaching-learning process.

As explained by the Principal of the Collegial School, the teachers attended district professional development according to their particular grade level, on strategies or state-based initiatives to be implemented in the schools. On the other hand, the professional development offered on school premises was geared to the specific needs that the teachers and students might have had, thus being more specific. As the Literacy Coach noted, both bilingual and monolingual teachers had the same opportunities for professional development. The only difference, she added, was that bilingual teachers had the Literacy Coach as the main coach within the building, but they also had outside support from the English Language Development Coach who worked with them as well.

Grade level meetings afforded more opportunities for professional development for teachers, where they exchanged ideas, planned together, or received training on a particular issue that they may have needed help with. As one of the first grade teachers explained, the grade level meetings afforded them with opportunities to plan and develop their lessons, exchange ideas and activities. As she described the advantages of common planning, she shared that at first it was not an easy task, but as the year progressed, it became very easy and she really loved being able to do it, as she stated, “At the beginning of the year it was the toughest. Now that it’s almost the end it’s a piece of cake. We’re actually looking forward to getting together in August to plan for next year.”

The teachers made it clear that common planning worked really well for them; they complemented each other by using each other’s strengths. Additionally, they all went to the same professional development, which one of the first grade teachers noted as a big advantage, “We go together. We sit together, sometimes what I don’t grab they’ll grab, and then will share information. So you know that’s one more thing that makes it easier.”

The Literacy Coach, who always attended the grade level meetings, also provided teachers with training about the implementation of their successful practices and the school’s instructional focus including but not limited to, the literacy centers, writing, or comprehension topics, classroom and time management. In addition to the training and information that the Coach offered to teachers, one of the first grade teachers thought of their reading coach as their support. Expanding on her thought, she stated,

She’s there when we have difficulties. She’s there when we have questions. She’s always going sharing any ideas, any new information, and any websites. She’s

there just to give a smile when you might think your having a bad day, and she'll just come and say, "Hi to you and to the children," and she routes you on, and she just gives you that pep talk that sometimes you might not be feeling like it's going well that day, and just when she comes in, and tells you how beautiful the children are doing, and their work, or what not, she brings your spirits up, and she's excellent. She's always looking for materials for us. Ordering you some manipulatives when it's allowed, and she opens the office up to anything that she has available for us to look at too.

From the teacher's comments, it was understood that the reading coach of the Collegial School was always available and ready to assist the teachers. It was evident that she played an important role in the implementation of the school's identified successful practices. As the teacher explained, all the teachers were scared; some of them had used the traditional whole group type of instruction for years and they felt they had to start all over again, but their Literacy Coach was there for them.

There were concerns; I wasn't sure how to set up the room correctly, how to put everything, how to start thinking center oriented, and she was there. When I wasn't sure I was having concerns she was there, and she would come in and help, and she helps, and she moves. She'd move furniture. She'll get you books. If you're doing a scene she'll get you the material. She opens her office to all her supplies, and materials, and she says, "Everything is here for you to use." She's always given us support.

It was permeated throughout the course of the interviews that the School Principal felt very confident about the professional development offered to the teachers in her

school. As it was described, teachers in some instances attended district professional development that had already been covered by the school. It became a review for the teachers of the Collegial School. This was perhaps due to, according to the principal, “because we’re a little bit ahead in terms of implementation.” Interesting to note, the teachers of the Collegial School were not only limited to the district staff development, they also had their in-house training.

The principal of the school, however, preferred not to interfere with the teachers’ grade level meetings, except for a few minutes when it was absolutely necessary. Time was of the essence and small group instruction required a lot of planning for teachers, as they had to develop, plan and implement meaningful activities. The principal did not want the students engaged in just “busy work...kids know that when they’re not learning anything, and when you’re just babysitting. So it takes many hours of planning...” Therefore, planning was the purpose of the grade level meetings. Moreover, common planning ensured fully implementation of the school’s identified successful practices by all teachers, the principal remarked.

According to one of the first grade bilingual teachers, the principal attended the meetings to provide teachers with information regarding any school issues and/or materials that would help them in their classroom. But for the most part, the grade level meetings were used for common planning and interaction with the Literacy Coach because in accord with the principal’s philosophy when teachers are able to plan together, it decreases the pressure to develop the different activities and hands on experiences for the children. Further, the principal explained, the teachers had other opportunities for “a lot more diversified professional development that is hands on” twice a month. One was

the faculty meeting, “which should not be wasted with the principal talking for an hour,” and the other one is the extended Monday, in which teachers got together by specific areas of learning.

It was obvious that professional development was a big undertaking at the Collegial School. The professional development opportunities ranged from teachers exchanging strategies and/or ideas at faculty meetings, extended Mondays, and grade level meetings, to workshops and training provided by the principal and the Literacy Coach. It was clear that in the two schools every opportunity was used for teachers’ professional growth. The extended Mondays took place once a month where the teachers stayed for an extra hour after school to participate in some type of professional development needed at the moment and done by the Literacy Coaches. At the Collegial School, professional development videos were available during the morning, before school started, or in the afternoon, after school in case teachers were willing to use their own time to watch the videos.

At the Collegial School every effort was made for in-house professional development where teachers turn-keyed teaching strategies that, as per the principal, “were commendable and needed to be shared, and teachers were more receptive to doing things differently more than I thought they would be.” The reason being, “sometimes what works in another school might not work at your school.” Basically, the principal identified a teacher who was implementing an instructional strategy successfully and effectively and assigned him/her to present it at the next grade level or faculty meeting. After all, the principal added, the teachers did not have a choice, but to implement the school’s identified successful practices. This fact might have changed teachers’ attitude

from “‘Oh she’s better than I am, and that’s what she’s presenting.’ To, ‘Gee there’s something I need to copy here before the Principal comes in to observe me, and evaluate my work.’ ”

Furthermore, the teachers as well as the literacy coach turn-keyed information at their grade level meetings. When the teachers attended workshops, they in turn, went back to their school and presented the information received to their colleagues, so everyone was informed, on the same page and it became useful to all.

Professional development at the school was very instructive and informative, and it was done based on the students’ needs and the particular needs of the school. The major emphasis was on the school’s instructional focus and their identified successful practices. Additionally, it was coordinated and planned by the Literacy Coach in conjunction with the School Principal. In fact, according to the Literacy Coach, the principals played a very important role in making professional development available for teachers and at the same time making the teachers available for professional development. It is imperative that they support the different programs and initiatives going on in the school. “Their support will make, or break a program.”

In talking with the principal of the Collegial School about the benefits teachers received from professional development offerings, it was clear that they helped teachers with the implementation of the small group instruction. Another important fact was that the school paraprofessionals were also involved in the professional development, so they would know what was going on. Even the nurse participated in the training, as the principal stated “and everybody else in the building, because everybody should be able to talk about what is going on, even the secretaries.”

The teachers in the district where the study took place were truly lucky in terms of the different professional development opportunities they had. As the Literacy Coach explained, a partnership between the school district and a local university afforded teachers and staff with additional training on the use and implementation of their school's identified successful practices. According to the participating teachers, the workshops and training received through the professors of the university were also instrumental in their understanding, use, and implementation of their successful practices. A major highlight noted about the professional development offered at the Collegial School was the follow-up sessions provided after the teachers have had a chance to try out the strategies. The teachers used the follow-up sessions to share their feelings and experiences as a result of the implementation of a particular strategy. They even displayed students' work demonstrating the use of the strategy. The feedback provided by the Literacy Coaches, professors, and even other teachers served to confirm or clarify the teachers' ideas. The bilingual first grade teacher claimed that as a result of the professional development offered through the different sources, they were able to transition from the whole group to the small group type of instruction, as well as to successfully use and implement their school's identified successful practices. In her words, "If we were not exposed to as much research, and help, and support that we've had, we would not have been so successful until this point the way we are."

In a comparison established by the kindergarten teacher regarding the types of professional development offerings, she believed that whereas the district workshops were more in tune and catered to the particular needs of the students in their district, the

job-embedded professional development takes the hands-on approach, which makes them more practical and meaningful.

In-class modeling done by the Literacy Coach was another type of professional development used for training. This type, however, is according to the Literacy Coach a more individualized training. Through in-class modeling, the Literacy Coach was able to meet the needs of a particular teacher, the specific skill or *successful practice* to be implemented.

As the Literacy Coach explained, she modeled whatever strategy was lacking, or needed to be implemented within the classroom.

So if a teacher was struggling with a specific strategy, let's say guided reading she was having difficulty getting children into their groups, or if she was having a hard time with keeping anecdotal notes about guided reading per student I would go in, and I would model for her... First we would explain it, and then we would go over what exactly that was. At no time is the teacher really suggested to do something without a follow up of, "How can I help you?" (Interview 3).

Similar to the in-class modeling, "job-embedded" was another form of professional development that according to the kindergarten teacher was used in her school. Wood and McQuarrie (1999) described job-embedded professional development as the learning that occurs as educators engage in their daily work activities. It includes peer coaching, mentoring, study groups, and action research. These appear to be excellent and unique opportunities for the teachers at the Collegial School to learn and improve their instructional strategies. As the teacher added, the teachers learn on the job as they teach as well. It is a constant, "and that way we improve our skills. We're constantly

improving our skills.” These learning opportunities happened all the time, at their grade level and faculty meetings, extended Mondays and others workshops where they had the opportunity to share what they had learned from their teaching experiences, reflect on specific work experiences to uncover new understanding, and listening to colleagues share about their successful practices they had discovered while using and implementing them in their classrooms.

Although the workshops offered by the district and the local schools were sponsored by the same people and covered about the same topics, the Literacy Coach regarded the school and classroom based professional development as more casual, geared, and catered to the specific needs of the teachers and their students. As she described it, “really it’s all about them. How to make it work within their classrooms using their specific students, their specific problems and their specific strengths....”

In addition to the district and school professional development opportunities, the teachers of both participating schools attended workshops and training sessions on different educational topics provided by their Educational Association at a minimal fee.

Parental Involvement

In both schools, parental involvement was very important. Principals, teachers, and staff strived to involve parents and the community in the schools’ activities and functions. In order to facilitate parental involvement, both schools had full time Parent Liaisons, whose role was to bridge the gap between home and school.

All the participants acknowledged that the parental involvement program in their respective schools was very strong, meaningful, helpful, and welcomed by the parents. According to the teachers’ comments, their parents visited the school constantly, they

liked being there and they loved volunteering. As the first grade teacher commented on, her parents might have showed up in the middle of a lesson, just to peak in, check on their kids or to drop something off to their kids. It is obvious that “they feel very comfortable,” the teacher added. For this teacher, having the parents on her side and working with her as a team was a big deal. Therefore, since the beginning of the school year, she meets with them and clearly talks about her expectations and the importance of helping their kids at home. Consequently, she claimed, her parents has always responded and worked with her. As she stated, “Because I get on them, I really do. I honestly, honestly I can say that out of 28 students, 27 parents work with their kids, and I can tell the homework is done.” Her parents were always around, inquiring about their children’s performance, which ultimately benefit the students.

Also, the parents were very happy to participate in the school’s holiday, cultural and ethnic programs. Since the majority of the population was of Hispanic origin, the Hispanic Heritage celebrated in November has always been a big success. It was a big celebration where parents, students, and teachers participated together to put up a beautiful show. Both of the parents of the Collegial School who participated in the study shared fond memories about the Hispanic Heritage Program and Cinco de Mayo celebrations held at the school. According to them, such events allowed them to be in school, to get involved as they helped the teachers putting the programs together, cooking their ethnic food or just watching their children on stage. They both pointed out how the teachers, parent liaison, principal, and the staff in general made them feel welcomed and appreciated in the school.

At the end of the school year, the Collegial School holds the kindergarten graduation and the second grade Moving Up ceremony for the second graders going to the new school. To the principal, all the school assemblies are vital to the children's development and they get them used to speaking in front of a public and interpretation. Further, the principal very proud recollected how,

Parents really flood the auditorium when those assemblies place. They are very proud of what their children can do, and I think it's very important that these presentations be as wonderful as possible, because they make parents proud of their children in case there was any doubt in the world that these children are an asset, and a joy to their lives.

The neighboring receiving 3-6 school holds the sixth grade promotion ceremony for the sixth graders going to the middle school. These ceremonies represent a big accomplishment for all, teachers, parents, and students. The parents get involved and help the teachers with all the arrangements and preparations for the big day.

According to the teachers, the Parent Liaison was a key factor in their school's parental involvement. As one of the teachers stated, her ability to speak the parents' language, her charisma and personality made the parents feel welcomed and comfortable in school. Both participating parents confirmed the teacher's statement. They referred to the parent liaison as someone caring, sensitive, who liked to help and assist the parents with their diverse needs. She was always there for them, getting them food, clothes, gifts, and offering workshops that provided them with information and knowledge about many different important issues.

The teacher also believed that after so many workshops, the parents had finally understood and became sensitive to the importance of being involved in their children's education. At this school, the parents always felt at home. Some of them even stayed after meetings and went to their children's classrooms to visit and/or offer their help with anything the teachers might have needed.

The school principal talked about the importance of allowing parents to visit the classrooms during the school day to watch "the children at work as opposed to visiting empty classrooms like they do on parent night... They had a good time." It is, according to the principal, essential to show the parents their children's talent, their academic progress, how they learn at school, and "just how much they have to be proud of it almost makes their support come that much more strongly. They love to watch their children..."

The Collegial School's principal regarded parental involvement as an opportunity for parents "to be involved in the children's education and to identify with their children." Additionally, the principal believed that parent involvement activities help parents understand the school's expectations, the purpose of the school in their lives, and what can they expect from the schools. Parents themselves may take advantage of the school meetings and events because they make connections with other parents as well.

The principal did not miss opportunities to see and talk to parents on a daily basis. This testimony was corroborated by one of the parents, who declared that every time she wanted to see the principal, she made time and was available for her. She added, "I think the principal is always willing to help the children and I believe she goes the extra mile to benefit our children." (Participant H, Interview 1)

Throughout the interviews, the Collegial School's principal spoke about and made it clear that parent involvement in the school was "Absolutely vital. You have the parents supporting everything you are doing, or at least believing if they don't understand everything you're doing believing in you enough, trusting you enough that you are going to educate their children." With this purpose in mind, monthly meetings were planned in conjunction with the school's Parent Liaison, who the principal regarded as "wonderful for bringing in parents, and parent participation."

The Literacy Coach described the parental involvement program at the Collegial School as a very successful and comprehensive program. As she indicated, they counted on the services of a "wonderful parent liaison that works very hard to meet with the parents twice a month...and offers a library trip twice a month per class."

The first grade teacher concurred with the Literacy Coach's belief regarding the role that the Parent Liaison and the principal played in the school's parental involvement program. She also felt that before they had the parent liaison, the parental involvement program was not as strong. Without a doubt, all the participants of the Collegial School felt that their parent liaison along with the principal made an important contribution to the parental involvement of their school. On this note, the parent liaison was quick to point out that everyone works together, "it's a team effort," the principal, the teachers, and herself.

Throughout the interviews, it was obvious that all participants agreed on the fact that being that the principal was able to communicate with the parents in their own language and was always available for them made a big difference and in fact, contributed to the positive school culture. The principal's participation in the parents'

meetings, workshops and PTA activities, as well as having an open door policy, made the parents feel welcome and comfortable in school. They never had to make an appointment to see the principal. Moreover, the school secretary was able to communicate with the parents in their language. Indeed, it was clear that the Collegial School had all the ingredients and the staff conducive to an effective and strong parent involvement program.

At both participating schools, the Parent Liaisons shared the parents' language and culture, which made them feel welcomed and at ease every time they visited the schools. Both schools offered an open door policy, where parents visited the school and worked with their children at any time. According to the Literacy Coach, the parents of the Collegial School visited the school during the literacy block, music, math and they sat and read with their children.

The Parent Liaisons also planned and invited the parents to dinners and breakfasts throughout the school year. For the most part, they held regular monthly meetings in the morning after the parents dropped the students off to school. As the school's staff expressed, there was a genuine commitment to educate and inform parents. In addition to all the enlightening meetings and workshops, both schools offered ESL classes for parents and community members. In order to accommodate their parents' different schedules, the meetings, workshops, ESL classes, and activities were also scheduled in the evening on a regular basis. All the different activities were usually very well attended, as reported by all participants.

All the informants agreed that their Parent Liaisons truly cared about their school community. They went above and beyond to meet the needs of the students and their

parents. According to them, their responsibilities and duties were endless. They helped with needed children providing from food and clothing to various services that included clinic, vision, medical exams, or important information such as, safety, and immigration laws.

Besides providing services and offering workshops for the parents, they involved community members in the schools. On a regular basis, they invited to the schools members of the community to share their knowledge with the parents. Some of the people they had brought in included, local hospital staff, police officers, nutritionists, dental hygienist, chiropractors, and even merchants who made contributions for the parents and students as well.

One of the first grade teachers noted that although she always had good parent attendance for report cards and a good interaction with the parents, “in the last 2 years not only do the children feel good about themselves, but the parents are feeling more comfortable coming forward for any concerns, any questions about, ‘How can I help my child at home?’ ‘I’m really concerned about their progress, their difficulties.’ ” She felt very comfortable about having the parents in the classroom; she invited parents to visit and to participate, to help. In this teacher’s first grade bilingual classroom, parents might have been seen reading aloud to the students, helping the teacher check the homework, sewing customs for shows, and even cooking for the students. Furthermore, the teacher strived to keep the lines of communication open with her parents all the time.

Indeed, according to the school principal some parents “are very, very loyal, and come in several times a week.” They truly enjoyed doing things for teachers that they did not have the time to do like straighten out shelves, clean things, sit with children and help

them do some work or read to them, take them to the bathroom. “It’s just wonderful having them in the building, because it’s an extra hand.”

Leadership Support

All the participants in the study shared their ideas regarding the support provided by their school principals and central office administrators as a key element to the implementation of their identified successful practices.

The Literacy Coach believed that 80% of the time the school administrators were aware of what went on in the classrooms. In the case of the district where the study took place, she commended how effectively the bilingual principals had been assigned to schools with predominant bilingual students. Additionally, she commented on how important it was for the principals “to keep the bilingual issues at heart,” to be proactive, and to make sure that the needs of all the students were met.

In concurrence with the Literacy Coach’s thought, there was clear evidence that the principal of the Collegial School had the knowledge, training, and experience to implement an effective bilingual program in the school. Further, the instructional strategies and school programs implemented provided the linguistically and culturally diverse student population with equal opportunities to receive an education based on academic excellence and high expectations.

In the Collegial School, all the teachers and Literacy Coach felt that their principal’s leadership and interpersonal skills were indeed contributing factors to the successful implementation of their identified successful practices. Further, despite the major transformation of the classrooms and intensive training as a result of the new initiatives, the teachers felt it was a non-threatening and smooth experience for all. They

were used to teaching in a different and more traditional way, but thanks to the principal the transition was easy and successful for all involved.

The kindergarten and first grade bilingual teachers added that since their principal felt positive about the new initiatives and showed support, the teachers, in turn, felt positive and projected the same optimistic attitude about the new initiatives. According to the first grade teacher, the principal's support and leadership vision regarding the use and implementation of the successful practices, being about the students and their future and not the teachers, was constantly reminded and reinforced.

All through the interviews, the teachers praised and appreciated the principal's participation in their grade level meetings, her open minded approach, listening skills, drive for success, and sharing of ideas and knowledge. The first grade teacher felt that it was her principal's openness and desire to succeed in the school that contributed to the positive school culture and environment. All participating teachers of the Collegial School described their principal as a caring, giving, and loving human being, who showed concern for the students, parents, and the staff. She was an educational leader who showed appreciation and made teachers felt comfortable, not afraid of even sharing a personal problem with her. She was always there for them, ready to listen or to provide them with anything they needed.

As she further described, all the first grade teachers tried to blend and be one, even though they had different teaching styles, experiences, and backgrounds. In short, their principal's leadership support and assistance, flexibility and open minded attitude were the common thread that drove them to try, use, and implement their identified successful practices, which have been proven to work. There were always people to count

on. "It's like a family picnic all year long here. That's the only way I could describe this building."

This teacher felt that they could count on their principal's and Coach's support, which led them to feel confident in what they were doing. At the moment of the interview, 3 years into the implementation of their identified successful practices, the teacher felt that they were already used to the new initiatives. They felt that they had mastered it enough that they did not feel threatened by it anymore.

Interpretation. The scientific research-based successful practices identified as effective in the teaching-learning process of reading in bilingual kindergarten through second grade classrooms have been described by all the participants of the Collegial School.

Based on the verbatim and analysis of the data, I can say that the successful practices identified and implemented in kindergarten through second grade bilingual classrooms of the Collegial School were indeed scientifically-based strategies and proven to be effective for all bilingual students. Further, I can say that the described successful practices, native language instruction and identified instructional strategies, along with powerful elements, such as, a meaningful professional development, strong parental involvement and leadership support all together formulate the emergent conditions necessary for the success of LEP students.

As the data was analyzed, it indicated that by Year 4 of the implementation of the culture of successful practices the teachers knew what they were doing. Walkthroughs, formal and informal observations performed by the principal, ILT members, central

office supervisors, New Jersey Department of Education, and teachers from within and outside of the district complimented how the teachers of the Collegial School used and implemented their identified successful practices. In fact, the study's research question 3 presents a detailed description and interpretation of how the teachers of the Collegial School used and implemented the identified successful practices in their bilingual classrooms to make a significant difference in their LEP students' learning.

Research Question 3

How did teachers use and implement identified successful practices in their classrooms to make a significant difference in their students' learning?

The success of this research study was defined in terms of the achievement of the following indicators: identification, use and implementation of research-based successful practices in bilingual self-contained classrooms to help LEP students reach high levels of reading, language proficiency, and academic achievement.

This section presents an analysis of the data in terms of how the teachers used and implemented their identified successful practices in their classrooms to make a significant difference in their students' learning. Throughout the interviews, the participants noted a significant difference in various aspects of the teaching-learning process of LEP students attending bilingual self-contained classrooms in the Collegial School.

Physical Environment.

As stated by all participant teachers the use and implementation of their identified successful practices greatly and positively impacted the teaching-learning process in their classrooms in many different ways. Perhaps, the first aspect having received a major

impact of the implementation of the school's identified successful practices had to do with the environment of the classrooms, as well as of the school's in general. A bilingual first grade teacher claimed that their success and the significant impact that the aforementioned practices made in the learning experience of the students was due to the "school environment in itself." To her, the entire process of the implementation was about providing an environment to the children conducive to learning where they felt productive and capable of learning, including even the low skilled children. An environment where all teachers worked together, everybody had something to offer, and therefore, everybody learned from each other. As she recalled, the teachers did not communicate amongst them as much as they had opportunities to do it since the implementation of the new initiatives.

Expanding on the thought of the transformed school culture and environment as a result of the use and implementation of the school's identified successful practices; the first grade teacher provided diverse reasons that included: flexibility, open communication, team work, common planning, diversity of ideas, and use of teaching strategies according to different teaching styles and learning styles. The students were exposed to an environment based on all of these factors reaping the benefits of small group and differentiated instruction. The teachers differentiated their instructional efforts and were able to watch their students' growth in a wider variety of ways.

The Literacy Coach commented on the importance of the physical arrangement of the classrooms as the beginning of the implementation of their identified successful practices. At the Collegial School, the physical structure and the classroom environment changed drastically as a result of the introduction of their new strategies. As she

described it, prior to the implementation of the successful practices, “basically besides the chairs being nailed down in straight rows and no talking going on it was pretty much an old fashion schoolhouse sort of speak.” With the introduction of the new initiatives, the school building was transformed to a completely different place.

The children are sitting in groups. It’s very, I shouldn’t say very noisy, but it is a noisy building. Children are encouraged, and expected to speak in complete sentences, and to talk things over with their peers, and it’s a more verbal environment.

The bilingual first grade teacher extended the Coach’s thought by stating, “The rooms are set up more colorful. All the children’s work is displayed. The rooms are inviting. The furniture is more spacious. The children have more room to move around.”

The principal along with the teachers and reading coach took care of the physical aspect of the classrooms first in order to fine-tune the other components. To facilitate the implementation of literacy centers, cooperative learning, small group and differentiated instruction, the school principal replaced individual desks with tables. The students now sit at “collaborative workspaces,” where everything is done in groups leading to cooperative learning.

The “collaborative workspaces” have contributed to decreasing discipline and/or behavior problems. As stated by the Literacy Coach, the students now act as responsible members of their classroom. The traditional role of a teacher as the ‘authority’ in front of their classroom and the students sitting silently listening switched to the role of a facilitator with the students taking active and responsible roles in the different activities around their classroom. The Literacy Coach felt that with “the responsibility also comes

lack of acting out sort of speak.” She observed the children as happy students. “They’re not worried about sitting in their desks for two hours at a time with their feet on the floor, and there’s a little bit more movement in the classroom.”

Along these lines, a first grade teacher noted that her students became more verbal since the beginning of the school year. As she described it, the physical environment of her classroom was one of constant interaction amongst the students where the students moved around, not in a disorderly manner, but with a valid purpose.

I always let them talk. I always let them get up from the chair. I can’t sit in one chair for more than 1 hour. I don’t see how they can sit in one chair for more than an hour being kids, but they’re very verbal. They get up, they go, they do, you know as long as I can see them they do all of that, but they’re more verbal, absolutely, absolutely.

The Teaching Learning Process

When the principal of the Collegial School arrived to the school, the teachers approached teaching as a whole group in teacher-centered classrooms. One of the principal’s main goals was the implementation of small group instruction where the teachers would differentiate instruction tailored to the students’ instructional level, weaknesses and strengths. Making reference to the whole group type of instruction, the principal stated,

The teachers listen to themselves repeat the lesson that they already know, and are not really sure if the kids have learned it or not, and you know that there’s maybe ten who understood you, and the other twenty did not, and I think that’s not

equitable. So all of the things that I knew were true when I was in a classroom, I thought needed to be implemented....

The timing of the arrival of this school principal to the Collegial School was just right because it was then when the district was revamping the approach to teaching and the instructional strategies in all the schools. Since the principal's ideas were aligned with the district's initiatives and small group instruction was the norm and expected, it was implemented immediately and rigorously at the Collegial School.

The analysis of the data indicated that small group instruction along with other successful practices made a significant impact in the students' learning. Nevertheless, as all the participants stated, it was not an easy task. It took a lot from each and every one of them. As the principal shared,

It did not come easily. I had the diehards, the ones that wanted complete control, but then were overwhelmed by having complete control. It was a difficult concept to teach teamwork here, even in the United States in factories we're trying to emulate the Japanese, and how they work in teams, and we you know it's a conflict of interest for us in America, because we believe in competition, and competition involves people working individually, and yet success we have discovered time, and time again by watching other countries come in as a team. That's where you achieve the most success where people specialize, or work together to achieve the most.

Throughout the interviews, it was clear to identify a common thread for all teachers regarding their authority and control being compromised as a result of converting their classrooms into center-collaborative working type of classrooms. The

Literacy Coach extended this thought by adding that it took teachers a while to realize that they were not really giving over their control. On the other hand, they actually had more control of their classroom making the children more responsible for their actions within the classrooms. As she explained, teachers did not need to be in every center, as long as they prepared “good mini lessons” and explained to students what they were responsible for at each center. Along these lines, the students became more responsible for a lot more. “It’s not the passive ingestion of information that the teacher is just talking at you. It’s more of a hands on experience, of taking the information, making it part of themselves, and owning that information.”

Across the interviews, the teachers’ answers indicated that their use and implementation of their identified successful practices made a significant difference in their students’ learning experience. As per the Literacy Coach, even the daily schedule and time allotment for the different subjects changed. It was her belief that these changes allowed teachers to accomplish more in a shorter amount of time. In her description, teachers did no longer teach to “the mass.” Teachers took into account every child, their learning styles, deficits, and strengths. Consequently, the students were exposed to more meaningful activities and their teachers were able to help all of them succeed. In her own words, “They’re not focusing on 80% going through. They’re not teaching to that 80% anymore, they’re really teaching to 100% of their class. No one is to slip through the cracks.”

One of the first grade bilingual teachers expressed that although she had always given her students the best of her and the students learned their skills and were successful, she noticed a significant difference since the implementation of small group

and center oriented instruction, along with the other teaching strategies. According to her, during the days of whole group instruction, it was difficult to identify a student who was at risk or who was in more need than the others. In short, the students did not receive a differentiated instruction. The teacher explained,

Everything was the same. Everybody did the same, and it was boring. I think it was boring to the children, because everything was being taught the same, and either you got it, or you didn't get it, or you sank, or you knew how to swim, and now everything's more appealing to the children.

This teacher regarded the use and implementation of small group instruction as one of their identified successful practices that had benefited the students and maximized their learning the most. Throughout the interviews with all the participants, it was their consensus that they had seen the students' growth and success as a result of the small group instruction. This approach, as opposed to the whole group instruction, allowed them to learn more about the individual progress and achievement of their students. With small groups and literacy centers, the teachers claimed it was easier to focus on the children as the teacher dedicated time and more attention to a small group of students. In turn, these practices helped those shy students, those who never raise their hand in a whole group setting. Being in small groups, the students felt more comfortable to participate, to read and to interact with their teacher. As the teacher described it, in small groups, she heard everyone, regardless of the level of proficiency they were at. "Everybody has something to say. Everybody has something to share, and everyone is learning." In addition, the teachers were able to know who was working on grade level, who needed to review and reinforce a particular target skill or concept.

Small group instruction and literacy centers allowed teachers to work with a particular student or group of students while the other children rotated through other literacy centers. As the students switched centers, they practiced, reviewed and reinforced the target skills and concepts because the skills carried over to all the different centers. By the time the students had completed the activities in all the centers, they had been exposed to all the skills necessary to achieve the goals for a particular lesson in reading, comprehension, writing, or vocabulary. On this note, the first grade bilingual teacher added, “they’re also reviewing the whole time of the literacy block...because every center has a skill that they need to master successfully, and what I love about it is just because you learned it yesterday, or last week, or last month doesn’t mean you can’t review again....”

After 3 years of implementation, the principal was able to declare that the teachers have really molded into the small group instruction, even though there were teachers who “still grumble because it’s work, but in the end they out do themselves amazingly well.” Further, they always talked about the students’ successes and academic achievement. The following is the principal’s recollection of some of the teachers’ comments to her,

...when they do come to talk to me it’s about how this particular (students) got it, and is learning, or they can’t believe that they’re not going to have this one repeat the grade, because they finally got it, I can’t believe that she got it. You know, and I think that that is all due to that individualized instruction.

The participant teachers shared their feelings insofar to the overall academic improvement of their LEP students in a center-based learning environment. They explained that the students carried the skills and concepts from center to center.

Consequently, the compendium of all the skills led to students' improved reading comprehension, increased vocabulary, and a strong native language foundation for transferring into English and second language acquisition.

The Read Aloud, which was one of the successful practices implemented in both schools and a daily routine followed in all classrooms, became a meaningful and positive experience not only for the teachers, but for their students as well. They all described this experience as unique due to the fact that the students loved to sit on the rug and be read to. All the participants recognized the importance of implementing read alouds on a daily basis in their classrooms. They all agreed on the significance of reading to their students and more so when they were aware that most of the younger students did not read and/or were not read to at home. Therefore, the Read Aloud routine was an opportunity to read to the students on a daily basis, to expose them to literature, and to introduce target skills and concepts.

Developing and using thematic units also made a significant difference in the teaching-learning process. It was beneficial for both, teachers and students as well. One of the first grade teachers believed that the concept made a lot of sense in terms of helping the students learn more and better as everything was connected, thus becoming more meaningful for the students. Along these lines, she commented that "all related learning activities and experiences are designed to effectively support teaching different content areas and skills organized around a central topic, idea, or theme. Students are able to make connections, therefore it becomes easier to learn and remember."

When discussing the effectiveness of using and implementing the successful practices in the bilingual classrooms, the Literacy Coach was quick to respond that the

bilingual students read on grade level in both languages. She extended this thought by stating,

I think that that's how we're showing that the bilingual education in this particular school is working. We're using the Best Practices in both languages. We're making sure that they're mastering the skills in their native language, and we're seeing a great transition to English." Further, she added, the students' academic achievement was well corroborated by their test scores, which also were an indication that the students mastered the skills corresponding to their grade level.

The reading coach also expressed great satisfaction knowing that they sent their students well prepared to the next school, and that they did not have as many reading problems as they had in the past prior to the implementation of the new initiatives.

It is worth while noting that according to the participants of the Collegial School, their school gained a positive reputation as a result of their appropriate use and implementation of their successful practices to make a significant difference in their teaching-learning process not only in the regular settings, but also in the bilingual classrooms. People at the district and state level talked about how at this particular school, they had willingly and quickly implemented the new initiatives quite successfully, so much that teachers from other schools and districts and people from the New Jersey State Department of Education visited to observe their ways and strategies, to talk to the students about their daily routine and to get ideas so they could replicate the successful practices in their schools.

A bilingual first grade teacher described her class as a very busy room. She particularly commented on how her students grew and matured since the beginning of the

school year. She was amazed to see them interacting, communicating, and sharing as a result of using and implementing the new initiatives. Additionally, her students were always reading, writing, retelling a story, or creating stories. She used to get very excited to hear the students' conversations and shared some of her feelings as the end of the year approached,

...it's about learning, and how they're ready for second grade, and how in September when they came they couldn't read, or write, and they've learned so much, and they'll mention, Ms. _____ really taught us a lot. She really got us ready for second grade, and just they're proud of themselves, that's the main factor here, that they're proud of themselves. It's just a whole different atmosphere of what goes on...

All the participants conceded that the use and implementation of their identified successful practices also made a significant difference in the learning experience of the special education students in their classes. One of the bilingual first grade teachers provided an interesting anecdote with a special education student in her classroom. The student received resource room replacement pull-out instruction provided by a Special Education Teacher. In spite of the child being on a different reading level, he was accustomed to the routine established by the classroom teacher. As the teacher explained,

...no matter how much confusions this child is being pulled in and out, when this child comes back to class, he just looks around to see what everybody else is doing, and without being told will go to where he needs to go on his own, and will work with the other children, and also he gets seen by a speech therapist, a bilingual speech therapist, and he's also seen by an occupational therapist. So at

the end of the day he's with me. I can happily say that I have seen such a big improvement in this child from September to now, because he's reading, even though it's not on grade level. He's maybe 1 or 2 books behind. He's reading. He's writing sentences on his own, and he's reading aloud to the rest of his friends, and he doesn't get embarrassed, or shy. So I'm happy with him.

Parents also realized of the difference that all of the schools' identified successful practices made in their children's learning. The parents were constantly in contact with the teachers and/or visited the school frequently to learn how their children were doing and they expressed satisfaction. The school principal expanded on this thought by stating that the school was always open about what they did, always shared with them the standardized testing scores, and in turn, the parents were always very receptive.

In a discussion about the impact of the parent involvement in the students' education, the school principal believed that there was a correlation between the students' academic achievement and their parents' participation in their education. She felt that in the process of being involved "parents learn to value education." Further, the principal noted that their appreciation for their children's education is even bigger when they take part of it. As a result, efforts should be maximized to inform parents about all that goes on in school in ways that "they begin to see it as not just a good thing, but as a valuable necessary thing in order for their children to do well in this country."

The school principal over emphasized the importance of showing and talking to parents about the school's academic programs. What follows is a description of what the Collegial School principal used to do to inform the parents about the transition into the small group instruction,

That's all I talk about at parent meetings. I take them on tours throughout the whole building. They sit in classrooms. They look at what's done. They see that I threw out all the desks, and all we have are tables. They are in there getting a feel for it, and also something that is very important is promotion. You have to constantly talk about how things are going well, where things are going well, and they begin to really believe you, because they begin to trust you so they believe you, and that's where you get their support.

The parents' comments demonstrated a clear understanding and satisfaction of the small group instruction and the new initiatives implemented in the school. The principal recalled some of the parents' comments and perceptions of the school, "They think it's a private school. They believe that their children are getting the most fantastic education, and over all, it's very, very positive."

Both participating parents attested to the principal's comment by expressing their satisfaction with the school's education and the different strategies used by their children's teachers. One of the parents said,

They have a very good program, which I like a lot. The children learn in small groups, participating in some kind of center activities, listening to stories, writing about the story, using the computer that I like very much...the children love it. My daughter tells me that she loves coming to school because it is like playing. She likes using the computer, using manipulatives for math, and I'm very happy with all of that. (Participant H, Interview 1)

A first grade bilingual teacher reported how her parents thanked her or stopped her in the playground to express their feelings about the progress of their children. Some

of the parents' comments included, "Oh my goodness, I can't believe it." "When they came in September, and I can't believe how well they're doing." "How well they're reading, and writing and their English." The parents even told the teacher that their children teach them English at home.

Very proud, a first grade bilingual teacher declared that her students were at proficiency and above proficiency levels. During the third year of implementation, of the 27 students in her classroom only one student was not able to meet the requirements to be promoted to second grade. But as she explained, he came to her classroom into the school year and had not received adequate first grade preparation in his country of origin. Nevertheless, she felt happy and proud to report that 26 students achieved academically, were successful, and were moving onto second grade.

The other first grade class did not do any different from the class described previously. In a comparison of the students' academic ability in September and the end of the school year, the teacher declared that, "The kids are writing better. The kids are expressing themselves a little more, so their writing is impressive at this point." Expanding on this thought, she noted how her students were using complete, longer sentences, thus producing relatively longer writing essays. Further, the students were able to proofread and edit their writing, which are difficult steps to accomplish in the writing process.

In a description of the academic achievement and proficiency of first grade students, the teachers stated that as in writing, the students at above proficiency levels were able to read any type of reading materials. They were able to comprehend, to question each other and their listening and critical thinking skills were superb. They

usually liked to challenge each other and were able to use higher-level thinking skills and in the midst of their discussions, they called the teacher to discuss and analyze their little problems

The above statement is a perfect illustration of a recommendation made by González in González, Huerta-Macías and Tinajero (2001) who stated that questioning is an important strategy that teachers need to use and practice with their students. According to her, the students' critical thinking skills are developed when they are engaged in a lot of questioning, which at the same time help students combine ideas.

The kindergarten teacher concurred with the first grade teachers as she mentioned the use of Bloom's Taxonomy in her classroom. She used questioning at different levels, through comprehension, application, and evaluation; she assessed her students' comprehension skills.

Students' Satisfaction

The first grade Bilingual teachers participating in the study described their students as "happy students," who loved being in school. They rarely were absent and they, many times, did not want to go home, they truly felt comfortable in school. Additionally, one of the first grade teachers found that since the implementation of the small group instruction and the literacy centers, among other successful practices, her students' self-esteem was noticeably enhanced. They went into their classrooms eager to read, write, converse or communicate. As she enthusiastically described her students, "they can't wait to go to a center. They can't wait to share something they wrote about, and they're always sharing. They're always reading out loud. Even the shy children are reading. They're not afraid to read anymore."

As noted by the teachers, the classroom setting created as a result of the literacy centers was such a relaxed, non-threatening, inviting, and fun environment that the first graders thought they were playing. This was without a doubt a major outcome and important feature of the implementation of the culture of successful practices and the truth of the matter is, as one of the teachers stated, “They don’t realize that what they are doing is learning... and they enjoy it.”

Both first grade teachers also noticed that their students actively participated in class and they were more extroverted. Interestingly enough, the students built up self-confidence because they were in a non-threatening environment, where everyone was accepted and no one was wrong. The students openly looked for assistance and in many instances not necessarily from their teacher, but from their classmates. The students helped each other and worked as a group. In a description of her students’ behavior, the first grade teacher stated, “they enjoy learning more, because everyone’s learning and sharing, and the children feel better about themselves, and there’s a lot more participation, a lot more smiling, and a lot more conversation and communication.”

González (as cited in González, Huerta-Macías and Tinajero, 2001) wrote about the importance of the communication in classrooms and that teachers be in tune with their students’ conversations. As she stated, “Teachers whose command of Spanish is strong have the ability to pursue conversations with children in these natural settings. The teacher is able to harmoniously interact at a very precise moment when learning can occur” (p. 92).

Communication and language interaction opportunities in all classrooms were evident in all participants’ interviews. As described by the teacher, those opportunities

represent teachable moments leading to incidental learning. What follows is an example of a first grade teacher's recollection of her students' interactions and conversations. Her first graders went through the days in constant anticipation of their upcoming learning activities and experiences. Their teacher expressed with joy that her students enjoyed being in school and reading so much that they did not want surprises, they wanted to figure things out, they wanted to know what they were doing. Their love for reading was permeated through their conversations, their smiles, and interactions, "I've never seen a class full of children that love to read." The teacher used to hear discussions such as, 'what do you think we're going to do tomorrow, and 'what do you think we're going to learn tomorrow?', 'Oh I guess we're going to have to wait until tomorrow.' "But as she indicated, "the fact that they're just questioning makes me feel like I'm doing a good job, and they love learning, and they love school."

When discussing how first graders expressed their happiness, and their love for school, their teacher stated that they told other children, teachers, parents, and the administrator. They liked to share what they learned, they liked to read books. As the teacher described it,

They're always projecting, announcing, telling everything that they do in here. So even the children. Just by the looks on their faces every morning that they're happy to be in school. They say that a smile is like a million dollars. They're always smiling in here. So if I got a million dollars for every smile I'd be a millionaire already, but they're always happy. I come into the door, and they're just happy, happy to be here.

Regarding the students' second language acquisition, all participating teachers argued that, without a doubt, the use of the students' native language as one of their identified successful practices in their classrooms along with the ESL component have made a significant difference in their students' English acquisition and proficiency. This assertion was made evident by a kindergarten teacher who stated that her students once having mastered the alphabet sounds in Spanish; they easily transferred it to English. To illustrate this thought, the teacher recalled some cases in which her students were so successful in making transfers from the native language to English that at the end of year when they took the English proficiency test, they were able to move from the beginner Level A to Level C, which according to her, "is very good for one year."

Students' Quality of Work

According to the Literacy Coach, the teachers' use and implementation of their identified successful practices made a significant difference in the students' writing ability and skills. She added that since the teachers and students used different successful practices on a daily basis, the stress and comfort level of the students writing everyday changed positively. The students were not afraid to pick up a pencil, and start free writing about an idea. "I mean they've been using visualization. They've been doing a lot of different strategies, and skills that have made them more active writers."

In the same way that the literacy coach recognized the use and implementation of different strategies to help students become active writers, Morrison (2004) talked about how she helps her LEP students perceive themselves as writers, "I open up free writing, and any other type of prewriting, to allow drawing, use of one's native language, and

anything else I think might build fluency. Dialogue journals are particular effective when used with ELLs....” (p. 121).

The participants’ thoughts regarding the importance of having their students writing on a daily basis coincided with Morrison who believes that students who write frequently with or without a purpose, “out of the blue,” build writing fluency. Throughout the interviews, all the participants emphasized the importance of having the students writing every day, so they could become comfortable in writing. All the students in the two participating schools wrote daily, for so long already that it had become a second nature. “The students were not afraid to write,” added the Literacy Coach. Of course the students’ confidence and improvement of their writing skills were possible due to the use of instructional strategies, such as small group instruction, word walls, writing center activities, and journal writing explained in the previous research question. It is evident that all these elements led to the development and enhancement of the students’ writing.

The students’ ability to use words from the interactive word walls, to pull them off and take them to their desks allowed them to check the correct spelling. All participants credited the word walls for their students’ improved writing skills. According to a first grade teacher, word walls could be considered a kind of *successful practice* because it is a research-based strategy used in her classroom on a daily basis. In her classroom, the students rely on the word walls, “whatever they’re writing, and when they need help with writing a word, let’s say during science or social studies, all they have to do is look at the word wall....” The rich print environment existing in the bilingual classrooms provided the students with the tools to become better writers and with

answers to a lot of things. As the Literacy Coach referred to, the classroom environment was “less inhibited,” as compared to the classrooms prior to the implementation of the successful practices.

Visualization and brainstorming allowed the students to be creative about what they wrote. Visualization to improve writing was a new strategy introduced to the teachers by the reading coach as part of her training. She explained how visualization could be broken down into different steps,

We did visualization on mental images using music, using emotions that you know would increase their (students) writing or brainstorming. We also did visualization really just to create more of a mental image when they’re reading, or when they’re being read to, so that that increases their comprehension and inference skills. (Participant G, Interview 1)

Another first grade teacher conceded that her students’ writing skills had improved quite a lot since the first writing benchmark assessment in October when her students only wrote a couple of words and inventive spelling. By January, they were able to write more and their improvement was very noticeable. But by the end of the school year, “they were able to write extensive stories of one to two pages long, some even wrote silly stories. They were much more creative than in October.” The teacher believed this was due to the students’ self-confidence in their writing, because as the better readers that they had become, they were able to write a lot more and better.

Students' Assessments

As teachers make important decisions as to what and how to teach, they follow different curriculums, use, implement, and assess the effectiveness of their school's identified successful practices as well as their impact in their students' learning. The participating teachers felt that along with the implementation of their instructional practices, there was too much testing to be administered. The Literacy Coach, however, recognized the amount of testing, but at the same time noted a benefit and a rationale behind all the testing being done. To her, all the testing and assessment served to differentiate instruction and teachers should use the results to modify their teaching strategies. To expand on this thought, the kindergarten teacher commented that she always communicated and discussed her students' results on the DIBELS and IDELS with the Literacy Coach, so she would be able to differentiate her classroom instruction according to the needs, weaknesses and strengths of the children as indicated by the tests.

According to the Literacy Coach all the tests measured different aspects of the students' reading, comprehension, and writing skills. To better understand how all the different tests measured and assessed the students' academic achievement as a result of the use of the instructional successful practices, it is worth while describing the purpose of each assessment, as it was explained by the Literacy Coach:

DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is an internal elementary reading test. IDELS is the Spanish version of the DIBELS. However, the Coach felt that IDELS is a more intricate test. It has a lot more parts to it than the English version. The test was given three times a year, in the fall, winter, and spring. It assessed alphabetical principles, phoneme segmentation, and decoding skills. Its purpose was to

identify the level of reading proficiency of each child and the students with specific reading difficulties. DIBELS and IDELS are state mandated tests and according to the federal law all children must be tested in English regardless of their native language. This meant that the bilingual students were double tested, which to the Coach was an interesting notion and she could not understand the rationale behind. To her, it did not make sense testing students in English, when they were being taught in their native language, some of them could have been struggling in their native language, and so testing them in English was kind of redundant and useless.

Running Records were administered every 6 weeks to evaluate the guided reading level of a particular child. It identified specific reading errors and strategies that the student used to get through a particular text. From those results the students' guided reading level was evaluated and determined. The teachers used the running records to identify and indicate how the students were doing, how they were reading, and the areas in which they were having difficulties. This assessment was one of the factors taken into consideration to assess the students' reading proficiency and to move them on to the next level reader.

Unit Benchmark Assessments were the Scott Foresman reading series unit tests administered at the end of each unit and district-wide scored. These unit tests assessed readability, reading comprehension, writing skills, and the specific target skills covered in the particular unit.

Writing Benchmark Assessments using a picture prompt. These assessments were administered district-wide three times a year. The Collegial School's teachers developed a rubric to score and assess the students' writing essays. The teachers of the neighboring school used rubrics generated from the NJASK state standardized tests.

Writing benchmark assessments presented teachers, principals and students with the opportunity to monitor the progress and improvement of writing skills. At the end of the year, when the teachers compared the results of the three writing benchmark assessments, they realized how their students' writing ability progressed and improved through the year. They were able to write a lot more and better. Both of the first grade teachers agreed on the fact that towards the end of the school year, the students had more resources, knowledge and strategies to assist them with their writing. The following teacher's description is an example of the students' ability to make a text-to-text connection and activate prior knowledge during the last writing benchmark assessment, which were strategies being taught throughout the year,

The last one (picture prompt) was a girl walking to a park; you know I'm calling it a park, trees around, and there was like an egg on the floor, on the ground. So we had just done dinosaurs. So my students started calling it the dinosaur egg, because they were able to relate that big egg to the story that we had read in previous weeks.... You know they were able to associate it....

The previous vignette indicates that the students used the successful practices on a daily basis in different circumstances. The read alouds were excellent opportunities for students to make text connections. Teachers encouraged their students to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections during read alouds. The vignette

presented first graders making text-to-text connections in order to build background knowledge, generate ideas and be able to create their story based on the picture prompt. Text connections are indeed instructional strategies and great tools that students could use in different subjects and for various purposes. Taking all these strategies and successful practices together, one implication may be highlighted above all: they made a significant difference in the students' learning.

In addition to the district mandated assessments, teachers developed and administered their own assessment instruments, especially to evaluate the students' progress and work at the literacy centers. As the teachers and the Literacy Coach stated, the students were accountable for their work and the teachers were interested in monitoring and evaluating their students' accomplishment, whether it was mastery of a skill, or the ability to complete the task.

District standardized tests were achievement tests administered in the spring. The monolingual students in kindergarten through grade 2 took Terranova and the bilingual K-10 students took Supera, the equivalent test in Spanish.

During the time of the interviews with a first grade bilingual teacher, the results of the standardized test taken in the spring had arrived. The teacher expressed contentment because her class had performed very well. As she explained, not only the scores matched her insight about the students' academic performance, but they over excelled. When she saw the scores, she could not believe how well they had done. She was in shock. She got emotional and stated,

I knew they did well in my heart, because I know what I've taught my students this year, and how hard I've worked with them, and I know the class as a

whole of how they've worked, and really strived to accomplish, and when I saw the scores I couldn't believe it. I mean they really scored. Not only on grade level, above grade level, and excellence.

NJASK is the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge state mandated test administered to all students in grades 3 through 6.

ACCESS Test of English Proficiency measures the students in bilingual and transitional settings their English proficiency in three domains, oral, reading, and writing. This test was administered in the spring and its results were one of the factors that determined the placement of the students in the appropriate level of English proficiency the following school year. The students were placed in five different levels. The students in levels 1-3 attended bilingual self-contained classroom being taught in their native language. Transitional students scored level four, and the students scoring level five were eligible to exit the bilingual program into regular education settings.

Portfolios were a compendium of the students' progress that moved with the student on to the next grade.

It was the participants' entire consensus that the scores had tremendously increased through the years. According to the first grade teacher, three years into the implementation of their successful practices, the children had really exceeded their performance and academic achievement. She claimed that this had been possible because "of the small group instruction, because you can work with them better, you can meet their needs, and you can really focus on that group and what is needed..."

The school principal summarized the benefits of the small group over the whole group instruction in terms of testing scores for both teachers and students, as follows:

“Well the benefits is primary and foremost, because students who might have languished in classrooms until we got scores back in May now are identified earlier in terms of problems.” As a result, in the student-centered classrooms and using small group instruction, the teachers get to know their individual students, identify their weaknesses and therefore, be able to address their needs much earlier.

Interpretation. Based on the analysis of the data, it can be said that the bilingual teachers of the Collegial School used and implemented their identified successful practices to develop and provide an effective reading instruction to their LEP students. Further, throughout the interviews much information was revealed that led to believe that participating teachers’ use and implementation of their identified successful practices in their bilingual classrooms made a significant difference in their students’ learning. They used and implemented reading successful practices and strategies, according to the following criteria recognized by Reading First (US Dept. of Education, 2002) as essential factors in designing an effective reading instruction:

1. Systematic Instruction that follows a purposeful and sequenced plan to provide students with wide-ranging support during their early stages of literacy instruction.
2. Explicit Instruction that is clear, visible and modeled to the students through a myriad of examples. Students receive great support from their teachers as they practice and apply the new target skills and concepts.
3. Scaffolding strategies through teachers’ use of instructional language, materials and activities, as well as small group instruction to support, adjust and extend students’ learning, so they would be able to develop new concepts and skills.

4. Maximizing Student Engagement so all students are capable of participating in all learning activities that have academic value.

In concurrence with the Reading First guidelines, it was clear that the students attending the Collegial School were exposed to a comprehensive and sound reading instruction in their native language, which ultimately would help them become proficient in English, their second language.

As the students moved on in their schooling, they transferred to the neighboring school for grades 3 through 6. It was important to find out what happened when the students went to this school. What type of reading instruction did the students receive? What instructional practices did the bilingual teachers use with LEP students? To what extent did the teachers' instructional practices impact the reading and English proficiency of their LEP students?

In an attempt to find answers to the questions posed, research question 4 describes the successful practices implemented in third grade bilingual classrooms.

Research Question 4

What successful practices are implemented in third grade bilingual classrooms?

The neighboring school receives the incoming second grade students leaving the Collegial School along with the students coming from another nearby feeder K-3 school. The third grade teacher talked about the transition from one school to another as a big challenge for her third graders. The students face many basic changes ranging from different types of books, copying the homework from the board as opposed to tearing a page out of a book, and the bigger size of the school. "It's kind of like a culture shock for

them, because first of all it's a different school... so that in it is challenging for me and for the students to get used to that; just to handle that." Fortunately, this teacher having done her student teaching in a second grade class at one of the feeder schools was able to understand the children's transition, where they came from and how they behaved. The transition faced by third graders was according to the teacher the basic difference between second and third graders.

Academically, the third grade teacher added, there were other challenges that the children had to endure. The concepts and skills get more difficult and advanced as they have to learn multiplication, division; and the writing becomes more difficult and involved as the students are expected to write three paragraphs to begin with. It was her belief that all of the changes were really difficult for the students, especially in the beginning.

Besides the basic and academic challenges that the third graders encountered at their new school, they also strived to become proficient in English, their second language. The teacher declared that she enjoyed teaching the bilingual students and always shared her own experiences as an immigrant and bilingual student. This teacher taught students who scored levels one and two in their English Language placement test. Therefore, they received instruction in their native language, Spanish.

As it was the case of native language instruction being implemented in the Collegial School, it was not surprising that the teachers in the neighboring 3–6 school implemented, for the most part, the same successful practices implemented in the Collegial School. It is worth noting that the selection and development of a school instructional focus, likewise, the use and implementation of scientific research-based

successful practices was a district-wide initiative. Therefore, the teachers of the 3-6 school also selected reading as their instructional focus and a set of successful practices to approach the teaching-learning process of reading with their LEP students.

As teachers described them, the following is an account of the identified successful practices implemented in third through sixth grade bilingual classrooms in the 3-6 school.

Native Language Instruction

The third grade teacher, who loved teaching her bilingual children, expressed how important it was for her that her students learn to appreciate having and being exposed to a bilingual program. What follows is an example of the “pep talk” she gives her students, so they understand that although they must face and deal the challenges in front of them, they would also be able to overcome them and as an example they have a teacher who went through about the same and perfectly understands how they feel. As an immigrant from Ecuador, she recalled,

...as a little girl starting a second grade, and I share with my students all the time I did not know how to say, ‘May I go to the bathroom, or can I get a drink of water?’ I knew nothing, and I tell my kids this so they can appreciate having a bilingual education, but I also throughout the years, you get to know one another tell them a little more stories, so that they don’t use it as a crutch, but to their advantage.

When bilingual perhaps immigrant teachers as well, as the third grade teacher shares her personal experiences with their LEP students, they are able to relate to their teacher’s own experience. Their teachers become their role models and inspiration to do well in school and succeed in life. On this note, a third grade transitional teacher

expressed that all teachers, monolingual and bilinguals as well, have the same goals and want their students to succeed. However, she felt bilingual teachers might need to be more sensitive to the specific needs of LEP students, they must take into consideration their origins and what they brought with them, so they could start learning a second language.

The third grade teacher argued that the rate and intensity of English proficiency of her third grade bilingual students, at a beginner stage, depends mainly on how strong their foundation in Spanish is. It varies from student to student; she said and added that,

If child is very well spoken in Spanish they just pick up the English very, very quickly, and I know, you know many people say the contrary, they say, “Oh a little child will pick up language quicker than an adult,” and it does appear that way, but that’s social language. We want to prepare our kids to have that academic language so they can go forward, not just end up with a High School Diploma, and perhaps working at a local restaurant. There’s nothing wrong with that, but we can really provide really much more for our kids. (Participant C, Interview 4).

At the time of the interviews, the third grade teacher had levels one and two students. These students were considered beginners in their English language proficiency. As the teacher explained, most of the instruction was done in Spanish, the first language of the students. Following the district’s guidelines, levels one and two students received 70% of their instruction in their native language and 30% in English. As the bilingual department had recently made revisions to the district’s bilingual program, the teacher implemented the changes and as a result the English instruction was integrated into

Language Arts and content areas, such as Social Studies and Science. The integration of ESL in all subject areas was accomplished, as it was also described in the Collegial School, using The *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model*, developed by Echevarria, Vogt and Short in 1997, was also implemented by the teachers of the grades 3-6 school.

The concept of integrating different content areas among themselves and with ESL instruction was shared by all the participants. The bilingual third grade teacher explained the importance of this integration as opposed to teaching in isolation. As a result of integrating subject areas, the students are able to carry information across subjects, it becomes meaningful, and they would remember more and better. This teacher illustrated the implementation of the SIOP model by explaining how by integrating ESL instruction with content areas, her students were able to make connections. For example, in one of the lessons, the teacher read the book, "If you take a mouse to school." The story had some words with the /ch/ sound and the students made connections with the /ch/ sound in their word study from the current reading in Spanish.

The following is an example of how the integration of ESL and language occurred in the bilingual third grade classroom:

So that's what we did, we tied in the lesson. We did the language objective during my language time. We had the read aloud, introduced the words, their word study. Then we switched over, we did our 90-minute reading block, and that just carried over, and the kids themselves said, "Oh, wait a second. You know, oh yeah like in English, you know like cheese." So they made that connection, and that's really the best way to learn any language, natural approach, and then when they went to

their literacy centers, and they had ELD center, we continued. We followed along with that. Something we also did the following day, we were introducing nouns and verbs. You know it's nothing like giving them that foundation in their native language, and they can transfer, and that's what they did. They knew what a noun, and what a verb was in Spanish, so when we were doing it in English it was very natural for them, of course, you know until they learn vocabulary, but they have the basics. They know what a house is, and lunch, and cheese. So it was very rewarding actually. It was enjoyable to see the children, just you know, get their ideas together, and roll with it.

Along with the SIOP model, the third grade teacher also used the "Natural Approach," which in her opinion, is one of the best strategies to learn a second language. Therefore, she exposed her students to natural literature allowing them to be part of it. She believed that it was important to engage the students in "real life situations as much as possible." Furthermore, she argued, the use of manipulatives, such as magnetic letters and picture cards would assist the students in developing writing skills. These visual and hands-on aids will help the students seeing something abstract as concrete and consequently have a better understanding.

The third grade transitional teacher, who in addition to being certified in ESL also spoke Spanish, liked being able to speak her students' native language, added, "I feel very fortunate that I can use my Spanish to help translate, or give them some background knowledge. Use some background knowledge to bring out what I want to show them." Although transitional teachers are not required to speak the students' first language, it is very helpful for the students who are transitioning into English-only classes. This

particular teacher regarded the transition period as a very challenging experience for the students, especially the first year after exiting a bilingual self-contained classroom. For this reason, she still used about 10% of Spanish instruction and incorporated a lot of ESL strategies and visual aids, such as, students' generated picture cards, role plays, and drawings to facilitate her students' transition into English only instruction. The teacher recognized and credited all these strategies for helping and supporting the students a lot. They facilitate building background knowledge and she illustrated this phenomenon by saying,

I'll say things that I know that they're familiar with in Spanish, or in their culture at home, whether it will be programs in Spanish, or things that they might be doing with their families, and then I'll ask them, and then they bring it into the English, and then, "boo," light bulb turns on. (Participant E, Interview 1)

As she indicated, her students "love and are very eager... and they feel very positive about learning in English." Not only her students had a strong foundation in their native language, but also were able to rely on their teacher who shared their first language. Consequently, they felt at ease and confident as they received their teacher's assistance as the need arose, which in turns facilitated their learning. This also was important and especially necessary in the beginning of the school year, when students were still getting used to being taught in English. The teacher believed that all of her students were ready to transition into English; however, she still needed to depend on the native language, familiar terms and vocabulary from the previous year. The beginning of the school year was a transition period for the students as they were getting used to all their instruction and books being in English. Always keeping these circumstances in

mind, the teacher reviewed and made sure the students understood some basic terminology to complete their assignments and/or homework. For example, the teacher explained, "I review basic mathematical terms. I'll show them what it is in Spanish, what they're familiar with from second grade, and then I'll tell them what it is in English, for example, "restar," "subtract," things like that."

As the teacher gave an account of her students' behavior, she recognized the students' effort and desire to demonstrate their proficiency in English. They really tried to use English most of the times, and they did not give up easily, they rather struggled because they were in a classroom setting and they felt it was expected of them. Once the teacher asked them to say it in Spanish, they did it, which she referred to it as a conditioned behavior,

So it's almost like they've been conditioned to follow whatever the teacher tells them, or expects of them, but I noticed when it's informal, and they're in their groups, in their centers, and they're helping each other, or they're in the playground, or in the cafeteria, then they'll switch more often to Spanish.

In addition to the use of the students' native language as a medium of instruction in bilingual self-contained classrooms, the teachers of the neighboring 3-6 grade school also implemented identified successful practices to make a significant difference in their students' learning. What follows is a description of the identified successful practices used and implemented in a self-contained bilingual and transitional third grade classroom.

Instructional strategies

1. School instructional focus. Both participating teachers described reading as their instructional focus. The bilingual teacher explained that reading, as their focus, must “be apparent in everything we do, all of the kids’, the students’ work that we display. Everything has to be apparent to our focus being reading.” Her counterpart in a transitional setting supported reading as her school’s instructional focus by encouraging her third grade students to read at home for 30 minutes every day. Additionally, she asserted, her approach to teaching science and social studies was through reading a lot about the topic being studied, thus incorporating her school’s focus in reading.

Through a democratic practice the staff of the school voted on different strategies to emphasize reading as their instructional focus, both participants explained. As a result, they selected three successful practices under their focus: literacy centers, mapping strategies, and higher order thinking questioning.

In a discussion about how she supported her school’s instructional focus, the bilingual third grade teacher explained that she used graphing organizers on a regular basis. As she described their use, she noted that different types of graphic organizers were used in her classroom for writing, as well as for reading. They were used to organize ideas, thoughts, and feelings. The following is an example that illustrates the use of graphic organizers in the bilingual third grade classroom,

If we’re reading a story, what happened at the beginning, what happened in the middle? How is it developing, and what happened at your ending of the story, perhaps. We use it a lot in our writing like I said, a four square model. So not only do we display, because once again everything must be displayed even more

so now, we display the whole process... So now we have the graphic organizer, their rough draft, and their final draft together, we'll do that. I do like a sequence story graphic organizer, and then they have to put it in a writing form, a paragraph, or paragraphs. If we're comparing, or contrasting something then they have the Venn diagram, and then you know they compose it, compose a paragraph, or essay. So that's the idea behind that.

In supporting higher order thinking skills, the teacher claimed regular use of this strategy in her classroom. As she stated, she did not only cover the basic comprehension or knowledge level of abstraction of questions. She went beyond that. She guided her students into the levels of application, making inferences and up to evaluation, the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy.

2. Small group instruction. The bilingual third grade teacher recalled how in the past, just up to couple of years ago, she used a whole group type of instruction. For the past 2 years and almost at the end of the third year, even though, she still had some whole group instruction going on, she incorporated and implemented the small group instructional approach to teaching. As she described it, she introduces the skill or concept to the whole group. The read aloud, mini lesson and shared reading activities are done as a group and then the students break up into small groups. The teacher openly recognized that it was difficult to get away from the traditional whole group instruction completely. On the other hand, she also recognized that using that approach was more difficult to reach each and every student. Consequently, she acknowledged the benefits of using small group instruction as a strategy conducive to target and address the students'

weaknesses. In short, the students' education has become more personalized or differentiated.

The transitional third grade teacher felt that it was only after almost the end of the third year of the implementation of the school's identified successful practices that she felt comfortable using them in her classroom. She credited professional development and abundance of materials for preparing and enabling teachers to use and implement the successful practices in their classrooms. She referred to small group instruction as a very valuable and powerful practice where small groups of students received attention from their teacher and the students learned from each other at the learning centers.

Small group instruction was the direction taken by the district and therefore it was implemented and stressed not only in her classroom, but throughout the school. It became the norm, the new way of teaching all over her district.

3. 90-minute literacy block. At the neighboring 3-6 school, blocks of 90 minutes were allotted and scheduled for literacy, which included the literacy centers. The third grade bilingual teacher noted that she started the literacy block off with a read aloud or book selection, which was strictly designed for the enjoyment of the students. The teacher and the students gathered at the rug area, "in a more relaxed atmosphere." The read aloud presented the teacher with an opportunity for modeling reading. Afterwards, the students wrote a synopsis of what they heard, so the read aloud was also used as a springboard for the students to express their feelings, thoughts, and practice their writing skills. This response journal activity, according to the teacher was corrected by her and helped the students build up their fluency in writing.

In the transitional third grade classroom, as well as in the bilingual classroom, the mini lesson followed the read aloud. As the teacher pointed out, it was at this point within the literacy block when “everyone has to have that same piece of reading material, whether I photocopy, and I put it on an overhead projector, or I use a big book, and we use that shared reading time to work on any skill.”

Shared writing was an effective complement to shared reading, which she also found very helpful. Perhaps, the teacher’s personal experience acted as a motivational factor in incorporating these two practices with her third graders. In sharing her thoughts and feelings, she expressed,

...there’s nothing, nothing more than actually seeing it in paper, and working together, and having a child come up, and add their own sentences, or their own thought to it so that they could see the whole writing process. I think that’s very important. I know when I was a little kid that was one of my worst subjects, writing, and it’s all the way it’s introduced, and I still feel somewhat uncomfortable and uneasy at times. You know, and it’s just I feel comfortable doing the shared writing segment with them; because I actually see it, it clicks.

Concomitantly, Morrison (2004) an eighth grade language arts and reading teacher, used “dialogue journals” with her ESL middle school students. She promoted the use of this strategy as especially effective with LEP students because it gave them “a solid sense of audience, a vital component of creating an effective piece of writing” (p. 121).

The use of other resources assisted the bilingual teacher and students with their shared reading and writing. Depending on the particular lesson, she might have used

charts, which allowed students to interact, to actively become involved by manipulating the different skills being studied. For example, the students might have come up and used the overhead transparencies on the overhead projector, or the charts on the board to write their responses addressing the learning skills being discussed. This was followed by the “word study.” The teacher referred to the “word study” as the time dedicated to review the spelling words and the vocabulary words from the story being studied. It also might have included some phonics and patterns that the teacher wanted to introduce. For this purpose, the teacher reiterated the use of hands-on and interactive activities. She liked writing the words on sentence strips, or the students wrote them, so they were able to manipulate them.

Similarly, the transitional third grade teacher used the read aloud for students’ enjoyment. She used books in either English or Spanish, or any kind of reading selections, poems, newspaper articles, stories, and so forth. The students listened and guided by their teacher made connections. In the teacher’s own words, the routine took place as follows,

I’ll just be reading for enjoyment during this time, and they’re making their mental connections. When I finish reading the story they go back to their seats, and they open up their journal again, and now they’re going to write all the connections that they made to the text. Like maybe, “Oh the story reminded me of another story that I read ’or‘the story reminded me of something that I did on vacation.”

Once the read aloud, the mini lesson, and the whole group activities were completed, the students were directed to the different literacy centers. It was at the

centers that small group instruction took place and the students' instruction was differentiated according to their level and ability. The transitional teacher emphasized the importance of incorporating the target skills taught during the whole group instruction into the different center activities, so the students were able to practice and/or reinforce them.

4. Literacy centers. The teachers' portrayal of the centers at work in the third grade classrooms conveyed a "nice noise level." As the bilingual teacher clarified, the work at the centers was an opportunity for the students to work cooperatively. A management chart in the form of a wheel, very systematically indicated the center assignment for the different groups of students. The wheel was separated into five sections, one for each center, on the outer circle. The inner circle had five sections, one for each group of students, which moved around the outer circle. As the inner circle moved every day, it indicated where each group of students was supposed to go to, and from there the students moved clockwise. At the end of the day, one assigned student moved the inner circle indicating where they left off, so they would be reminded on the next day at which center they would start off.

Before the students were sent to their centers, the teachers explained all the activities and the students' responsibilities. At each center, they found an index card with detailed instructions for the center activity, which they also received from the teacher prior to getting there. Once the students got to their centers and reviewed the instructions, all teachers and visitors passing by observed students involved, engaged, and hands-on activities taking place in this third grade bilingual classroom.

The third grade teacher had six to seven centers where as the teacher described and according to the set up of the room, the students rotated clockwise. The groups were formed heterogeneously. A timer went off every 20 minutes, so the students knew it was time to move to the next center. As the teacher explained, the students were not expected to complete their activities within the 20 minutes because they had the opportunity to go back to the center at least three times during the 6 or 7 day cycle.

The third grade transitional teacher, in turn, found it easier to have the centers strategically located in a circle. The students also rotated clockwise at the sound of a bell, “and they know the first bell means wrap everything up, second bell move.” Both teachers planned and prepared several activities for the students to work on. These activities were placed in the students’ folders, so they just followed the instructions as they completed the activities. The students were fully engaged in their center activities all the time, their teacher emphasized.

According to all participants, the bilingual classrooms were busy places where students took on different activities with teachers assisting them, students moving from one center to another, manipulatives being used and hands-on activities being enjoyed by the students. The third grade transitional teacher stated that she loved to have her third grade students working in any sort of groups, “I can hear them talking about things that we learned in the classroom, and I can hear them explaining it to each other, and making like questioning about it.”

The following literacy centers were used and implemented in the third grade bilingual classrooms at the grades 3-6 school:

Guided Reading was conducted by the teachers while the students rotated through the centers during the small group instruction. Both teachers noted that throughout the guided reading they concentrated on the target skills of the week. Whether it was comprehension or sequencing, the students worked on that skill in a particular group. Further, they clarified; they met with the “lower functioning” group for about 20 minutes, sometimes even 30. Both teachers strived to meet with their lowest group every day, and with the ones who did not need much help with fluency or word attack with less frequency.

It was the teachers’ consensus that the purpose of the guided reading was not only to read a story, but to also focus on target skills. Once the students had acquired the skills; they were able to apply them to any article, story, assignment, or as another bilingual teacher noted, to help each other.

The transitional teacher remarked about how important it was for her to challenge her students during the guided reading. For instance, she might have challenged level one students with level two reading by scaffolding until they reached a higher reading level. During the guided reading process, the teacher listened to the students read and took notes, which she used to identify the students’ reading needs and difficulties, so she could address them later and as a result, the students improved their reading skills.

Additionally, the teachers used anecdotal records to monitor, assess, and measure students’ mastery of skills and progress. The notes provided teachers with accurate information as to what skills needed reinforcement or perhaps re-teaching, so the students could reach proficiency. The third grade transitional teacher provided a detailed explanation on how she used “anecdotal records,”

I'll listen to them read, like they'll whisper reading, so I can get close to them, and listen to them. Then, I'll take notes on where their weaknesses are, and then once I finish all of them, then I might if it's an isolated weakness I may take that student to the side, and go over it with them. If I see that they're all having the similar problem then like they're not pronouncing the, /d/ at the end of a word, then I might just go over that in the Guided Reading with them, and then I give them a little, as the seventh day when we're all finished with the story, I'll give them a little assessment of the story that we did together. So that's a leveled reader that they're going to be assessed on.

The anecdotal records were used to monitor students' proficiency in English, as well. Students' oral presentations afforded their teacher with more opportunities for taking anecdotal records. An example illustrating this situation was the students' oral retelling of the story "Sleeping Beauty" to the class using puppets. The students knew the story, but it was still difficult for them to express it in English. Therefore, the teacher was able to identify the students' deficiencies in English and was able to use her anecdotal records to help the students with the use of prepositions, inflectional endings and complete sentences.

In instances when the teacher noted lack of mastery in any given skill, the weakness was addressed during ESL lessons, in a center activity or integrated in science or social studies. "So if I know that they're having problems with prepositions, for example, I'll review it during language time, and then during Science, and Social Studies we might practice it, but with a Science or Social Studies theme."

Assessment was an important part of the literacy centers and all the students were accountable for their work. In the third grade transitional class, the teacher coordinated the assessment of the center activities with the co-teacher. While the teacher did the guided reading, the co-teacher walked around the centers to monitor and assess the students' work. The teacher did what she called "eye-oral" observations to take anecdotal records. These observations made her aware of the students' weaknesses, strengths, or difficulties mastering the skills. Besides the teachers' observations, the students had forms of assessments at each center. The students might have completed "documents" or "charts" to demonstrate mastery of a particular skill.

Independent Reading or Classroom Library was another name for the center in the third grade bilingual and transitional classrooms. The classrooms were equipped with at least 300 books from different genres in Spanish. As the teachers stated, they were very happy to have in their classroom library chapter books, biographies, fairytales, fiction and non-fiction, science related, different animals, and even astronomy. A good number of books in the area of career awareness, as well as social skills like disobeying, whining, and teasing. Sport related books were also included, which the teachers reported being the favorites for most of the boys.

The classroom library was mostly used at the independent reading center, where four or five students at this center chose a book to read. This was, per the teachers, perhaps the students' favorite center because they were able to go, look through different books, and select one of their preference. Although the students selected their own books, as the transitional teacher explained, the books were leveled according to reading difficulty. The books had stickers indicating low, middle, or high level reading, which the

students were made aware of in the beginning of the year. However, it was up to the students' preference the book that they read. The teacher was always around to assist the students.

If they pick a book that's too difficult, I might tell them, if I know they're a struggling reader, I might tell them, "Well you might want to pick more of these books, because these are more on your level," but I can't it's not like forbidden for them to pick, because the whole idea is it has to be something that they like to read.

Once the students read the book, the students completed a graphic organizer that was prepared by the teachers according to the students' ability and to the target skills at hand. It could be a sequence story log, comparison and contrasting, writing an essay, or a brief report. In short, the students were accountable for their independent reading of their choice and they had to show evidence of their engagement at this center.

Clear examples described by the teachers indicated instances in which, for example, the bilingual third graders might have had a graphic organizer to complete after they read a book. They could either have worked on story sequencing, writing sentences about the story and or illustrating it. The tasks were always aligned to the students' ability. The transitional third grade teacher added that, at the end of the week, her students must have completed an assessment activity to show her that they read a book.

Writing Center presented the students with meaningful opportunities to practice and enhance their writing skills. The bilingual teacher explained that the "interactive word wall" was a great resource for the students' writing. The students might have gotten a topic related to the story they were reading and had to use between five to eight words

from the word wall in their writing piece. At this center, the word study and word wall were very important resources for the students, thus they were seen going up to take the words down, and so they could use them in their writing. The students were very aware of the purpose of the “interactive word wall.”

It was evident that the students were engaged in meaningful writing activities at this center. The teacher described the different writings her students produced throughout the year. They ranged from narrative, comparison and contrasting, persuasive to creative writing in which they used the writing process taught in class. The following is an example of writing activities assigned to bilingual third graders,

Persuade me not to give them homework one particular weekend... I give them an analogy; I tell them, I said, “You don’t like to eat a piece of steak that’s dry that has no flavor, no taste.” So I tell them, “Your writing has to be like a nice juicy piece of steak with a lot of seasoning.” By doing so go back and adding the adjectives, and so on, and so on.

A word wall was also an important part of the transitional third grade classroom and a helpful resource at the students’ writing center. As the teacher stated, her students picked words up from the wall to use in their writing. Along with the word wall, the students used dictionaries, which they learned to use very well. Very soon, the teacher added, the students would be introduced to the thesaurus to assist them with their writing.

Listening Center was equipped with listening stations that allowed a group of students to use individual headphones, so they could listen to a story on tape. Following the listening of the story, the students responded to related questions to enhance the students’ reading comprehension skills.

The listening center had a two-fold purpose in the third grade transitional classroom. One, to listen to the stories being studied and two, to enhance listening, comprehension and oral skills in English, as an extension of ESL lessons. For example, prior to start listening to a story, the students were instructed to do a “picture walk,” or to look through the book first, and then discuss the illustrations with a partner. By doing this, the students practiced their English vocabulary. These moments were golden opportunities that encouraged students to speak in English only. Following the “picture walk,” the students made predictions about the story and then proceeded to put on their headphones to listen to the story. Since the students spent 15 to 20 minutes at the center, the completed activity took them about three sessions. The last step involved the assessment, which may have consisted of the students telling their teacher whether their predictions were correct or not in a written format, or the students might have compared the story with another story they had read previously or any other activity that indicated whether the students mastered the target skills being studied or not.

In other instances, where the target skill might have been comprehension, the students were free to speak in their native language.

Computer Center: Wiggle Works in both third grade classrooms entailed the use of the “WiggleWorks” program, which had various stories, at different levels, offering students opportunities to practice, review, reinforce, and improve their reading comprehension and writing skills. The WiggleWorks activities were aligned to the activities in the listening center. The students might have listened to stories at the listening center and then, complete other type of activities with the same story at the computer center.

All teachers had the WiggleWorks program installed in their computers. As the transitional teacher described it, this was a great resource for the students and for the teachers as well. It had a teacher's toolbar where the teachers entered all the students' names to monitor their progress. The students were able to listen to the stories, write about the story, or write their own stories based on the illustrations provided by the program. Further, they could also even speak, record, and listen to themselves. The students' work could be saved into the program, so teachers were able to later on, listen or read the students' work to identify their weaknesses and finally adapt their instruction and academic activities to meet their individual needs. With Wiggle Works the students achieved academically and moved up at their own speed.

Both teachers agreed that the use of WiggleWorks facilitated addressing different skills in a fun and non-threatening approach. Further, the students truly had fun and enjoyed using this program.

Vocabulary Center, which the bilingual third grade teacher called "word study center." She found this center very important and helpful because through the activities completed at this center her students expanded their vocabulary. The following description depicts some of the activities that third grade bilingual students may have engaged in at the word study center,

They'll either match the word with the definition, fill in the blank; break down the words into syllables. So now they're manipulating all of this, or writing it on a wipe erase board, or on chart paper, and then everything was transferred onto their paper, and they had this in their folder, because this is third grade and we have to do more writing, and more independent that way.

The students truly got involved at this center, as their teacher described them, “You’ll hear a lot of discussions, you know the word study, you’ll see them putting things together, maybe with the magnetic letters, or writing their own sentences on the white erase board, and then transferred over into their learning center folder.”

Skill Center was deemed as one of the most important centers in the bilingual classroom. It was strictly geared to cover the target skills being studied in class. An example of this center was:

...steps in process. So I had an activity where they had again, follow the steps in process to cut out, and glue together to make a clown. So they had to cut out the strips. The six strips for the hair, tiny little circles for the color of the clown...

English Language Development Center as explained by the third grade teacher provided students with activities at their English language proficiency level. As in the guided reading, the students at this center were grouped homogeneously. In the third grade classroom, the teacher designed activities for each level. She emphasized, “I will try to tie in; of course, with what I’ve done in the morning, during my language with the read aloud, and so if I’m working on these nouns, or verbs, so we’re tying it together with that center.”

Math Center: the transitional teacher expressed her preference for teaching math. She liked using manipulatives, the overhead projector and group work. She explained that as in reading, she used to present the skills to the whole group and then, the students practiced the skills in groups using manipulatives. At that moment, the teacher assessed the students’ comprehension and grasp of the skill.

5. Word walls. The students manipulated words constantly and on a daily basis. They used them for various purposes, for writing sentences, stories, to put them in alphabetical order, or as the teachers indicated, for students' review, reinforcement, and memorization.

The third grade bilingual teacher regarded her word wall as an "interactive word wall." As she described it, the words were posted on a bulletin board where the students could have access to them, take them down and manipulate them. The word wall was made up of current words from the word study that were also the words from the story being studied. The words included phonics, spelling, and all the words the students were using in writing.

At the beginning of the school year and to start building the word wall, the transitional third grade teacher used to go through the basic "Dolch" words for her grade level to find out which words her students knew or did not know how to spell, or define. The words that her students did not know were posted on the word wall. As in the other classrooms, once the students learned the spelling and definition of the words, they were removed from the word wall. Therefore, the word walls were constantly changing.

6. Journal writing. The third grade teacher referred to "journal writing" as a "response journal." According to her, these journals were very helpful for the students to freely express their thoughts and feelings. Without a specific format, not even sentence forms, the students liked being able to write in a relaxed and informal fashion. The third graders wrote in their journals at the writing centers and they also used them during their ESL classes to write in English. As the teacher noted, "that's a great opportunity for them

to feel comfortable, and develop their language, and they can write in Spanish, or in English as this point, and just their own response journal.”

The third grade transitional students started their day off with their “journal entry.” As their counterpart bilingual schoolmates, they wrote about anything, it was their personal journal entry and they could write about something at home. Their teacher randomly collected the students’ journals but only to read what the students wrote, she never corrected them.

7. Hands-on activities and manipulatives. The teachers used hands-on activities and manipulatives during reading centers and lessons in the other content areas. The teachers indicated using the Total Physical Response approach and /or acting out for ESL instruction. Asher (1982) developed the Total Physical Response as a language learning method based on the coordination of speech and action.

Various manipulatives were considered helpful not only for the students, but for the teachers as well. They liked using visuals, such as picture cards, drawings on the board and on paper to illustrate words and actions. These picture cards became meaningful to the students because they created them. For example, the students liked using magnetic letters for writing, as well as for ESL, as it is explained in the following illustration,

...if we’ve been working on nouns or verbs, I have picture cards and maybe with the (magnetic) letters they’ll form the names of that object on the cookie tray, and then from that point on, they’ll write it down. This may sound elementary as far as maybe the lower grades will do it, but this has been emphasized even the third graders to do. Everything has to be something that they manipulate, and

touch before they do the actual writing. Of course manipulatives are used in Math as well. You know that's very important for them to see something that's abstract, hopefully concrete, and have a better understanding that way.

The transitional teacher regarded manipulatives as great educational resources for any student or subject. According to her experience, the students loved using them, they thought they were playing, the time went by quickly and they were able to comprehend some difficult concepts a lot better and faster than without using any kind of manipulatives or hands-on activities. A clear example that illustrated this thought was the use of individual clocks for students to understand the concept of elapsed time or using counters, such as little cubes or bears to learn multiplication and division, which were difficult skills for third graders.

8. Thematic units. As stated by the third grade teacher, "thematic units, that's the best way that a child will learn." And she recalled how during her training, the bilingual master teacher promoted the integration of different subject areas to teach a specific broad topic. As she explained her approach, she stated that the master teacher was a strong believer in connecting everything together instead of isolating subject areas. Fortunately, she believed this strategy was something that throughout the years had changed in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). The old days when the students were pulled out of their classroom to receive ESL instruction are well gone, and in spite that many students were able to learn that way, their instruction was never related or connected to what they were learning in the other content areas, it was not meaningful or relevant.

An application of the above approach was the integration of ESL in the 90-minute reading block in the classroom of the third grade teacher. Even though the literacy block was being taught in the students' native language, English Language Development (ELD) was one of the centers in the classroom. The teacher gave credit to the English Language Development Coach for showing her and teaching her how to work with that type of integration. As a result, ESL instruction was incorporated into the thematic unit being developed and covered.

Fortunately, according to the bilingual third grade teacher, thematic units were also developed and used by other bilingual teachers. They also felt it was important to "tie things together" as opposed to teach in isolation. Further, it was the teachers' belief that thematic units approach gives importance and meaning to the topic, skill, or concept being studied. This way, the students will carry along with it and they will remember it. The following is an example of a topic being integrated into different subject across the third grade classrooms,

In the reading one of the stories was, "Venus Fly Traps," so it discussed all about the plants. We just didn't leave it alone in reading. We brought it into science. We brought it in the research books, and we went to the library, and we made drawings with flowers. So you really do incorporate everything in.

9. Co-Teaching. The third grade bilingual teacher considered herself lucky as she worked with two staff members who facilitated the co-teaching approach. A paraprofessional assigned to work with a special education student and a Basic Skills Instruction (BSI) Teacher rotated and worked with the students at the centers during the

small group instruction, while the teacher worked with a group of students at the guided reading center.

The teachers explained that a special education teacher who is assigned to provide in-class support to special education students does not necessarily work with the particular student(s) in isolation. This teacher may work directly with at least one classified student, but he/she is not prohibited from working with non-classified children who might also benefit from such attention. An extra advantage to this approach has to do with reducing over-identification of special education students. The main role of the resource room teacher is to work with the student(s) by developing and implementing intervention, using alternative examples and teaching methodologies, modalities and manipulatives according to the students' level and ability in order to achieve the goals for the lesson or instructional activity, as well as the goals outlined in the students Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

The presence of a special education teacher in the classroom, as the teachers described it, afforded a perfect opportunity for using co-teaching strategies. Whereas one teacher was leading the guided reading, the other teacher worked with the students at the centers ensuring they stayed on task, or as the transitional teacher stated, assessing a particular center activity, or overseeing the students' self-assessment process.

As a district-wide initiative, it was highly recommended that principals made arrangements for having a co-teacher during the 90-minute literacy block or at least for part of that period of time. The bilingual teacher had a resource room, a BSI or ESL teacher in her classroom during the literacy block. Co-teachers were supposed to work collaboratively and closely. As in the case of this teacher, she appreciated not only having

a second teacher in her classroom, but also being able to get along with her. What follows is an example of the co-teaching experience in the third grade classroom,

It's actually very nice. It's very nice, because you try to you know do what's your forte perhaps, you know, if someone's very good at vocabulary let them do that, because the children are going to benefit the most from that. I love to introduce the stories, and then do the read aloud. So I would do that, but you are supposed to work together, and plan together.

Unfortunately, according to the teacher, the co-teachers are pulled out for different reasons and the classroom teacher is left alone with all the responsibility, which she did not perceive as being a big deal. The problem arises when the teachers have planned to work on something or in certain way and then, the classroom teacher suddenly learned that the co-teacher was not there. The routine was interrupted. The teacher referred to these as the conflicts that may happen with the co-teaching approach, which in turn affect negatively the flow of the instruction taking place. At the same time, she recognized that although the administrators hold both teachers accountable, in the end, the homeroom teacher is the one being responsible for the students and as she stated, "it is her name stamped on the report cards, testing results, and everything else."

Common planning between the two teachers is another ingredient needed for a successful co-teaching experience. Being cognizant of the difficult task of scheduling common planning for all the co-teachers in the school, the bilingual teacher found the time and was easily available during lunch time or the release period, so that she could meet with her co-teacher. But, as she observed, this willingness and availability does not happen all the time. Further, she continued, co-teaching is only possible when the two

teachers are compatible and make every effort to make it happen. All teachers agreed on the fact that common planning was very hard to accomplish. “So you kind of try to meet up for 5 minutes, “Oh look this is what I’m going to do, and okay I’ll think about it, I’ll talk tonight, that sort of thing, but you know it doesn’t happen, as you know with everyone.”

The common planning concern was brought up to the administrators’ attention and by the time the transitional teacher was interviewed, she stated that they were in the process of implementing a “shared time” where both the classroom and co-teacher could meet for 10 or 15 minutes to discuss and review their lesson plans. Additionally, the vice-principal provided teachers with hand outs that outlined the role and responsibilities for each teacher during the literacy block, which was found to be helpful for all teachers. So far and into the first 2 months of the school year, the transitional teacher’s co-teaching experience had been positive as they had been able to work together and interact meaningfully in the classroom. They had conveniently agreed to meet and plan once a week for 15 minutes at the end of the day. As she expressed, “I’m very fortunate because I get along very well. We work well together...and now with the planning time it should flow even better.”

All participating teachers agreed on and made an emphasis on the fact that chemistry must exist between the co-teachers and classroom teachers in order to maximize the benefits of the co-teaching approach in the classrooms. In a very effective and realistic way, the bilingual teacher used the metaphor of a “marriage” to summarize the co-teaching approach. As she observed,

You have to make it work. You're getting to know one another, your likes, and your dislikes, and so that you can feed off of what works for you, and it is it's just the process of getting to know each other, and really to trust, because you know I always say ultimately it's my name on that report card, and on everything else. I am ultimately responsible for them. I've been fortunate, and unfortunate. You know these past years I've had good teachers working with me, but it's very difficult when you have someone that does not take initiative, or perhaps feel it's not their job to do certain things, that makes it very difficult, very difficult.

Professional Development

Whereas the district and in turn the grades 3-6 school were revamping the instructional strategies across the board, the professional development also needed to be revised in order to address effective use and implementation of the new initiatives. Efforts were concentrated in staff development and training opportunities to ensure proper and effective use and implementation of the new instructional strategies.

The third grade teachers asserted that small group instruction was the major focus of the professional development and training they received during the school year that the interviews took place. They attended a great deal of grade level workshops provided by a local university that worked in partnership with the district. As they explained, every month a different topic was covered. The topics ranged from small group instruction, guided reading, literacy centers, reading strategies, to topics in the content area subjects like social studies and science. They found the workshops very helpful and informative. Further, the transitional teacher found the workshops very open in terms of allowing

teachers to be creative and implement the initiatives as they deemed appropriate to their students' needs.

The bilingual teacher thought of the professional development offerings as a theoretical and practical kind of training. As she explained, every month she went to the college and gained knowledge on a specific strategy. Then, she went back to her classroom and tried it out; implement it, so that when she returned the following month, she could discuss the outcomes and the overall experience with the particular strategy. This allowed the "experts" to answer any questions, concerns, or clarify any doubts the teachers had.

The transitional teacher believed that the professional development provided by the local college matched the reality and the needs of the district and its student population because they worked closely with the schools and their staff spent time in the schools. Additionally, the reading coaches received training through the same college professional development, thus their coaching to teachers was aligned to the training teachers received from them.

The presenter of the workshops and training sessions was an important feature of the local college professional development offerings highlighted by the third grade teacher. According to her, the presenter in charge of all the training was "wonderful." She made teachers feel comfortable and instilled in them the desire to learn. The teacher felt she truly learned a lot from her. As she described the presenter's unique traits, she mentioned that she effectively used a combination of theory, personal experiences and anecdotes that ensured and led teachers to believe that what she was teaching them was realistic and achievable.

In addition to the local college training, the grades 3-6 school had two literacy coaches and a master bilingual teacher who provided training and assisted teachers in the implementation of their identified successful practices. Actually, she mentioned, the literacy coaches and bilingual master teacher went to her classroom and modeled the use and implementation of the strategies for 2 weeks. As she recalled, those 2 weeks meant a lot to her. She was able to see the successful practices being used and implemented in her own classroom, with her own students. Additionally, as she interacted with the coaches, she learned and was able to replicate it later on.

The role of the bilingual master coach was instrumental in the teacher's understanding, use, and implementation of the successful practices in her classroom. She, especially, highlighted the assistance of the bilingual master teacher and regarded it as valuable and meaningful. She took the time to sit down with her and actually did things with her, as oppose to demand what to do, which made her feel good and supported. They worked together for lengthy sessions where they discussed and prepared actual lesson plans and activities, as well as elaborated manipulatives for the lessons. This training was a very direct, hands-on, personalized and very helpful. In her words,

So that was very beneficial for me, because I actually, one thing is you know to go to workshops and to see, and to have been explained, and another thing is to have someone there do it with you, and show you. So I was very fortunate to have that.

Grade level meetings were also used at the grades 3-6 school to provide teachers with professional development and training about the use, implementation and related issues of the school's identified successful practices. In the beginning stages of the new

initiatives, the teachers explained, the grade level meetings led by the reading coach or the assistant principal were basically used to provide information, suggest ideas and strategies, as well as to disseminate relevant information from central office or the local college working with the district regarding the use and implementation of the successful practices. Once the teachers had received all the basic information, then, the grade level meetings dealt more with the actual process of implementation of the successful practices, where the teachers shared their experiences and exchanged ideas.

The full time Reading Coach was, at this school, the contact and resource person for teachers. Her role was mainly distributing information and materials, and keeping the teachers updated in regards to the use of the successful practices. As the transitional teacher recalled and conversely to the Reading Coach of the Collegial School, the Reading Coach of the neighboring school did not provide as much as training for the teachers as they would have liked her to do. She did not, for example, model the strategies and/or use of the successful practices in all classrooms for proper implementation.

The teachers of the grades 3-6 school, however, also had a part time Reading Coach who was assigned to their building 2 days a week. Interestingly enough the teacher observed, this coach went into classrooms, modeled lessons and strategies. As the teacher noted, “she did perhaps a little more than our other reading coach.” In-class modeling was regarded as very helpful and appreciated by the teachers in the school. In agreement with those teachers, the bilingual third grade teacher expressed her openness about having someone to show her the ways and to model the strategies, especially when she was trying new things out.

At the time of the transitional teacher's interviews and into another school year, it was the teacher's belief that their reading coach had become more in tune in regards to the use and implementation of the school's successful practices. Having received quality professional development prepared her better to assist the teachers with an effective implementation of their instructional teaching strategies. Perhaps, as the transitional teacher stated, she could have had a more straight forward attitude to enforce the use and implementation of their successful practices. As the teacher added, a "laid back" stance does not help in situations where everyone has to be on board with policy implementation.

Parental Involvement

As it in the Collegial School, parental involvement was a major undertaking in the neighboring grades 3-6 school. For this purpose, the school offered the services of a full time Parent Liaison, school counselor and a school-based Social Worker. The third grade bilingual teacher commented on the effectiveness and helpfulness of this three-people team and their role in the development and implementation of an effective parental involvement program in her school. About the Parent Liaison, she said, "... she's really good, actually. She's really helpful. Anything that needs to be done with a parent, perhaps, she'll be that middle person, as well as our school-based social worker. Extremely helpful, extremely helpful."

As the teacher added, the services provided by the parent liaison, counselor and social worker were at a more personal level with the parents. Additionally, they bridged the gap between teachers and parents. In instances when the teachers had questions and

or issues involving parents, they could count on any of the three staff members. As she noted, “they go that extra mile and call. They help us out a lot. When there’s a diffuse situation they guide us. We know we have to call right away, but you know they guide us....”

The Parent Liaison of the grades 3-6 school, explained the teachers, conducted many informative sessions and workshops for their parents. They ranged from information about immigration, drug and gang awareness, homework help, medical, insurance, and breast cancer awareness workshops to public and social services information. They had organized flea markets to offer them any kinds of assistance with food or clothing. They also participated in educational field trips. They would do anything that the students might have needed to succeed, the teachers stated. The bilingual third grade teacher personally attended some of the sessions, which were held in the evening, and thought were very well attended and appreciated by all parents.

In addition to informational workshops, the parents attended school programs and assemblies such as the Hispanic Heritage Month and “Cinco de mayo” assemblies. In an effort to ensure good attendance, the teacher highlighted the fact that the Parent Liaison personally called the parents to invite them to the assemblies. “She really makes sure that the parents are reached. She does that outreach. She personally calls.”

It was of the bilingual teacher’s opinion that the Parent Liaison made every effort to involve the parents in the school, to make them feel welcomed, and supported. She believed that she made a major impact on parents, on their participation in school, and in their children’s education.

Expanding on her bilingual colleague's thoughts about the parent liaison, the transitional teacher believed that in addition to the parent liaison, social worker, and school counselor, the teachers also played an important role in involving the parents in school and in their children's education. Since there are parents that do not participate, the teachers should "become a family. We all have to help each other," the teacher suggested. According to her, the teachers should take advantage of seeing the parents in the morning and in the afternoon and make a point to personally invite them to school, to their functions and workshops; because some of them do not read the school notices sent home. Thus, the teachers assist each other in their effort of establishing a strong home-school partnership.

A "Community Group" for the parents was an initiative developed and organized by the Parent Liaison and the Social Worker. When parents had a need, they reached out to the "Community Group" for help. This group took care of clothing, house ware items, food, school supplies, and other parents' needs.

The transitional teacher believed that being in the school before and after they had the services of a parent liaison allowed her to support the position and explained a legitimate reasoning for having a parent liaison. According to her, the parent liaison came to their school to do what they were never able to do, "to bridge the gap" between home and school. The following is a comparison between 8 years ago when the school did not have a parent liaison and now,

"...8 years ago we didn't have Parent Liaisons, so I felt like I had to be the one to encourage the parents to come, to educate the parents on what they need to

be doing at home, and I feel that with the Parent Liaison it's like, and I'll do it, and then a second person is doing it too, and I see the difference over the years.

Leadership Support

The key factor to the success of any school is the building principal, expressed both teachers. The principal sets the tone as the school's educational leader, reinforcing the positive and convincing the students, parents and teachers that all children can learn and improve academically. In essence, the school principal has the greatest impact on student achievement. In order for principals to become instructional leaders, it is imperative that principals understand the instructional strategies leading to the students' academic achievement. In this case, it was important that the school leaders had a good understanding and provided support for the successful practices that their teachers were implementing in their classrooms.

A principal and assistant principal ran the grades 3-6 school. The bilingual third grade teacher felt, "for the most part, supported by the administrators." In talking about some uncooperative parents she dealt with during the particular year in which the interviews took place, she was happy that her administrators provided her with the support she needed in handling those situations.

In terms of the bilingual education program, she stated that she was happy that her administrators understood the role of the bilingual teachers. Additionally, they met with the bilingual Master Teachers, also called English Language Development Coaches to find out and be informed of the requirements, policy, guidelines, and new procedures of the district's bilingual program. In her own words, "they know more or less" what

bilingual teachers had to do, “So we are left alone in that sense. However, there have been times when they have exerted pressure for more English instruction.” As far as she was concerned and due to the fact that she had the beginner levels, one and two students, she did not get much of that pressure. On the other hand, she expressed that teachers having level three students felt more pressure from the administrators to teach more English than what they were supposed to, according to the bilingual guidelines.

The transitional teacher thought that whereas the principal relied on the bilingual master teachers or the limited English proficiency (LEP) coordinator about bilingual education issues, her assistance to the bilingual teachers and students was limited because she did not always know what to do in dealing with them. As the teacher recommended, the principal should “get herself more information on this so that she can make a better decision, and not always rely on other people.”

Additionally, the transitional teacher believed that her principal was very concerned about complying with the guidelines and policies from central office. In order to do that, she created the 90-minute literacy block schedules, facilitated the implementation of the school’s successful practices and was interested in meeting the objectives set forth with the implementation of the successful practices. However, the teacher added, the principal could improve her effort in enforcing the use and implementation of the new initiatives. The teacher would love to see the principal walking around the school and classrooms, providing feedback to teachers, and ensuring proper implementation of their successful practices. As she described it,

She doesn’t know firsthand what’s going on. So it’s hard for her from her office to know what she wants implemented is being implemented, so I think that’s

where the problem is. That's how I view her that she has a good handle on what is expected of the teachers, but she doesn't have a good handle on making sure that we are doing that.

In concurrence with the transitional third grade teachers, DeVita (2007) asserted, "Principals need to be able to devote time to working with their teachers on instructional issues. And they need to be able to allocate resources (people, time, and money) to the areas that need them most" (p. 29). The author studied principals' training programs and concluded that higher education schools must develop rigorous school leadership programs with an emphasis on instructional improvement. Her study shows a correlation between improved school leader programs and student learning.

Interpretation. As it was previously described, the staff of grades 3-6 school, as their counterparts of the Collegial School, used and implemented similar successful practices in their bilingual classrooms to assist their LEP students become proficient readers and speakers of English. The teachers of this school obviously had a great advantage getting the bilingual students from the Collegial School. The students had been exposed and used to learning using the same instructional strategies used by their teachers of the Collegial School. In addition, the students who had attended the Collegial School since kindergarten had been in the bilingual program for 3 years, therefore having built a solid and strong foundation in their vernacular. Most of the students were placed in transitional settings for grade 3 at the neighboring school.

Nevertheless, two important differences between the two schools emerged from the data analysis. First and most important, the leadership support existent and provided by the principal at the Collegial School was lacking in the neighboring grades 3-6 school. As it was observed in the Collegial School, the role of the principal was critical to the success of the use and implementation of the school's identified successful practices. The teachers participating in the study reported satisfaction and some degree of success implementing their instructional strategies in the grades 3-6 school. However, due to the fact that their principal did not provide them with enough support nor did she make her business to monitor proper implementation, one can be led to believe that the use and implementation of this school's successful practices could have been more successful had the principal dedicated time to observing teachers to ensure reliability of their school's initiatives and to working with them on its implementation in the same ways her counterpart in the Collegial School did and as DeVita (2007) recommended.

Secondly, an obvious divergence between the reading coaches of the schools led me to think that the teachers of the grades 3-6 school did not have the quality or the amount of in-class support experienced by the teachers of the Collegial School. This factor could also have impacted negatively their use and implementation of their identified successful practices.

As it was manifested in the Collegial School in regards to their reading coach, the reading coach of the grades 3-6 school should have provided daily support, including mentoring and coaching to all teachers. Additionally, she should have provided in-class support for the teachers by helping them screening and diagnosing instructional activities, monitoring intervention strategies, and monitoring and assessing students' progress. She

should have modeled the school's identified successful practices for teachers in their classrooms.

Perhaps, having facilitated workshops and/or information to the principal, she would have had the tools to become more involved in the process of implementing their successful practices. Further, working with the principal in monitoring the use and implementation of the school's initiatives would have made teachers feel, like the transitional third grade teacher would have preferred, more supported.

Having noted two flaws in the use and implementation of the school's identified successful practices in the neighboring grades 3-6 school; the next research question describes the impact of the school's identified successful practices implementation in the bilingual classrooms.

Research Question 5

What is the impact of the implementation or lack of successful practices in third grade bilingual classrooms?

The bilingual third grade teacher, who enjoyed being a bilingual teacher, liked the benefits that bilingual education provided for her students. She argued that bilingual education allows students to "get a solid foundation in their native language, and they do transfer it, those skills." She strongly believed that she was indeed helping her students acquire their second language by teaching them and "giving them a solid foundation in Spanish," which in turn was one her school's identified successful practices.

In a discussion about the impact of the students' native language as a medium of instruction, the transitional teacher believed that when teachers use, expand upon, and

reinforce their students' first language, then more can be tapped into, the students can make connections, and learning can happen. On the contrary, she added, if the students' prior and background knowledge is not used or expanded upon, due to the lack of understanding, the students just struggle trying to figure what their teacher is trying to teach or communicate to them. As a result, the students get frustrated; their knowledge never gets tapped into and they do not have opportunities to build upon. In the end, numerous students miss learning opportunities, many get behind, and sadly, others drop out of school.

In spite of the existing antagonism about bilingual education, the bilingual teacher believed in its benefits and as she said, she has experienced students making the transfer from Spanish to English,

I saw it last year even more so when I moved from third to fourth grade, and I was able to see a tremendous impact that teaching in Spanish did for the children, because they got it, they need that connection. It wasn't foreign to them.

It happens naturally, eventually things click and students themselves realize and make the transfer. Further, she commented how the group of third graders she had at the time of her interviews had greatly improved since September. When asked what she attributed to the students' accomplishments, she responded that besides implementing different teaching styles, and district initiatives, she attributed it to,

The biggest thing I'd say is just teaching them in their native language. I mean after all once they know, and they have the foundation in Spanish, which is their native language, and then it's very easy to transfer, and I've seen it. So that makes me feel very comfortable.

Furthermore, she added, speaking and teaching the students in their first language to slowly transferring into English is the district's ultimate goal. For that purpose, the teacher used English as Second Language (ESL) strategies, the English Language Development (ELD) center, and the integration of English into Science and Social Studies. It was her opinion that not providing LEP beginner students with an instruction in their native language is a "disservice to the students, when they do go into a transitional class, and the teacher does not speak their native language," because they are not ready and they still need the introduction of the skills and concepts in the language that they understand. The following statement attests to the teacher's belief in providing a solid foundation in the students' native language, so that transferring to the second language can occur,

At that point, I was doing more English, and one of my students made the realization, you know she said it in Spanish. She says, "Oh because Ms. _____ in Spanish you would say the 'cat nice' where in English you would say, 'the nice cat,' and you know it was wonderful. It was beautiful to see that connection. That shows that the child has had enough foundation, and is able, and is ready to transfer those skills, because that child knew what a noun was in Spanish, and what a noun was in English, and the same as an adjective, and it finally clicked.

In the case of the third grade transitional teacher, who is not only certified in ESL but also speaks Spanish, although it is not required that transitional teachers speak their students' native language, it is very helpful for the students who are just being

transitioned into English only classes. As the teacher declared, she was able to use her students' native language for clarification or building background knowledge purposes. The students were also free to use their first language anytime they needed to or desired so. For example, in one instance, the teacher explained,

...there was one student today who, I thought he couldn't remember the story. I thought he didn't have good comprehension, but he was able to tell, I said, "Do you know it in Spanish?" So I let them do it in Spanish, because I wanted to make sure that he knew the story, the sequence of the story, and then so now with him I have to work more on English, translating what he knows into English. He's not quite ready for that transfer yet.

The continued use of the students' native language in the transitional classroom, however and according to the teacher, "could help them, but could hurt them too." Caution and good judgment must be used as to when and how much it is used and/or allowed to be used by the students. As she recommended, the native language should not be used at all times, only when it is strictly necessary, "or else they won't learn the second language." By the same token, it is very difficult for those transitional students whose teachers are certified in ESL, but do not speak their language at all. Consequently, it is to the students' advantage that their transitional teacher shares their language.

In sum, the use of background knowledge, 10% of the instructional time in Spanish, and incorporating ESL strategies, visual aids, and role plays help transitional students smoothly transition into all English classes. It was evident that the students' strong foundation in their native language, along with their motivation and the teacher's

ability to speak their language were key factors in the students' confidence and easiness to enter the English-only teaching-learning process.

Along these lines, the bilingual teacher noted that whereas the bilingual students reach levels four and five, they transition into English-only instruction, they also benefit from transitional teachers who speak their language, so they are able to reinforce in the students' language. When this is possible, the students reap the benefits of a truly bilingual environment and as the year progresses, the students feel more comfortable and accustomed to the English instruction. Only until then, the teacher relies less on the students' first language. Additionally, the use of small group instruction facilitates a more individualized attention to the students making the transition into learning in English.

The third grade teacher recognized that by working with small groups, teachers target and are more attentive to the students' weaknesses. In other words, "you target more; you know the term we're using now it's more differentiated instruction, and that has a lot of benefits, absolutely."

All participants in the study described their students as highly motivated when they participated in small group activities or when they were allowed to choose their center and/or activity. Further, their needs and interests were met and their instructional needs were differentiated. The transitional teacher described her third grade students' perception of working in groups as "playing at home school." Further, she added, "even adults do not like to be lectured, when the students are actively engaged, the time goes by fast."

The co-teaching approach made a positive impact in the third grade classrooms. In the best case scenarios, the teachers worked together, bounced off ideas, and shared

their responsibilities with another professional. The students also reaped the benefits of having the professional attention, assistance, and help of two teachers. As the teachers explained, they shared their talents and strengths. What follows is an illustration of how the third grade teacher interacted with her co-teacher for their own benefit and to maximize instruction in the classroom,

... You know my in-class support was excellent in vocabulary. So that's an area that she dealt with, the word study, you know, and comprehension questions. So we feed off of each other. If I'm introducing something, the other teacher is writing on the board, or writing the chart you know the easel..., so you try to reach all the different ways of learning so you have it visually, you have it oral, and that's really what you should be doing in co-teaching.

The teachers demonstrated that co-teaching, as a *successful practice*, made a significant and positive impact in the classrooms and the students truly benefit from this instructional approach as long as both teachers are willing to work together, "and you need someone that's going to get involved, that wants to get their hands dirty. Not going to be a bystander, because that just occupies space," emphasized the third grade teacher.

The bilingual third grade teacher expanded on her colleague's statement, by adding that in fact, they used different successful practices to make a significant impact on their students' learning. From both teachers' interviews, it can be said that their main focus was deviating from whole group and implementing small group instruction in their classrooms. According to both of them, the use and implementation of other identified successful practices was achieved through small group instruction.

The following is an account of the impact of the implementation or lack of successful practices in third grade bilingual classrooms in various aspects of the teaching-learning process:

Students' Satisfaction

According to the third grade teachers, their students always looked happy and enjoyed being in school. In spite of the challenges experienced in the beginning of the school year, they liked their school. The following is an example of how the bilingual teacher described some of her students' feelings about their school,

It's sad to say many of the kids don't want to go home at the end of their day.

They have a very difficult home life, and they're very happy they're with us. They feel secure. They feel safe. I speak their language. You know many do. So that does provide like a safe haven for them.

The transitional teacher also shared that her students loved coming to school so much that many times, even sick, they wanted to attend school. She believed the students got bored staying at home.

In fact, throughout the teachers' interviews it can be said that both third grade teachers are truly dedicated educators who made every effort to make their teaching interesting, appealing and meaningful to the students. A testimony to the teachers' effort was their willingness to use and implement their identified successful practices. Additionally, the teachers' dedication and caring attitude contributed to the students' positive feeling towards school. The teachers' traits very well explain their students' love for school and desire to be there.

The third grade teacher indicated how much the students liked and showed interest in the topics that were introduced and taught across the curriculum. When different subjects were integrated, the teacher stated, “You don’t get to that point that the bell rang, “Okay close your books,” so forth and so on.” As far as her students were concerned, they responded satisfactorily. She said, “They like it, you know it’s involved, and they just keep going with it. However, sometimes due to the scheduling, it is very difficult to continue through different subjects. Other things got in the way and we got to stop.”

The verbatim offered testimonies indicating that both teachers and students loved working in centers and approaching the teaching-learning process in small groups. The transitional third grade teacher regarded centers and small group instruction as “valuable.” She found that teachers appreciated having instructional time with smaller group of students. Further, she added, the students liked centers, “because it gives them more freedom, and the great thing about centers is that they’re learning from each other, and that’s very powerful, so that I do like.”

Besides being fun, the centers afforded students with various opportunities that ranged from learning, reviewing, reinforcing, or even entertaining depending upon the needs and/or interest of the students at the moment. The transitional teacher described expressively how much she enjoyed seeing and listening to her students talking about things that they learned in the classroom, questioning and explaining things to each other. To her, this kind of students’ interaction was an indication “that they really got it; because they’re able to explain it to somebody else, and then, they’re, you know, defending their answers and things like that.” The students really liked going to the

centers so much, that they miss them, if for some reason; they did not get to work in centers on a particular day.

In terms of center preferences, the teacher explained that the students, for the most part, liked all the centers. However, it is very interesting to note that some students would prefer not going to the writing center, if they had a choice. This shows how dreary writing could still be and as the teacher observed, it was something that some students struggled with. Fortunately, with the use and implementation of the new successful practices, writing became easier and more manageable for students. To the successful practices, the teacher harmonized the center with colorful swirl pencils and different kinds of paper. To this effect, the third grade teacher added,

...it has become more approachable, because they can go up to the bulletin board, and take down their own words that they can trade off with the other student that sits there with them, and they don't have to do it on their own. They can get help from someone else. So that makes it more likeable....

Along these lines, since the students were in groups on a daily basis, they loved working cooperatively and being able to help each other. In sharing their students' feelings, the teachers commented that some students felt as if they were playing and the time went by fast. They did not even realize it was lunchtime and they had to stop their work.

In terms of professional development, the support, assistance, and training provided by the bilingual master teacher had, according to the third grade teacher, a major and positive impact in the implementation of the identified successful practices.

During the interviews, the teacher expressed how the professional development provided by the bilingual master teacher was more tailored to her needs and the needs of her LEP students. To highlight the teacher's appreciation and to demonstrate the effectiveness of a meaningful professional development, what follows is an excerpt of the teacher's comments about her training through the bilingual master teacher,

That was targeted more for my children who speak Spanish in their level of ESL, and that's why I found it more beneficial for me in particular, because this master teacher has taught bilingual education, and now she's in a different point of view, you know in a different setting that she can observe and say, "Oh this is what I used to do, but you know what, now I've learned better, now I know better." So I like that input.

Students' Assessments

As mandated by the district and the state, the teachers explained the various assessment tools used to evaluate the progress and achievement of their students. Nevertheless, the third grade bilingual teacher would prefer not having to rely as much on the test results as she would on her own observations, running, and anecdotal records. Her rationale behind this assertion was that test results, often times, do not show accuracy in relation to the students' actual performance in class. Conversely, she noted, the running records are good because "they indicate fluency, and also the comprehension, because often times the child can read beautifully, but have no idea what they just read, but again I stress teacher's observation." Additionally, she added, teachers know their students better than the test results. However, she admitted, in the beginning of the school

year and for lack of anything else, teachers need to use test scores for placement purposes.

An interesting fact to note was that for the year of the interview, the SUPERA standardized test results matched the third grade bilingual students' academic performance. As the teacher explained,

...my students that scored well in any test, or just do well in class, did very well.

I had students that went through the roof, you know over a grade 12th in the reading. I had grade 7, and I had a grade 9, but those that are very low that are failing, that's just how they did on the SUPERA.

The following is a description of all the assessments described by the teachers at the grades 3-6 school:

Gates McGinnity is a test that indicates and measures the reading skills of the students, including vocabulary and comprehension. The teachers at the grades 3-6 school administered this test three times a year to assess their students' reading progress. As the third grade teachers explained the Gates McGinnity is an internal assessment tool that helps them create their reading groups along with the other district and state assessment instruments.

Writing Rubrics were used to assess the students' writing work. The NJASK rubric was used for the district-wide writing benchmark assessments in grades 3 to 6 and a teachers' made rubric was used for in-class reports, writing compositions and writing benchmark assessments in the lower grades.

The students were familiar with the rubrics, so they knew what was expected of them. The third grade transitional teacher being sensitive of the limitations that her

students still had, especially in the beginning of the school year, modified the rubric, so her students would understand it better. The following is a description of what she did to the rubric:

So like, you know a punctuation, they might not be familiar with that word so I just start off the year by saying make sure you have periods at the end, complete sentences. So I just like kind of draw picture periods, exclamation marks, and as the year goes on they have to get ready for fourth grade, so we just start making it more sophisticated.

Writing Benchmark Assessments were administered three times a year district-wide. The students used picture prompts to write essays. Then, the essays were scored by the classroom teacher and a second teacher using the rubric. The final score was based on the two teachers' scores. If major discrepancies occurred, two numbers or more, a third teacher came into play and scored the writing essay. To this effect, the teacher criticized that the third teacher in her group was a special area teacher who did not attend the same training as she did; therefore she felt that the teacher was not qualified to do the scoring. Additionally, she was not a bilingual teacher, which in fact it should have not really mattered because the students wrote in English, but as the teacher said, she was not able to understand what the students wrote as well as she did.

The transitional third grade students took the first benchmark assessment in October and according to their teacher, they did not do well. On a scale of 1 to 5, she said, most of them scored 1 and some 2. As she explained, at that point in the school year; they had been in third grade for about 2 months, so she still considered them second graders. They were lacking of a lot of sentence structure; their skills were very basic as

they were in the transition from a bilingual self-contained to a transitional setting, yet. Nevertheless, the teacher's expectation predicted improvement, as she exclaimed, "I hope, I hope they move up. I wish the majority would have a three, and then I'd have a few of my higher students with four's that's my goal."

Reading Running Records were administered every 6 weeks to evaluate the students' guided reading level and measure their accuracy, fluency and comprehension skills.

DIBELS was something similar to the running records. The Spanish version of DIBELS is called IDELS. DIBELS and IDELS are state mandated tests and according to the federal law all children must be tested in English regardless of their native language. Therefore the third grade bilingual students are assessed in both tests. They are administered in the fall, winter, and spring to assess alphabetical principles, phonic segmentation, and decoding skills. These tests were administered by the reading coaches and a few teachers who had been trained to administer the test. The teachers use the results to identify the level of proficiency of each child in different decodable measuring types of skills.

NJASK is the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge state mandated test administered to all students in grades 3 through 6 regardless of the students' language. As a result, the bilingual third grade students were double tested in the spring. They took the NJASK and SUPERA, which is the selected district standardized test for bilingual students. The transitional teacher's opinion regarding testing her students in English was as follows:

I think it's very unfair to have children that are not proficient in the English language to be tested in English. I understand for several reasons, may it be political, or financial they have to take the NJASK, and it's very unfair, because first of all do not do well in it at all. You are given the kids much anxiety over something that they have no control over, neither do I for that matter.

Obviously, the teacher explained, since her students' English proficiency was low; they fared poorly on NJASK. On the other hand, the students' performance on the SUPERA was much better. The teacher found the SUPERA in alignment with the NJASK. However, she believed that it was very unfair that the third grade bilingual students were tested in English when they were not proficient in English enough to take a major test like NJASK. Further, when the students took all the components of NJASK, they only had to take an abbreviated form of the SUPERA, in which the writing component was eliminated. As a result, the students did not perform well on NJASK because of the language barrier nor they performed well on the SUPERA test because their opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in their first language was taken away.

The following is a teacher's description of what students encountered with NJASK. Just the fact that the test was in English it already was a challenge for the students, whose proficiency level was not at that point yet,

...the passages on the NJASK test are extremely long. They're over, I don't know several pages, and that's real frustrating when you do not understand, and have no clue. Yes, they are allowed to use their English/Spanish dictionaries, but the purpose of that is not to sit there, and try to find every single word. It's to help them along with anything they do not understand in particular. So needless to say,

they did not score proficient. You know they were all partially proficient, and that was very difficult for them.

With SUPERA of course, as the teacher indicated, the students were more relaxed. Since the test was in their first language, they were able to understand, and as a result the level of anxiety and frustration decreased.

It was very clear that the testing experience was very unfair and frustrating not only for the students, but for the teachers as well. The teachers from the grades 3-6 school agreed with her colleagues at the Collegial School on the overall testing situation. They all criticized the abundance of testing and assessments the teachers and students confronted. Too many tests make the students nervous to the point that they were “way tested out,” the bilingual third grade teacher added. The transitional third grade teacher felt “they teach to the test” and that their administrators’ implied message conveys that “they want the kids to succeed for the tests.” In making a recount of all the different tests, the teacher listed: DIBELS, IDELS, running records, benchmark assessments, ACCESS, district and state standardized tests, in addition to the teacher’s assessments, such as unit tests and teacher made tests.

Anecdotal Records were alternative forms of assessment, which the third grade teacher regarded as more valid, accurate, reliable, and valuable. The teacher stated that when she was working with the guided reading group and throughout the day, she took anecdotal records of her students. “That’s a good way of assessing what a particular child is doing, a different way instead of all this formal testing.” As she stressed, her own observations and anecdotal records were her best assessment and evaluation of her students’ progress, and performance.

Portfolios like anecdotal records were used as an alternative way to assess the students. Through the teachers' professional development, they learned to use portfolios to assess and measure growth and progress of their students. At the time of the interviews, the teachers had implemented the use of portfolios in writing, but as the teacher stated, they were encouraged to use them throughout all of the content areas.

The third grade teacher observed that the writing portfolios helped her in determining where a student needed help or what they were struggling with. Additionally, she used them to contact parents to make them cognizant of their children's progress before they received the progress report and/or report cards.

ACCESS is the state and therefore district mandated test to measure and assess the students' English proficiency. As the third grade teacher explained, ACCESS was a more precise, more thorough, and more complete test as compared with other tests they used in the past. This test has four components: listening, reading, writing, and speaking, which is done one on one. Although the teacher described her students' reaction as being more at ease and more comfortable taking this test, it was still challenging for some of them, "and you saw many from their frustrations that they wanted to, but they couldn't."

In spite of the teachers' criticism of the excess of testing, they also recognized the benefits of having that data available. They analyzed and used the results to identify the students' weak areas and needs to therefore, plan their instruction accordingly. Besides, students' data assisted teachers in determining the formation of homogeneous groups for the guided reading and English language development centers and instruction.

Interpretation. Small group instruction was highlighted by the participants of the neighboring grades 3-6 school as being a major focus. According to the analysis of the data, it can be said that the teachers favored this approach to teaching rather openly and quickly.

Based on the observations, small group instruction along with the other instructional strategies was effectively implemented. Moreover, the students reaped the benefits of the school's identified successful practices. Clear manifestations of the teachers suggested genuine students and teachers' satisfaction and passion for what was going on in their classrooms.

The lack of meaningful support and effective training from the reading coach of this school would have had a negative impact on the implementation of the *successful practices* if the teachers, instead, did not have the support and professional development offered by the bilingual master teacher along with the workshops provided by professors of a local college. This serves to prove that the effective and meaningful professional development offered to the teachers was a key element to the use and implementation of successful practices.

This chapter presented an analysis and a description of the data collected from participants' interviews providing an understanding of the culture of successful practices used by bilingual teachers in their self-contained K-3 bilingual classrooms to assist their LEP students achieve high levels of reading proficiency in their native language.

A description of various identified research-based successful practices was provided throughout the chapter to demonstrate how bilingual teachers successfully participated in the culture of successful practices. Among a number of findings, this study

suggests the degree of influence bilingual teachers have on the achievement and success of their LEP students.

Up to the time prior to the implementation of the successful practices analyzed and described in this research-study, the educational process and teachers' behavior in the two participating school were completely different. It is worth discussing what happened in the studied schools and to participating bilingual teachers in the process of developing and implementing the culture of successful practices. Also, it is important to look at the elements that made the culture successful and perhaps replicable in other classrooms or schools.

Without a doubt, this study conveys significant messages and teaches lessons, from which educators and stakeholders in the education field can learn from. Although it does not mean to propose a perfect program to be implemented in bilingual classrooms or a quick answer to the challenges presented by LEP students, it is hoped that the lessons presented could be used to create a positive educational environment conducive to the academic success of LEP students. Based upon unique and particular needs and conditions, the lessons could be modified to address and meet the needs of individual schools and classrooms with successful practices conducive to an enhanced teaching-learning process in bilingual classrooms. Further, the described instructional strategies are scientific research-based successful practices and therefore could be transferable to students in regular education classrooms, as well. In fact, the culture of successful practices can very well developed, implemented and replicated in any school district in spite of its unique differences or characteristics associated with Abbott or non-Abbott districts.

The Collegial School was considered the frontrunner in the district's educational transformation insofar to the implementation of new instructional initiatives and their identified successful practices. This renovation did not occur overnight. The analysis of the data indicated that the presence of key elements, such as professional development, leadership support, positive working and learning environments, were essential in the process of implementation. Based upon the data analysis, the following is a description of findings and lessons learned from the study, as well as a humble contribution to the existent literature on instructionally successful practices.

Lessons Learned from the Study of the Culture of Successful Practices

Among elements such as the use of effective instructional practices, leadership support, and parental involvement, the one factor that surfaced as the most influential component of the culture of successful practices was teachers' professional development and training. Without proper training and a professional development aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards and the selected instructional successful practices to be implemented in the classrooms, participant teachers would have not had the knowledge or the preparation to effectively implement their identified successful practices.

The importance of teachers' preparation and training manifested in this study was supported by Haycock's research findings (2001), which asserted that schools that provided a challenging curriculum and highly-qualified teachers to low-income and underachieving students have shown great gains. In fact, according to Haycock "what matters most is good teaching" (p.10). Along these lines, this chapter highlights how

indeed, good teaching has been provided in the bilingual classrooms investigated. Moreover, it was found that teachers in both schools were provided with high-quality professional development and training in topics aligned with scientific research-based reading strategies and the schools' identified successful practices. As a result, teachers became better teachers and the quality of their teaching-learning process improved. The nature and quality of teachers' training empowered them to change traditional instructional practices and to implement innovative research-based teaching strategies. As the teachers went through the process of transitioning from conventional instructional practices into the newly adopted approach to teaching, they became effective participants of the culture of successful practices. In fact, they became strong advocates of continuing implementing and participating in the culture of successful practices.

Among many elements that characterize effective teachers' training, one of the most significant factors of the professional development and training offered to participant teachers was specific academic content, which in both schools was reading and literacy. This new element of professional development was appreciated and highlighted by all teachers. In the past, teachers reported not having professional development opportunities offered by the district or the school in academic areas of common interest or need. Previously, teachers participated in isolated, traditional training or workshops that did not match their academic needs or the needs of their students. Sadly, prior to the implementation of the culture of successful practices, the professional development in the two schools under study matched the characteristics of the professional development described in the 1999 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study. According to the study, "traditional approaches to professional

development (e. g., workshops, conferences) have been criticized for being relatively ineffective because they typically lack connection to the challenges teachers face in their classrooms, and they are usually short term” (as cited by Lewis et al., 1999, ¶14).

Throughout the interviews, I learned that teachers’ instruction changed as they regularly participated in highly effective, meaningful, and on-going professional development that supported their teaching practices. As described by all participants their staff

development was systemic and sustained. According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (as cited by Lewis et al., 1999, ¶14), effective professional development must be aligned with the needs of the school and the classrooms of the teachers receiving the training. The

following findings of the NCES study mirrored the professional development offered to bilingual teachers of this study prior and after the implementation of the successful practices:

Increased time spent in professional development and collaborative activities was associated with the perception of significant improvements in teaching. For every content area of professional development, a larger proportion of teachers who participated for more than 8 hours believed it improved their teaching "a lot" compared with teachers who participated for 8 hours or less. For example, teachers who spent more than 8 hours in professional development on in-depth study in the subject area of their main teaching assignment were more likely than those who spent 1 to 8 hours to report that participation in the program improved their teaching a lot (41 percent versus 12 percent). Moreover, teachers who participated in common planning periods for team teachers at least once a week

were more likely than those who participated a few times a year to report that participation improved their teaching a lot (52 percent versus 13 percent). (¶14)

The new elements of teachers' training had a major and significant impact in their teaching practices in positive and fruitful ways. The focus of the professional development and training was on what the students needed to learn and how teachers could plan and deliver effective instruction and intervention to address their students' weaknesses, difficulties, and needs. In addition to the training's theoretical framework, it provided teachers with opportunities for hands-on, collegial, job-embedded, and follow-up opportunities. Professional development and training afforded teachers not only with the preparation required to effectively participate in and implement the culture of successful practices, but also with opportunities to develop strong collegial relationships among teacher and staff. In the beginning of the development and implementation of the culture of successful practices, all teachers were in the same predicament. They all needed the same tools to effectively implement this culture. Therefore they all, together as a group, collaborated to acquire knowledge and build expertise. In order to change their current practices, all teachers and staff were held accountable for implementing the culture of successful practices.

The data analysis led me to realize that as a result of the development and implementation of the culture of successful practices a strong collegial interaction was developed and permeated throughout the school, which in turn led to the development of a special bond among the staff. Teachers and staff communicated, exchanged ideas, and shared experiences constantly at grade level workshops, meetings, frequent visits to each others' classrooms, and formal and informal walk-throughs. They were there for each

other and provided mutual support when they needed it. In short, the teachers in this study took an active role in their own professional growth. The different dimension of professional development and teachers' training described in this study, could be referred to as an alternative to school reform through professional development and very well replicated in other school districts.

Professional development and training opportunities for teachers should focus on improving content and pedagogical knowledge in the subjects that the teachers teach and on improving instructional strategies in areas of greatest need. Moreover, the professional development should focus on data-driven instruction, effective students' assessment instruments and how to incorporate them to differentiate instruction. The professional development should take into account culturally responsive teaching strategies that address the needs of the diverse student population of the schools. The professional development should allow opportunities for collegial support, job-embedded learning, and coaching leading to improved instructional practices. An effective sustained professional development should provide support and follow-up, such as classroom visitations, coaching and modeling lessons.

In conclusion, an important lesson learned from the study implies that good teaching is possible as long as teachers receive effective training and high-quality professional development as one of the most important and instrumental factors in the developing and implementation of a culture of instructionally successful practices. In addition to teacher preparation and practices, the authors of the NCES study (1999) considered teachers' work environment, including school, parental and community support as an additional category to measure teacher's quality. They regarded work

environment as a critical factor in determining teachers' satisfaction and retention.

The analysis of the data throughout this chapter indicated the high level of satisfaction described by the teachers. Throughout the interviews, teachers manifested passion for their teaching profession and a commitment to accomplish their mission with their LEP students. All the teachers felt supported by their administrators, but the teachers of the Collegial School expressed stronger support than their counterparts at the neighboring school. The difference could be attributed to the fact that the principal of the Collegial School not only shared the language and culture of the bilingual teachers, LEP students, but also had a strong background and experience in bilingual education issues. Therefore and as a result of the increasing numbers of LEP students with distinctive needs, it is of utmost importance that school leaders receive training in multicultural and bilingual education issues.

The analysis of the data conveyed a clear image of the working environment in which the teachers worked. The image portrayed a working environment that was desirable and conducive to a happy and productive teaching-learning environment for all, staff, administrators, and parents. This working environment also facilitated and added to the strength of the special bond existing among the staff and described by all participants. They all were happy to be there and volunteered to participate in school functions and activities after school hours. As it was described throughout the chapter, the different dimension of professional development and training offered to teachers in both schools not only made a difference in the teachers' approach to teaching, but also impacted the classrooms' environment. The classrooms of participant bilingual teachers reflected a student-centered classroom where all students were actively engaged in their learning and

where all students' individual needs and proficiency levels were addressed, either individually or in small groups.

The learning environment provided to the students acknowledged and respected their cultural differences and was supportive of their individual needs. The Language Arts curriculum was age and cognitively appropriate to the students and designed to accept and incorporate their language and culture to promote literacy. The students engaged in meaningful learning activities that built on their background knowledge and prior experiences. As a result of the new initiatives, the conventional teacher-centered classrooms transitioned into student-centered classrooms. The students became actors who played important roles in their dynamic, active and interactive learning environments. Teachers acted more as facilitators, as opposed to the traditional authoritative figure in the classroom. Vygotsky (1962) studied this approach to teaching and his neo-Vygotskian movement supported learning in terms of social interaction as opposed to individual and isolated instruction.

In short, the lessons learned from this study allude to the following key components leading to the success of a school culture, such as the culture of instructionally successful practices described in this study. The following components were found to be instrumental and strong indicators of a solid, comprehensive, and sound culture of instructionally successful practices: the development and implementation of instructionally successful practices, a systemic and sustained professional development for teachers and staff, a strong leadership support provided by the school administrators, and a positive teaching-learning environment created in the school.

According to the teachers of the Collegial School, it was not until the third year of the implementation of the new culture that they had developed a special bond, there was a sense of confidence and security in the use and implementation of their new initiatives, including the identified instructional successful practices. It was during the third year of implementation when the aforementioned components were fully rooted in the Collegial School. The period of uncertainty, resistance and lack of knowledge was long time gone and the teachers loved and believed in what they were doing. It is probably about time to start wondering and inquiring about students' gain and achievement.

The primary goal of the development and implementation of the culture of successful practices in bilingual classrooms was to enhance reading and language proficiency of LEP students. Professional development helped teachers understand and learn about their instructional practices; ways of implementing them to meet the needs of their LEP students. Teachers met by grade level to review, discuss, and analyze performance data. This collaborative effort led to authentic and continuous data analysis to drive and improve instruction. Even though this study did not analyze quantitative student's performance data to determine their academic achievement as a result of the implementation of the culture of successful practices, the teachers voiced satisfaction due to the students' performance and assessment results, as well as great improvement in their second language acquisition.

Joyce and Showers (2002) argued that research-based professional development programs alone do not guarantee gain in student academic achievement. In order to obtain this kind of gain, professional development should occur along with the following circumstances:

1. Elevating what is taught, how it is taught, and the social climate of the school;
2. Significantly affecting what is taught, how it is taught, and the social climate in the clinical sense that student behavior really changes to a considerable degree;
3. Providing opportunities for student learning to be studied continuously and diagnostically. (pp. 5–6)

The argument proposed by Joyce and Showers reflects the situation described by the participants of the Collegial School and analyzed in this chapter. The conditions were created and aligned to maximize LEP students learning opportunities leading to their academic achievement. Therefore, it is not surprising or hard to believe that the K-2 LEP students attending the bilingual classrooms of the participating teachers had demonstrated high levels of reading proficiency and second language acquisition.

In conclusion, as the LEP student population increases in American schools, the teachers' colleges have the responsibility to prepare and train teachers so they could meet the academic and linguistic needs and challenges of these students. Once in the work force, districts and schools must provide teachers with meaningful and on-going professional development aligned with the school's instructional focus, identified instructional practices and students' needs.

As described in this chapter the teachers, staff and parents of the Collegial School worked rigorously to address and meet the instructional needs of LEP students and to provide an environment conducive to a successful and productive teaching-learning experience. As an Abbott district, the district where this study was conducted received additional funds. Abbott funds and grants facilitated the implementation of the instructional initiatives and resources described and analyzed throughout the chapter, thus

providing LEP students with greater opportunities to succeed.

According to the 2000 Census, Hispanics represent 13.3% of the reported population in New Jersey. Given the fact that the Hispanic population total 26.9% within New Jersey, it is worth noting that the district under study and other Abbott districts in New Jersey are responsible for educating over 90% of these students.

Data from the school district report card (2006-2007) indicate that 67% of the students come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. Of these students, who total almost ten thousand, 31% receive some form of English language instruction. The district services students of 15 different home languages. At 31%, the percentage of LEP students in the schools is over twice the percentage in other Abbott districts (13%) and a startling six times the percentage statewide (5%). Sadly, as reported in the school report cards (2006-2007), over 20%, or about 640 of the LEP students were overage and entered the schools having had sporadic or even no schooling in their home country.

The cost of educating students of limited English proficiency is appreciably greater than that of educating monolingual students due to the additional materials needed for ESL instruction and for instruction in the native language, not to mention the additional specialized staff required to provide this instruction. In 2008, Governor John Corzine proposed a school funding formula that threatened Abbott districts to lose state aid.

State officials strive for providing school districts with equitable and adequate funds. However, they must recognize that high poverty and high minority Abbott districts require sufficient funds and aid to support their instructional practices, professional development, leadership, and parental involvement as essential components leading to our students' educational success as indicated in this research study.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major purpose of this research study was to study effective instructional strategies used by bilingual teachers in their bilingual self-contained classrooms with their LEP students. The instructional strategies were used and deemed as successful practices by the schools and teachers participating in this study. Further, the use and implementation of the successful practices was twofold: (a) to meet the needs of the LEP students preparing them to achieve high levels of proficiency in reading in their native language and (b) to maximize their opportunities to become proficient in English, their second language.

The research was conducted following an ethnographic methodology. In an attempt to answer the research questions for this study, ethnographic interviews were used as a form of qualitative research. Ten informants participated in the research. Four interviews were scheduled with each of the professional staff members and two with the parent liaison and parents. Each participant was interviewed for about an hour. Thirty-four interviews were conducted between the spring of 2006 and the spring of 2007. Every interview was tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The ethnographic record became the source of evidence to answer the research questions and to learn about the culture of teachers' identified successful practices in bilingual classrooms.

As data were collected and analyzed interesting and important results unfolded. Following the process of ethnographic methodology, an initial analysis of the data led to

the discovery of cultural symbols and possible relationships among them. The cultural symbols are included in larger categories or domains according to their similarities. A domain analysis facilitated the search for domains, which represented the largest units of the informant's cultural knowledge about the culture of instructional successful practices. Within the domains discovered, recurrent themes were observed and analyzed, which in turn became the basis of the findings of the research study.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study and offers policy implications, and recommendations for stakeholders and future research. The data from this study did not only reveal the successful practices that were used to meet the needs of LEP students, but also what contributed to the effective use and implementation of the identified successful practices.

Findings

Hill and Flynn (2006) suggested that if LEP students do not get help in their preschool years, it will be up to elementary school teachers to teach academic content as well as proficiency in English. On this note, participating principal, bilingual teachers, and staff members who dealt with the schools' LEP students had the mission of meeting this challenge using and implementing a comprehensive and sound bilingual education program to maximize the educational opportunities of their LEP students and to ensure their academic success, not only in their native language, but also in English.

The data collected from the ethnographic interviews indicated that the participating schools, teachers, and school personnel were passionate about and committed to accomplish their mission. The following statement mirrors many of the participants' feelings expressed throughout the interviews, "I love first grade too much.

I already know it's in my heart; it's in my blood... I'm very happy where I am. I like the peers, my coworkers, the parents, the community, and I enjoy being in this building, and I hope to stay here till I retire.”

As a result of the participants' commitment and willingness to assist their LEP students, they identified, used, and implemented specific instructional strategies to address and meet their needs. As the data were collected and analyzed, it was concluded that the identified successful practices were a set of instructional strategies and activities implemented to teaching and helping LEP students improve and reach high levels of achievement not only in their first language, but also in their second language. Further, it is important to understand that the identified and described successful practices were scientific research-based and grounded in proven classroom techniques that included instructional practices for which original data have been collected to determine their effectiveness. The studied instructional successful practices were implemented to assist LEP students master a solid literacy and reading foundation in Spanish leading to building proficiency in English.

The identified successful practices were implemented by highly qualified teachers, who throughout the years have been willing and dedicated to work with LEP students and offer their support in an educational environment conducive to academic achievement and success. Further, from the teachers' interviews, it can be surmised that all teachers and school staff were sensitive to and understood the linguistic, educational, emotional, and social needs of their LEP students. As a result and using LEP students' needs as a framework, it can be said that the staff of both participating schools developed

and implemented a culture of successful practices, which according to the data consisted of the following key elements:

Native Language Instruction was provided to the LEP students in the classrooms of participating bilingual teachers. In order to address the linguistic needs of the LEP students, the teachers planned and delivered rich and meaningful lessons in the students' native language. For example, the kindergarten teacher firmly believed that native language instruction was the most important successful practice identified and implemented in her school, "because the children are learning in their native language, and I have to improve their skills in their native language in order for them to be able to someday be mainstreamed into the regular classroom."

Without a doubt, according to the data gathered, it can be concluded that the teachers made a substantial difference in the achievement of their LEP students by providing instruction in the students' first language. Analyzing the data in regards to the use of the students' vernacular, one implication stands above all: the use of the vernacular, as a medium of instruction with LEP students, is an effective educational practice. The use of the students' first language in their education helps them learn the second language. In agreement with UNESCO's proposal (1951, p.9), when the students become literate in the vernacular, they become literate in their second language much easier and faster.

Additionally, the participating bilingual teachers differentiated the instruction according to the diverse ability and instructional levels of the students, as well as their limited proficiency in their second language, English. A major occurrence took place in the bilingual classrooms; the teachers transitioned from the traditional whole group

instruction to small group and differentiated instruction. These classrooms never looked the same. To accomplish this and contrary to the adage “one size fits all,” the teachers successfully used specific instructional strategies to address the needs of individual and small group of students. It was demonstrated that the students truly reaped the benefits of receiving instruction in small groups tailored to their needs.

Instructional Strategies and the quality of instruction that the LEP students received in the participating bilingual classrooms were essential components of the culture of successful practices. All of the participants concurred that the main focus was on the development of a comprehensive literacy program to assist all students achieve high levels of proficiency in Language Arts and Literacy.

The implementation of a 120-minute uninterrupted language arts literacy block was implemented in the classrooms of LEP students. The instruction during the literacy block was approached through the use of research-based identified successful practices, which included, but were not limited to, small group instruction, guided reading, literacy centers, word walls, journal writing, hands-on activities, use of manipulatives, thematic units, and a co-teaching approach. One might conclude from the study’s data that the characteristics of the instructional strategies implemented in the bilingual classrooms under study included, but were not limited to the following:

1. Having an instructional focus selected according to the needs of the student population as indicated by the students’ performance data.
2. Adequate instructional time for language and literacy skills.
3. Planned and delivered meaningful lessons organized around thematic units.

4. Use of an ongoing assessment system to identify the students' weaknesses, strengths, and needs to drive their instruction.

5. Small group and differentiated instruction according to the needs, interests, readiness, talents of each and every LEP student and placement determined by the ongoing assessments.

6. Appropriate use of instructional materials and manipulatives according to the instructional level of the students.

A close assessment of the study's results led to the conclusion that two major factors contributed to the effectiveness of the implementation of the aforementioned instructional successful practices. The participants' verbatim revealed that professional development and leadership support played a significant role in the development and implementation of the culture of successful practices and ultimately on student achievement. Very eloquently, a first grade teacher expressed having the support of her principal and reading coach when she stated,

...if the principal that you worked for makes you feel positive about what you're doing, and you hear that positive support, then you feel good and you project that. I have that. My co-teachers have that from our principal, and our reading coach, and now we're so confident that we don't have a problem doing this. We're already used to what needs to be done, the grade level meetings, the workshops. We share with each other, and we're just already used to it, and we feel that we've mastered it enough to the point where we don't feel threatened by it anymore.

A meaningful observation made by all of the participants was that without the quality and intensity of the professional development received, they would have not been

able to improve their teaching strategies and skills in order to meet the needs of their students. All teachers agreed on the fact that professional development was vital in the implementation of their instructional successful practices. Another first grade teacher made a key observation regarding the professional development received for the last three years,

We don't have one or two. It's an ongoing process, and we're constantly going to workshops, and we go by grade levels, which I like it very much, because you're able to meet with other teachers that are in your situation... We have received a lot from our literacy coach... and whenever we have a need we can always go to her, and ask her for any type of help. As well as our principal. Our principal is very open-minded. So if we have a certain situation we can always go to her as well...

Without a doubt, professional development and leadership support were key elements in the process of implementing instructional successful practices in the bilingual classrooms. From the data collected in this research study, it can be said that the use and effective implementation of the instructional strategies was possible due to the systemic, ongoing, meaningful, and data driven professional development and training offered to teachers and staff. According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2007) standards for teachers' professional development, district and schools must provide teachers with high-quality professional development that help them acquire "the content knowledge and teaching skills they need in the subjects they teach to effectively support student learning of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards" (p. 3).

Recognizing the effect that appropriate professional development can have on student achievement and in compliance with the state's standards and requirements for

professional development, the data indicated how the training and staff development offered by the district and schools participating in this study changed from traditional, isolated professional development practices to a more collaborative and data-based professional development.

There is testimony in the teachers' verbatim that the transformation of the district and school professional development offerings had major positive implications on teachers' training and use of the instructional identified successful practices. All the participants indicated how the revamped professional development contributed to their professional growth and improvement of their teaching practices. A particular comment made by the kindergarten teacher was the obvious fact about the innovative professional development approach, "It focuses on what we want to improve on... the district workshops were about meeting the needs of our children... and the job-embedded workshop basically deals with hands on."

The results of the data in agreement with the New Jersey Department of Education Standards for Professional Development led to the conclusion that effective professional development opportunities should include key elements in order to make a significant difference in teachers' professional growth and ultimately in students' academic achievement. Therefore, it is recommended that training and professional development should be based upon the following guidelines:

1. Teachers actively involved and engaged with their colleagues in daily job-embedded learning opportunities concerning the curriculum they teach and the instructional practices being implemented in their classrooms. Further, it can also be concluded that the learning opportunities and teachers' training organized by grade level

and instructional strategies were significant components to the collaborative professional development offered in both schools under study.

2. Teachers should use student data and classroom assessment that allow them to determine on a regular basis if student learning has been improved because of their new knowledge and skills. This in turn, will determine professional development needs.

3. Recognize the importance of skillful leaders in schools and at the district level who have a deep understanding of instruction, curriculum, assessment, and the organizational factors that affect student learning. Teachers must have input on the development and planning of their own staff development to identify their needs and design a plan that meets their needs.

4. Schools should allow time for staff to work and plan together. Common planning time so teachers can design powerful lessons with their peers, practice new teaching methods, share experiences, and solve problems collaboratively. Schools should make every effort to organize sets of teachers who share responsibility for the same students and provide them with time to meet and discuss individual students' strengths, weaknesses, and personal issues.

5. Team learning and holding all stakeholders accountable for student achievement and the provision of high-quality professional development. All teachers must be involved in the continuous, intellectually rigorous study of the content they teach and the ways they teach it. Teachers participating in this research study claimed that one of the most effective forms of professional development took place when they had opportunities to work together and learn from each other throughout the day. Teachers felt empowered

helping each other, became experts in a particular *successful practice* and then taught it to their colleagues.

6. Effective professional development makes the connection between subject matter and pedagogy. It expands teachers' repertoire of research-based instructional methods to teach that content and help students master new skills. Teachers need for opportunities to develop understandings of the subject matters and teaching and learning the subject matters consistent with the views embodied in the curriculum standards.

7. Professional development must be planned and developed around the specific needs and instructional focus of the school, as well as linked to the identified school improvement goals. Further, professional development should be assessed on a regular basis to determine how staff development resources are being used and how they might be better deployed to serve the professional development needs of teachers.

Leadership Support was fundamental in the creation and implementation of the culture of successful practices. Studies indicate that students' academic achievement and performance can soar under the influence of effective teachers, and they also demonstrate that principals are as important in obtaining good results. Dinham (2006) conducted a study on the effect that principals had in creating a culture of effective teaching and learning and found that principals indeed are responsible for creating the necessary conditions necessary for effective teaching and students' achievement.

Throughout the interviews, the participants revealed a great deal of information about the powerful influence of the Collegial School's principal that led to the teachers' effective implementation of their identified instructional successful practices. As described by the Collegial School's participants, their principal was open to change,

informed risk taker, friendly and approachable. The principal's leadership style was characterized by setting a tone, in which everyone worked collaboratively and she was the frontrunner of the process. The staff agreed with and followed through in leadership roles. She created a school climate where staff members bought into her initiatives and instructional practices and everyone was involved in the school's decision-making.

The consensus of all the Collegial School's participants was that their principal was highly influential in the development and implementation of a positive school culture and the culture of successful practices. A second grade teacher said that her principal,

...is not behind doors, not available. She's available. She's there, and I think that the fact that the parents can communicate to her in their own language makes a big, big difference... She participates in the workshops. She participates in the PTA meetings, so they feel welcomed.

The second grade teacher made important remarks regarding her principal's support and willingness to provide the teachers with the materials and resources needed to implement instruction. She reminisced about a fond memory in which,

I went and bought stamps. The Principal came. She saw the stamps, "Oh everybody should have them." So they went and they bought them for everybody. The tiles, I bought them. I was the first one in the building with them. What happened? Next thing I turned around and everybody had them, because they saw that it worked. It worked in my classroom.

According to Chrisman's (2005) study of successful schools, the principal of the Collegial School mirrors the characteristics of the principals analyzed in her study. Chrisman noted that principals of successful schools provided their teachers with

“structured support” and made time for teachers to work cooperatively. Further, the principals participated in teachers’ grade level meetings, were open to teachers’ feedback and were willing to assist teachers with their needs. The teachers in the successful schools referred to their principals as leaders actively engaged in the teaching-learning process. They used data to improve instruction in order to increase students’ achievement. Further, they modeled lessons and provided teachers with meaningful professional development. Without a doubt, the principal of the Collegial School meets the criteria for Chrisman’s successful school principals.

Dinham (2006) also looked at principals’ behaviors and according to his findings, it can be concluded that the principal of the Collegial School matched his characteristics of good principals and accordingly, she played a major and determining role in creating the culture of successful practices for effective teaching and learning.

González (1997) asserted that in schools with Latino students, the principal “sets the tone of respect, acceptance, and knowledge of sound instructional practice that result in high expectations” (p.3). Additionally, she recommended that principals should ensure that the school’s instructional program provides LEP students with native language instruction and English as a second language instruction, so they could be successful in an all-English classroom.

There is testimony in the Collegial School principal’s verbatim that indicates that her educational philosophy and training were aligned with the district’s new literacy initiatives and bilingual education, thus providing her with the basis to lead a school with a large student population of LEP students. As she shared, “Well, originally my experience is in Elementary Education. I taught for 11 years in elementary settings from

first grade thru fifth grade, and basically that is my background.” She taught LEP students in bilingual self-contained classrooms using the native language as the primary medium of instruction. She dealt with students from low socio-economic status and students who had many special needs, which were basically the characteristics of the students enrolled in the Collegial School.

Upon her arrival to the school, this principal’s mission was to change the existing traditional teaching-learning practices used by the teachers. Furthermore, the principal’s teaching and leadership experience, training and background knowledge in bilingual education were of significant importance in the creation and implementation of the culture of successful practices at the Collegial School. The principal was an active agent of change. Using a proactive and approachable leadership style, this principal worked collaboratively with the teachers and staff to effectively create and implement the culture of successful practices. On this note, she was quick to point out that,

Teachers whose strength is bilingual education would of course agree with my philosophy, because they’ve had that kind of training, and I find at sometimes teachers who are in bilingual classes might not have as extensive the training as I had, and all of the field work that I had. So it falls into my hands to give them professional development to let them know what I want them to do, because I know what has worked all these years, and what the research says, and I do back it up.

All participants agreed on the importance and effectiveness of strong parental involvement programs developed to establish a partnership between home and the schools. As evidenced by González (1997) a principal serving Latinos in a successful

urban school realized the need for a strong parent involvement in her elementary school. She invested time, energy, and effort in involving parents and training parents in understanding the school's curriculum. The parents were welcomed into the school, felt empowered and even took upon more civic responsibilities.

Throughout the interviews, the principal of the Collegial School presented clear evidence of her willingness and efforts in involving and empowering the parents. When asked about her feelings towards parents, she eloquently replied,

Well the school has be so open about what it does, and how we conduct classes, and what it is we do, and I've been so open about sharing with them scores from standardized testing, and just regular assignments the children take home that they are very, very receptive. They're in the building all the time, and they are welcomed. They have found their voice.

The consensus of all of the participants was that a strong partnership between school and home was established and a community-based project offered training for teachers, as well as for parents. As the participants described it, both schools participating in the study created different ways of involving parents and community members in the school. They provided parents with valuable information empowering them to learn and improve their English language and actively participating in their children's education.

The Collegial School's principal stressed the importance of the connection between parents being actively involved in their children's education, and the student's achievement. This principal expressed how important she considers the fact that the parents learn to value education. In fact, she acknowledged parents' awareness regarding the value of education, but according to her,

They learn to value it even more when you make them a part of it, and when you insist on informing them about all the things that you're doing in the school. I mean they can't help to find out what you're doing, so they begin to see it as not just a good thing, but as a valuable necessary thing in order for their children to do well in this country.

As the data unfolded and was analyzed, I ultimately concluded that an effective teaching-learning process in bilingual self-contained classrooms is a dynamic combination of expertise in a vast collection of successful practices along with a sensitive understanding of the individual needs of the LEP students and their specific needs at particular points in time. In general, the results were interpreted as a confirmation that the culture of successful practices is in fact a culture of schooling.

The data analysis suggests that the identified and selected successful practices can be the theoretical framework and guidelines for effective schools committed and willing to make a substantial difference in the overall achievement and success of LEP students. Using all the evidence found as a result of the data analysis, one implication stands above all: the culture of successful practices analyzed and described in this study is worth replicating in other schools and particularly in bilingual classrooms. In fact, the participants of the Collegial School proudly talked about the many visits from other schools within and out of district interested in seeing how well they implemented their instructional successful practices, so they could replicate it in their own schools and classrooms. The teachers also received compliments about their performance from the state department of education representatives who visited the school and took ideas to be shared with other districts. What follows is a brief account of the steps that could be

taken into consideration when developing and implementing the culture of successful practices:

1. Instruction in the students' native language
2. Study and analysis of students' data to identify the needs and areas of improvement, as well as the development of instructional strategies and successful practices designed to meet the needs of the student population.
3. Establish a school improvement plan committee to work with the principal in the assessment and improvement of the instructional culture of the school. The team would also develop and monitor the implementation of the school's identified successful practices and a school-wide instructional focus.
4. Develop a strong academic and instructional focus based on students' learning needs as indicated by different sources of data.
5. Identify and select actions and instructional strategies to be implemented on a daily basis, in order to support the schools' instructional focus and to address the needs of the students as indicated by their performance data. They might include:

Successful practices to support the instructional focus and to address the academic needs of the student population. The successful practices must be scientific research-based, such as, a 120 minute literacy block, small group and differentiated instruction, daily read alouds, storytelling, literacy centers, word walls, mapping strategies, and higher order thinking questioning.

A professional development plan aligned with the needs and interests of the teachers and students, the academic focus, and the instructional strategies selected and implemented in the school.

A Literacy Coach to assist teachers during the language literacy block on a daily basis.

Materials and supplies to facilitate the implementation of their academic focus and successful practices.

Classroom libraries that contain between 200 and 300 books selected around the themes of each grade level across the curriculum. These books were developmentally appropriate and met the reading abilities of the students.

6. Walkthroughs intended to observe, monitor, and study the evidence and rigor of the use and implementation of the school's instructional focus and successful practices.

7. Strong Leadership support.

8. Parental involvement as a very strong component.

In general, the interpretation of the results led to believe that when bilingual teachers use and implement the studied successful practices, they maximize the educational opportunities of the LEP students. LEP students exposed to the identified successful practices will reap the benefits of using them in their bilingual classrooms.

It is important to note that the study was conducted in the primary bilingual grades of two elementary schools. However, taking into account the participants' responses and information about the creation and implementation of the culture of successful practices, one can conclude that the question as to whether the culture is worth replicating has been answered. It is! This research study can certainly declare that the combination of all of the components previously described provide the foundation to create the culture of successful practices. It is not the intent to refer to the culture of

successful practices as a cookie-cutter in the teaching-learning process of LEP students. Nevertheless, as the data were analyzed and described, the findings promise to afford bilingual teachers with strategies to meet the needs of LEP students. Further, it presents opportunities for other schools and bilingual classrooms to make positive changes that will benefit the overall functioning of a school and classroom settings, but most of all, it affords LEP students a chance to benefit from the implementation of an effective school culture, such as the culture of successful practices.

Moreover, this study is not intended to be a tool that answers all questions about the creation and implementation of the culture of successful practices in schools and bilingual classrooms. Rather, it aims to provide a theoretical framework and guidelines that must be interpreted by individual districts, school principals, and teachers in accordance to their unique situation and circumstances. Therefore, the question as to how the culture could be created and implemented must be answered by the stakeholders responsible for the implementation. However, one can say that students' performance, data analysis, and teachers' input are fundamental in identifying the needs of the schools to then, select the successful practices to be implemented to address those needs.

On a deeper level, the common threads for a successful creation and implementation of a school culture conducive to the academic achievement of LEP students, such as the culture of successful practices, were a school climate of collaboration and commitment, strong instructional leadership, and high quality professional development and training.

Indeed, a key element of the culture of successful practices was the ongoing collaborative learning and systemic professional development offered to all teachers and

staff members of both participating schools. It was through the training and professional development that teachers learned and strengthened the ability and effectiveness of implementing the identified successful practices. The real difference was made by the kind of professional development and training teachers engaged in, which was aligned with the schools' instructional focus, improvement goals, and successful practices.

One of the most innovating approaches to professional development used in both participating schools was job-embedded learning. Through this type of training, the teachers learned as they engaged in their daily teaching activities and exchanged personal teaching experiences during grade level meetings. This training method is supported by Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) who stated that "job-embedded learning is learning by doing, reflecting on the experience, and then generating and sharing new insights and learning with oneself and others" (p. 9).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Teachers

The findings of this research study lead one to infer that effective and successful teaching in bilingual classrooms is a dynamic combination of teachers' knowledge about instructional strategies and their application with an awareness of the needs of each and every student in different areas and at different points in time.

While it is not the intention of this research study to identify instructional strategies that work with every student in every class, it is the purpose to recommend teachers which strategies have been used and have a good chance of working well with LEP students. Individual bilingual teachers must determine and decide which strategies to

use and implement with their students according to their needs as determined by their academic performance data.

In short, the decision to replicate the culture of successful practices or any other school reform model should be based upon the data generated by the school where the culture will be implemented. The process of data analysis indicates the areas in need of improvement and provides guidance as to the culture to be created and implemented according to the needs of the student population. Data should not only drive instruction, but also guide professional development for the teachers, as well as the selection of materials needed for effective implementation of the culture of successful practices.

It is recommended that bilingual teachers take into consideration the following guidelines when organizing, planning, and delivering instruction in their bilingual classrooms:

1. Participate in continuous high-quality professional development and training.
2. Teachers should collaborate with their peers and work together to achieve similar goals.
3. Instruction should be carefully planned, purposeful and follow a coordinated instructional scope and sequence.
4. Instructional content and pacing should be adapted to the individual needs of students and/or small group of students.
5. Instruction should be data-driven and constantly monitored to address the needs of the students.
6. Provide small group and differentiated instruction to meet the individual needs of students and/or small group of students.

7. The instruction of academic content should be organized in thematic units.
8. Use of modeling and hands-on learning activities

Recommendations for Administrators

School principals should see and consider LEP students as an integral component of the student population of their school. Further, they should assume full responsibility in seeking and incorporating into the school's academic programs the most effective instructional strategies that address the needs and maximize the academic achievement of their LEP students.

González (1997) described the efforts made by the principal of Ysleta Elementary school in El Paso, Texas, in transforming the school into a successful urban school. In order to serve the needs of their LEP students, the school follows a "late-exit transitional bilingual model" adopted by the district. According to this model, although the students may be classified as fluent English proficient, they remain in the late-exit program through sixth grade. According to research, students have shown greater achievement gains, positive impact on self-esteem and cultural pride when remaining in late-exit programs as compared to their counterparts in early-exit models (Ramirez, cited in González, 1997).

According to Collier's (as cited in Gonzalez, 1997) studies,

...late-exit bilingual education programs that continue through the upper elementary grades to provide first language academic instruction, along with balanced second language academic instruction, language minority students can also maintain their academic success at the secondary level, even when the instruction in middle and high school is delivered exclusively through the second

language. Academic language gained in first language transfers to the second language. Thus, the more students have received high quality education in the first language, the deeper their knowledge base across the two languages. Even though language minority students may be segregated from English speakers in this type of program, they are able to build the self-confidence and academic skills needed to succeed in secondary school contexts all in the second language. (p. 8)

In agreement with scientific research, it is of utmost importance that school administrators understand that teaching bilingual students in their native language leads to transferring skills and concepts into a second language. As the Collegial School's Principal advocated, "it's always good that the administrator understands that this transfer is not only possible, but also necessary." Moreover, School Administrators must be able to provide teachers with the professional development about different ways to present information to students where they can make connections and transfers from their first to their second language.

Effective instructional leaders should be willing and committed to providing an effective bilingual education as a fundamental constituent of the school's curriculum. Additionally, instructional leaders should be sensitive to the needs of their LEP students and cognizant of recent literature and research regarding bilingual education issues and successful research-based instructional practices leading to their academic achievement.

Effective instructional leaders should make every effort to create the conditions, which will make the transition from the LEP students' vernacular to second language as smooth and as psychologically harmless as possible. They should participate in professional development that assists them in creating a school culture conducive to the

academic achievement and success of their LEP students. Principals should participate in and share the teachers' professional development, so they know what they have been trained to do. Many times principals have their own agendas and they want certain things to be done certain way, but the teachers have been taught to do it differently.

According to recent data collected by e-Lead (2007), a free online resource offering information about quality professional development for principals, the traditional kinds of professional development, such as workshops and conferences, are not very effective. Further, they claimed that due to time constraints, principals do not have the time to attend workshops or to apply what they learned from them into their daily leadership profession. Job-embedded training is their suggested solution to the problem. This alternative to professional development offers school leaders with opportunities for learning on-the-job, without "setting aside a separate time to learn." Job-embedded is also cost-effectively when compared to the fees of educational consultants hired to conduct training.

Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) proposed various formal structures to promote job-embedded training and professional development. Among elements such as the selection of instructional strategies and the teachers' willingness to implement them in their classrooms, the one factor that surfaced as the most influential component of an effective culture of successful practices was the meaningful opportunities for professional development. Professional development and training was vital in the teachers' process of buying into the new culture and proper implementation of the culture.

In short, based on the observations, it can be said that professional development was one of the main elements that made a great difference and lead to the effective

development and implementation of the culture of successful practices. According to the results of the study, the revamped professional development created and offered by the district and school studied was systematic, ongoing, and meaningful; traits missing in previous traditional staff development offerings.

According to the interviews of the Collegial School's principal and the comments made by the participating teachers of the neighboring school, it can be said that they not only participated in but also provided teachers with job-embedded opportunities, so they all could improve instruction. The following vignette is an example of a job-embedded experience described by the Collegial School's principal:

Well we had the faculty meetings in classrooms, and one particular meeting the literacy coach, the facilitator, myself sat at different areas in a classroom, and students, which were the teachers came in, and were assigned particular groups to sit in for that day as if they were student in our class, and at the end of the 15-20 minute rotation the buzzer rang, they had to get up move to the next station, and learn whatever it was that we were presenting to them at the next station. They were very surprised, because they saw that not only could it be done, but also that it would take some effort, but also that it could be done as a group.

From the previous job-embedded scenario, one can surmise that teachers engaged in hands-on professional development. Additionally, according to the participants, they participated in study groups, where small number of teachers got together to read literature about and/or discuss topics of common interest, such as literacy centers, cooperative learning, guided reading, use of native language instruction, et al. As it was the case of the neighboring school, teachers visited their neighbor Collegial School to

observe their model small group instruction and literacy centers approach to teach reading. As Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) noted, in the process of study groups, teachers increase their knowledge, develop new strategies and awareness before implementing the new approach in their classrooms.

Action research is another approach to job-embedded training. According to Reed (2002), through action research teachers examine their unique educational practices and/or specific classroom problems systematically using the techniques of research. Action research consists of the following phases: problem identification, data collection, analysis of data, findings and development of a plan of action.

From the findings of the research, it can be concluded that action research gives teachers the skills needed to work on problems specific to their classrooms and their schools. Likewise, participating teachers and principals worked collaboratively on problems they identified. Teachers also worked with their colleagues and principal in their professional development.

Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) recommended action research to educators wanting to explore different methods of instruction and to find what works best for their students. Further, authors Davis, Resta, Miller and Fortman (1999) noted that in recent years, teachers have discovered and recognized action research as an effective way to find answers to questions related to their classroom's needs. According to their studies, it is through action research that teachers have found ways to strengthen their teaching strategies to become better teachers and to improve their teaching practices. They recommended novice teachers to engage in the process of inquiry and action research during their formative years of teaching.

In 1993 the Southwest Texas State University established “The Teacher Fellows Program,” a field-based graduate program to provide strong induction support to new teachers. The program fosters collaborative action research between novice teachers, mentors, and university faculty (as cited in Davis, Resta, Miller & Fortman, 1999). Over the years, novice teachers in this program have consistently demonstrated that they can, and should, become involved in action research from the very start of their teaching careers.

Teachers who participated in The Teacher Fellows Program indicated that collaborative action research afforded them with benefits, such as, developing problem-solving abilities, becoming self-aware of their own behavior and/or that of their students during the process of instruction, growing professionally as teachers, building self-confidence in their teaching skills, and foreseen and developing new goals for continued research.

As described, action research provides experienced and new teachers with the tools needed to deal with the challenging issues that educators face in diverse classrooms as the bilingual classrooms studied in this research project. Therefore, it is highly recommended that school and central office administrators incorporate action research as an approach to professional development and training for teachers, as well as mentoring and induction opportunities for new teachers.

It was interesting to note that participating teachers, reading coaches, and principals of the two schools expressed statements embedded throughout the interviews, which raised questions about the students’ performance. Through action research they found answers and ways to improve the teaching-learning process and in particular

teaching reading to LEP students. Teachers, then, implemented changes and continued gathering research data to determine if the new approaches were effective. As Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) claimed, action research was an excellent way of helping educators to find out how to teach reading to LEP students in both participating schools.

Along these lines, the appointment of reading coaches to assist, guide, model, and help teachers with the implementation of the culture of successful practices was key and very important in determining teachers' willingness to first, buy into the new culture and second, being able to use them effectively. Reading Coaches were instrumental in establishing job-embedded opportunities for teachers. Perhaps school administrators and central office supervisors should consider appointing reading coaches when staffing their schools. As it was demonstrated in this research study, the reading coaches played a proactive role in implementing the culture of successful practices leading to improved classroom reading instruction and students' achievement.

The reading coaches were an integral part of the high-quality professional development offered to teachers in the study. As suggested by The Teacher Fellows Program (as cited in Davis, Resta, Miller & Fortman, 1999), the reading coaches provided teachers with "intensive and continuous on-site support" (¶8), so that teachers could learn and apply "first-hand" the benefits of action research in their classrooms. They provided all teachers with information, in-class support, feedback, lesson demonstrations, ongoing assistance, and data analysis to drive instruction and professional development. The reading coaches and teachers engaged in activities leading to their own learning. Along these lines, Wood and Killion (1998) believed that although not recognized as formal professional development, very often educators participate in

job-embedded learning to improve instructional practice and student performance.

Authors Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. (1999) expanded on the concept of Wood and Killion's job-embedded activities, which serves to confirm the role that the reading coaches played in organizing plenty of job-embedded professional development opportunities for the teachers in both schools. Teachers, principals, and coaches participated in planning, task, and problem-solving groups to learn new content, skills, and clarify their professional beliefs and values. Faculty and grade level meetings also provided teachers with opportunities for promoting professional growth and training. Teachers were able to share their best teaching practices and experiences. Teachers shared with their colleagues information received in workshops. A second grade teacher noted that the information received in their professional development was "passed on from one person to the other." This statement is illustrated by her description of a personal experience:

I'm going to a writing workshop right now, and the presenter is so good... So now I have to present to my colleagues, but of course, I'm not going to do it in the same way that is was presented to me. I'm probably going to cut this out, cut that out, and present what I understood, and what I'm excited about.

They discussed successes and instructional practices related to their school instructional focus and selected successful practices being implemented in their classrooms. They helped each other solve instructional problems and offered alternative solutions to those problems. As Wood and McQuarrie, Jr. pointed out, the emphasis of the teachers' meetings should be on "sharing and expanding the use of the best practices, knowledge, and skills that already exist within the school" (p.13). Hence, one can

conclude that the reading coaches are valuable and meaningful resources and facilitators for the effective implementation of a new culture, such as the culture of successful practices.

If outside educational consultants are hired to conduct professional development in schools, it is strongly recommended that professional development presenters and consultants be cognizant of the district and schools' curriculum, policy, identified teaching strategies and how they want them implemented in the classrooms. Knowing what the district and/or the school are about, they would be able to present the right information and design the training according to the district, the school, and teachers' needs and interests.

Instructional leaders should also make on-going professional development and training available to bilingual teachers tailored specifically for them on language acquisition issues. As the study's data collected suggested, school principals should provide meaningful professional development. It would be preferred if the professional development was given by former teachers, who have dealt with the same type of student population and the same educational issues of the teachers receiving the professional development.

Additionally, it was suggested that the training should be offered early in the school year, so teachers could start applying and implementing the professional development ideas and recommendations early in the year. Teachers highly recommended that principals provided enough opportunities for follow-ups, continuous support, and guidance in the application and implementation of professional development. Thus, teachers will know whether or not the application of their training is

appropriate. Further, they will afford golden opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas and classroom experiences regarding the outcomes of their professional development implementation.

School principals should provide teachers with training and professional development on all the different school's requirements and/or new initiatives. According to the data collected, school principals, often times, require that teachers use specific strategies in their daily instruction and/or approach instruction differently, but do not offer the appropriate training for teachers to effectively comply with the requirements.

The involvement of parents in the education and functioning of both schools under study were noteworthy. The school principals supported the students' families and allowed them to become an important part of their school communities. Their open door policy and appreciation of the parents' culture is worth replicating in other schools wishing to create a school environment of belonging and approval for all families and community members. A partnership established between home and school can only be an advantage to the success of the entire school community.

The teachers praised the use of thematic units, so they could teach a particular concept, skill or topic across the curriculum. However, they expressed their concern regarding the schedules and wished administrators were more flexible when teachers were not following their schedule. One of the teachers stated,

...it's a challenge, because of you know just conflicts, and scheduling, or perhaps building administrators want you to stop at a specific time, because that period is over. That's one of the challenges and difficulties that we face that if only administrators can fully understand that just because the bell rang that does

not mean that the teaching just ended, because you really can... I say, what's the word, not damage, but you can really interrupt that thought process, and we do, do some damage, I guess in a way.

The teacher suggested that it would be very helpful and teachers would feel more comfortable if the school leaders understood that in spite of the schedules and the time allotment the teachers must follow, they also try to develop activities and lessons in an effort to integrate content areas that may go overtime and at times override the schedule. Teachers do not want to feel the pressure or "so constricted" in following the times and schedules that if they are off schedule, and the principal or assistant principal pass by, they would not get in trouble and the administrators would be able to understand that as long as the students are engaged in learning, the times or schedules are not a big deal.

Teachers must have effective and appropriate materials, supplies, and resources available in order to plan and implement meaningful lesson and learning activities for all the students. As the Literacy Coach of the Collegial School stated, "unfortunately the bilingual students did not get their fair share with materials, because we know that the materials just aren't as elaborate, or as much as they are for the English speakers, but they have improved, and it is coming around (Interview 3). The literacy coach's statement is an eye-opening look into the acquisition of materials for bilingual teachers to use with their LEP students.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

In discussing the third grade bilingual students' assessment, the teacher argued the regulation that mandated that all students, from grades 3 and up, be tested in English, regardless of the language in which they were being taught. In spite of her students taking

the district-wide standardized test in their native language, often times the students cannot demonstrate their proficiency in neither English nor Spanish. The following is a third grade bilingual teacher's analysis of her students' assessment procedures,

The SUPERA does target more open-ended. Although, and this is where the frustration comes in, my students that are bilingual have to take the NJASK if they've been in bilingual education for more than three years, though excuse me this is different, if they've been in the school for more than a year, then they take the full battery of the NJASK, and the survey portion of the SUPERA. So what happens is then in the NJASK they have to do the writing in English which they're no near ready for, or capable of, but because they've taken the full tests in NJASK they only take the abbreviated version of SUPERA where the writing has been eliminated. So they have no opportunity to prove, or to show how they can write in their native language, and that's very frustrating for them as well as for me, because then how can you show, well they didn't do well in English, but this is how they did in Spanish when it's not a full, it's not complete battery test just a survey.

As stated by the teacher, federal and state mandates demand accountability through rigorous standards and standardized tests that assess students, schools, and teachers. Nonetheless, De León and Holman (2002) believed that "...standardized tests underestimate minority students' abilities" (p.191). As they explained, various factors, such as, language, cultural differences, socio-economic status, acculturation rate and stress, and biases embedded in the tests, indeed, have a negative impact on LEP students' performance and validity of test scores. Without being able to take these factors into

consideration, schools must administer standardized tests like NJASK 3 in English to all students, including LEP students even those who have been in the country for as little as one year. As Ochoa and Ochoa (2007) pointed out,

The stakes of these tests are high for students and schools. Students are labeled based on their test performance, and with high school exit examinations, students may be prevented from graduating. If schools do not meet their targeted competency scores, they face various sanctions that divert money and resources away from them to pay for students to transfer to other schools, or schools may be taken over by the state or closed entirely.

School districts should take into consideration the different factors affecting LEP students' testing performance and perhaps offer alternative ways of assessment.

Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) assert that in best practice classrooms, teachers go beyond traditional ways of assessing their students; they promote the use of more practical and authentic forms of assessment. Teachers participating in this research study had no choice but using the standardized tests mandated by the state and the district. However, they also monitor their students' growth and progress through anecdotal, running records and student's portfolios. These instruments are used in parents' conferences, to drive instruction and to differentiate the students' instruction.

In the same way that alternative assessment instruments should be considered when evaluating LEP students, Tinajero, Hurley, and Lozano (as cited in González, M.L., Huerta-Macías, A., & Tinajero, J.V., 2001) noted that a new approach of language and literacy has emerged in the last decade and as a result, educators had to adapt and adopt instructional strategies in regular and bilingual classrooms where LEP students receive

instruction in both Spanish and English. As the authors explained, the instructional practices and strategies have shifted to a student-centered and an integrated, literacy and language arts curriculum.

Board of Education members, superintendents, school administrators, and all educational stakeholders must keep abreast of current research and the new trends in education to ensure comprehensive and sound educational programs are being implemented, so their students receive the best education possible and are not left behind. As it was indicated in this research study and aligned with literacy instruction in the first and second language suggested by Goodman, (1986) and Roser and Hoffman (1993) (as cited in González, Huerta-Macías, & Tinajero, 2001), literacy instruction in schools providing bilingual education should focus on:

(a) Teaching the what, how, and when of comprehension through holistic and strategic approaches, (b) reading skills being recast as part of the strategies employed during meaningful reading contexts, (c) instruction involving student-teacher dialogue and interaction with the students actively engaged, (d) instruction focused on the reader –on his/her constructing meaning by interacting with text, (e) an emphasis on modeling the process of comprehending where risk taking and learning from mistakes are encouraged, and (f) strategies taught using authentic text and original, unadapted literature. (p. 145)

In the same way that literacy instruction has changed, ESL traditional instructional strategies have shifted from established units taught in a structured, sequenced curriculum where the student is a passive recipient of information to instructional techniques that promote the student's active participation in language

development. Opportunities are created for students to develop and manipulate language freely, as well as to participate in meaningful and rigorous activities while learning English (González, Huerta-Macías, & Tinajero, 2001).

Updated programs and shifts in educational trends require trained personnel and well prepared teachers to deliver instruction according to the requirements and mandates of the instructional programs, strategies and curriculum being implemented. The district personnel in charge of hiring teachers have the responsibility of selecting educators who are prepared, trained, and willing to provide the best educational experiences for our students. In turn, all institutions preparing future teachers must ensure that teachers exhibit positive behaviors that support student learning and development. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Excellence (NCATE, 2007) outlined the professional dispositions and behaviors as used in teacher education. Further, NCATE urges institutions to assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational institutions.

Members of NCATE (2007) in a social justice statement declared that at least since *Brown v Board of Education* in 1954, United States has struggled to provide equal educational opportunity to all children. These requirements are translated into social justice demanding appropriate action to fulfill those promises by assuring high quality education for all children.

According to NCATE (2007) a well-prepared teacher is a key-factor and an essential element of high quality education. NCATE was established in 1954 to develop rigorous standards as a yardstick for teacher training and preparation as well as to evaluate institutions according to those standards. NCATE's standards require that

teachers demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions to work successfully with students of all races, disabilities, ethnic and socio-economic groups.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that school districts ensure that all their educators are prepared in institutions that meet NCATE's performance-based unit and program standards. Along these lines, NCATE (2007) requires that, "School districts and state authorities assure that every child has a caring, qualified, and effective teacher" (§16). Further, to close the existent achievement gap based on students' race, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status all students must be educated by teachers and support personnel that meet the professional standards outlined by NCATE. "When the education profession, the public and policymakers demand that all children be taught by well-prepared teachers, then no child will be left behind and social justice will be advanced" (NCATE, 2007, §17).

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings as well as the limitations of this study bring forth some fruitful and interesting possible avenues for future research that might be needed in relation to the topic of the study. The most important avenue for future research obviously lies in continuing investigating the development, use and implementation of successful practices in bilingual self-contained classrooms.

A more thorough understanding of the culture of successful practices from other researcher's perspective could be achieved by considering the connections, implications, and interplay of the culture's elements more explicitly. However, in this research the decision was made to explicitly separate the elements so that they each could be examined individually. This detachment can be seen to provide a first step towards

developing a rationale for understanding the need and importance of developing a program that helps LEP students reach high levels of reading, language proficiency and academic achievement. The next step would be to create a program incorporating the interconnections between the elements and to implement the actual program as interplay of these elements.

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Appendix A

Letter of Solicitation for a Research Study

Gloria P. Vargas
5 Cambridge Road
Wharton, New Jersey 07885
Tel: 973 · 607 · 1547
Email: GVEducator@aol.com

Letter of Solicitation for a Research Study

Dear Participant:

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University, where I am working under the supervision of Dr. Juan Cobarrubias in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy.

My doctoral dissertation study aims to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of teachers' identified scientific research-based *instructional best practices* in the teaching-learning process of reading in self-contained kindergarten through second grade bilingual classrooms.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Your contribution will assist me in determining if your participation in the culture of *instructional best practices* is in fact effective and ensure a successful educational experience of LEP students in American schools. The length of your participation in this research study is of about four hours.

You will participate in at least four interviews, of about one hour each. The interviews will be tape-recorded with your permission and will be scheduled at the time and location of your convenience. The interviews will focus on the following issues:

- The use of students' native language in the teaching-learning process
- The selection and implementation of *identified instructional best practices* in teaching reading to LEP students
- Professional development and training offered in order to effectively use and implement *instructional best practices*
- The role and support of the School Leader in the implementation process of *identified instructional best practices*

Your participation in the research study is completely voluntary. Please be aware that you are entitled to refuse or discontinue participation at any time, without penalties or consequences.

All information gathered from the interviews will be treated under the strictest guidelines to protect your identity and the confidentiality of the data. You will not be identified in the study. All the participants' responses will be combined in the analysis and description of data. In the dissertation report you will be referred as "Participant A, B, C, etc."

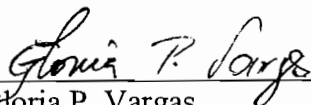
The data will be kept in a safe, secured and locked place to guarantee confidentiality. Only the researcher, her mentor, and committee members will have access to the participants' information. Upon completion of the study, the data will be kept in a safe, secured and locked place for three years and then destroyed.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this research study. I will be contacting you in the next few days regarding this request for participation. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me, if you have any questions or concerns, at school 973-591-6749.

Your voluntary participation in this study will contribute to the existing literature regarding the use of native language and the implementation of *instructional best practices* in teaching reading to LEP students in bilingual self-contained classrooms. Further, it will also provide educational facts to teachers, educational leaders, and policy makers regarding professional development and the resources necessary to ensure a successful educational experience of LEP students in American schools.

Thank you in advance for considering this request.

Sincerely,


Gloria P. Vargas

Appendix B
Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form
**Interviews on *Identified and Implemented Instructional Best Practices* in
Reading Instruction to LEP Students**

1. Researcher's Affiliation:

Gloria P. Vargas is a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University, working under the supervision of Dr. Juan Cobarrubias in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy.

2. Purpose of the Study and Duration of Subject's Participation

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of identified scientific research-based *instructional best practices* in the teaching-learning process of reading in self-contained kindergarten through second grade bilingual classrooms.

The length of participation of each subject in this research study is of about four hours.

3. Description of the Procedures:

Each subject will take part in at least four tape-recorded interviews of about one hour each. The interviews will be scheduled at the time and location of the subject's convenience.

The interviews will focus on the following issues:

- The use of students' native language in the teaching-learning process
- The selection and implementation of *identified instructional best practices* in teaching reading to LEP students
- Professional development and training offered in order to effectively use and implement *instructional best practices*
- The role and support of the School Leader in the implementation process of *identified instructional best practices*

4. Instruments Used in the Research:

Recorded interviews and subject's artifacts (lesson plans, teacher's created instructional materials, reading curriculum, etc.).

5. Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Subject's participation in the research study is completely voluntary. The subject is entitled to refuse or discontinue participation at any time, without penalties or consequences of any kind.

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 22 2006

Approval Date

College of Education and Human Services

Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy

Tel: 973.761.9397

400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Expiration Date

MAR 22 2007

6. Anonymity Statement:

The researcher will interview the participants face to face. Therefore, they cannot be anonymous. However, the interviews will be treated under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants. The participants will not be identified in the data collection or research process. Only the researcher, her mentor, and committee members will have access to the information. All the participants' responses will be combined in the analysis and description of data.

7. Confidentiality of Data:

All information and data gathered from the interviews will be treated under the strictest guidelines of confidentiality. To protect the subject's identity, he/she will be identified as "Participant A, B, C, etc." Only the researcher, her mentor, and committee members will have access to the data. The information collected from the subjects will be combined in the analysis and description of data in order to avoid any connection between data and informants.

8. Access to Data

The data will be kept in a safe, secured and locked place to guarantee confidentiality. Only the researcher and her advisor will have access to the subject's information. Upon completion of the study, the data will be kept in a safe, secured and locked place for three years and then destroyed.

9. Participant's Possible Risks or Discomforts:

Participation in this study will not anticipate any risks or discomforts to the participants.

10. Participant's Benefits:

The subject's participation in this study will contribute to the existing literature regarding the use of native language and the implementation of *instructional best practices* in teaching reading to LEP students in bilingual self-contained classrooms. Further, it will also provide educational facts to teachers, educational leaders, and policy makers regarding professional development and the resources necessary to ensure a successful educational experience of LEP students in American schools. Subjects should not expect any other kinds of direct benefits.

Expiration Date

MAR 22 2007

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 22 2006

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
Tel: 973.761.9397
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Approval Date

11. Remuneration:

Subjects will not receive a monetary compensation for their participation in the study.

12. Participant's Possible Stress or Psychological Harm:

Participation in this study will not cause undue stress, discomfort, or psychological harm to the participants. However, if the participant experiences undue stress, he/she must seek the assistance of the local community mental health clinic.

13. Alternative Procedures:

This research study does not require and/or use medical or psychological treatments. Therefore, a disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment to the subject's advantage does not apply.

14. Contact Information:

For any questions regarding this study, please contact:

1). Researcher: Gloria Vargas

School No. 5 or SHU information in No. 2
168 Monroe Street
Passaic, N.J. 07055
Tel. 973-591-6749

2). Researcher's Faculty Advisor: Dr. Juan Cobarrubias

Seton Hall University
Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, N.J. 07079
Tel: 973-761-9390

3.) Office of the Institutional Review Board

Presidents Hall – 3rd Floor
400 South orange Avenue
South Orange, N.J. 07079
Tel. 973-313-6314

Expiration Date

MAR 22 2007

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 22 2006

Approval Date

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
Tel: 973.761.9397
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

15. Tape-Recorded Interviews:

Upon the subject's approval and written permission, the researcher will record the interviews. The subject will be identified as "Participant A, B, C, etc." and has the right to listen to the tapes and to request deletion of any or all segment(s) of the interview(s). The tapes will be kept in a safe and secured place, and will be destroyed at the end of the study. Transcriptions of the recording will be maintained for three years following completion of the research.

The participant has received a copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent Form.

Participant

Date

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 22 2006

Approval Date

Expiration Date

MAR 22 2007

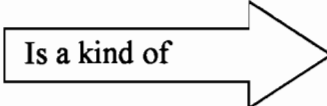
Appendix C
Domain Analysis Worksheets

Domain Analysis #1

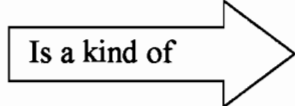
1. Semantic Relationship: Strict Inclusion

2. Form: X (is a kind of) Y

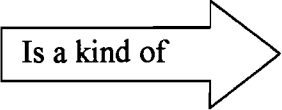
3. Example: Guided Reading is a kind of Literacy Centers

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Guided reading</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Literacy Centers</u>
<u>Wiggle Works</u>		
<u>Independent reading</u>		
<u>Reading library</u>		
<u>Writing</u>	<u>Listening</u>	<u>ELD/ESL</u>
<u>Vocabulary</u>	<u>Spelling</u>	<u>Skills</u>
<u>Math</u>	<u>Technology</u>	<u>Word study</u>

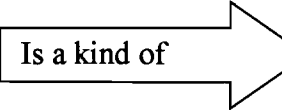
Structural Questions: What other kinds of Literacy Centers are there in your classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Transitional</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Students</u>
<u>Bilingual</u>		
<u>Monolingual</u>		
<u>Special education</u>		
<u>In-class support</u>	<u>Visually impaired</u>	
<u>Gifted and talented</u>	<u>504</u>	
<u>Mexican</u>	<u>Dominican</u>	

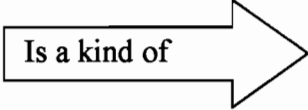
Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of students in your classroom/school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Co-teaching</u>		<u>Instructional Strategies</u>
<u>Bilingual Education</u>		
<u>Native language instruction</u>		
<u>ESL</u>		
<u>Learning centers</u>		
<u>Graphic organizers</u>		
<u>Small groups</u>		
<u>Poetry prompts</u>		
<u>Guided reading</u>		
<u>Intervention</u>		
	<u>Buddy reading</u>	
	<u>Independent reading</u>	
	<u>Thematic units</u>	
	<u>Read alouds</u>	

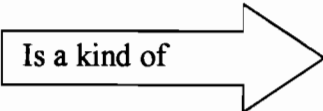
Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of instructional strategies do you use?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Narrative</u>		<u>Writing</u>
<u>Comparison & contrasting</u>		
<u>Persuasive</u>		
<u>Creative</u>		
<u>Invented spelling</u>		

Structural Questions: What are the different types of writing do students engage in?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>A School Instructional Focus</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Research-Based</u> <u>Best Practices</u>
<u>Small group instruction</u>		
<u>Differentiated instruction</u>		
<u>Native language instruction</u>		
<u>Literacy centers</u>		<u>Classroom libraries</u>
<u>90-minute literacy block</u>		<u>Word walls</u>
<u>Guided reading</u>		<u>Shared reading</u>
<u>Independent reading</u>		<u>Read alouds</u>
<u>Parent involvement</u>		<u>Grade level meetings</u>
<u>Thematic units</u>		<u>Journal writing</u>
<u>Hands-on activities</u>		<u>Mapping strategies</u>
<u>Co-Teaching approach</u>		

Structural
Questions: What are the different best practices implemented in your school classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Use of native language</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Intervention</u> <u>Strategies</u>
<u>Small group instruction</u>		
<u>Guided reading</u>		
<u>Learning centers</u>		
<u>Buddy reading</u>		
<u>Visual connections</u>		<u>Read alouds</u>
<u>Independent reading</u>		<u>Wiggle Works</u>

Structural
Questions: What are the different Reading Intervention Strategies used in your school/classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>BSI Teachers</u> <u>ESL Teachers</u> <u>Literacy/Reading coach</u> <u>Special education teachers</u> <u>Special Ed. literacy coach</u> <u>Math coach</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div>	<u>Co-Teachers</u>
	<u>ELD master teacher</u> <u>Para-Professionals</u>	

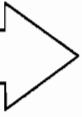
Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of Co-Teachers in a classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Making connections</u> <u>Schema</u> <u>Visualization</u> <u>Questioning</u> <u>Bloom's Taxonomy Questions</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div>	<u>Comprehension Strategies</u>

Structural Questions: What other kinds of comprehension strategies do teachers use in the classroom?

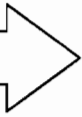
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Magnetic letters</u> <u>Pictures</u> <u>Counting bears</u> <u>Sentence strips</u> <u>Tiles</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div>	<u>Manipulatives</u>
	<u>Linking Cubes</u> <u>Flashcards</u>	

Structural Questions: What other kinds of manipulatives do you use in the classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Spanish books</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Classroom Library</u> <u>Books</u>
<u>Chapter books</u>		
<u>Biographies</u>		
<u>Sports</u>		
<u>Fairytales</u>	<u>Novels</u>	
<u>Fiction & Non-Fiction</u>	<u>Animal books</u>	
<u>Thematic units</u>	<u>Science books</u>	
<u>Astronomy</u>	<u>Careers</u>	
<u>Social Skills</u>	<u>Poetry</u>	

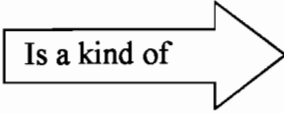
Structural

Questions: What types of books do you have in your library?

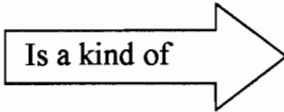
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>About ourselves</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Thematic Units</u>
<u>The Community</u>		
<u>The Family</u>		
<u>The Spirit of the Season</u>		
<u>The Seasons</u>	<u>A New Beginning</u>	
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Nursery Rhymes</u>	
<u>Animals</u>	<u>Sea Animals</u>	

Structural

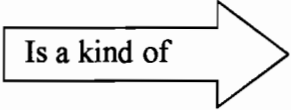
Questions: What kinds of thematic units do you develop and implement?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Reading materials</u>		<u>Professional</u> <u>Development</u>
<u>Model videos</u>		
<u>Internet research</u>		
<u>Local college workshops</u>		
<u>District workshops</u>		
<u>Reading coach's workshops</u>		
<u>Principal's workshops</u>		
<u>Master teachers' workshops</u>		
<u>In-House / Job-embedded</u>		
<u>Colleagues's workshops</u>		
	<u>Faculty meetings</u>	
	<u>Extended Mondays</u>	
	<u>Grade level meetings</u>	
	<u>EAP workshops</u>	

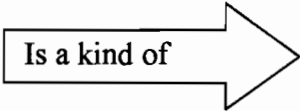
Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of professional development opportunities ?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term		
<u>Games</u>		<u>Teaching/Learning</u> <u>Materials</u>		
<u>Webs</u>				
<u>Leveled readers</u>				
<u>Flash cards</u>				
<u>Charts</u>				
<u>Computers</u>				
<u>Leap Frogs</u>				
			<u>Graphic organizers</u>	
			<u>Manipulatives</u>	
			<u>Basal & leveled readers</u>	

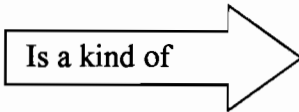
Structural Questions: What kind of teaching/learning materials do you use?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Total Physical Response</u>		<u>ESL</u>
<u>SIOP Model</u>		<u>Strategies</u>
<u>Manipulatives</u>		
<u>Vocabulary cards</u>		
<u>Picture cards</u>		<u>A print rich environment</u>
<u>Computer activities</u>		<u>Lots of reinforcement</u>
<u>Sheltered English</u>		<u>Use of all senses</u>

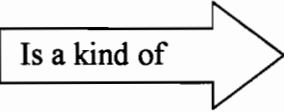
Structural Questions: What other kinds of ESL Strategies do you use?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Webs</u>		<u>Graphic Mapping</u>
<u>Charts</u>		<u>Organizers</u>
<u>Venn Diagrams</u>		
<u>The Four-Square Model</u>		

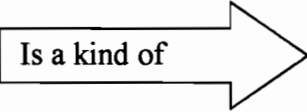
Structural Questions: What other kinds of graphic/mapping organizers do you use?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Comprehension</u>		<u>First Grade Skills</u>
<u>Vocabulary development</u>		
<u>Syllables</u>		
<u>Sentence structure</u>		
<u>Verbs, nouns, adjectives</u>		<u>Punctuation</u>
<u>Reading, Writing, Math</u>		<u>Capital letters</u>

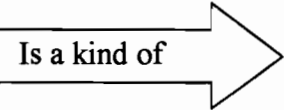
Structural Questions: What kinds of skills do your first grade students master?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term	
<u>ACCESS Test</u>		<u>Assessment Tools</u>	
<u>Standardized tests</u>			
<u>Portfolios</u>			
<u>DIBELS</u>			
<u>Unit tests</u>			<u><i>IDELS (DIBELS in Spanish)</i></u>
<u>ELAS</u>			<u>Work samples</u>
<u>Anecdotal records</u>			<u>Literacy prompts</u>
<u>Writing Benchmark assessments</u>			<u>Reading Benchmark assessments</u>
<u>Running records</u>			<u>Homework</u>
<u>Group projects</u>			

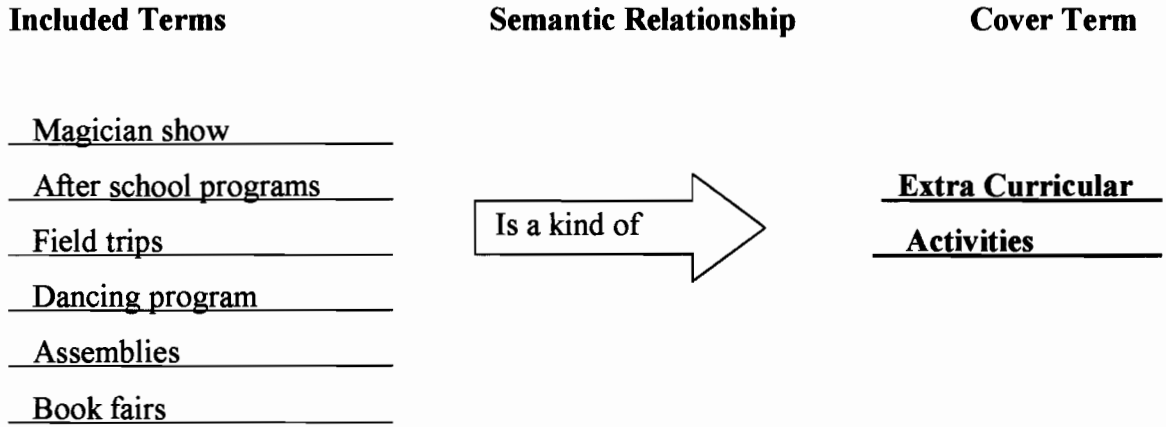
Structural Questions: What kinds of assessment do you use to evaluate your students?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>ACCESS Test</u>		<u>Standardized tests</u>
<u>Terranova</u>		
<u>Aprenda</u>		
<u>Supera</u>		
<u>NJ ASK</u>		

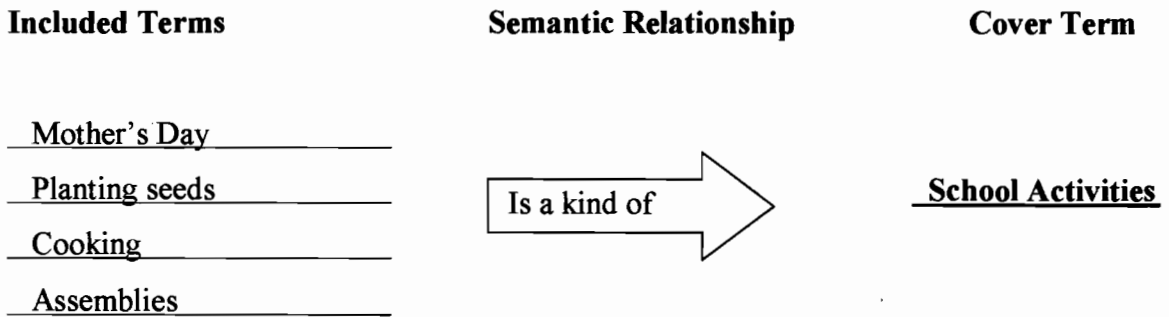
Structural Questions: What are other kinds of Standardized tests?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Level A, B, C, D, E</u>		<u>ESL Levels</u>
<u>Bilingual, transitional</u>		
<u>Beginners, intermediate</u>		
<u>Advanced Bilingual</u>		

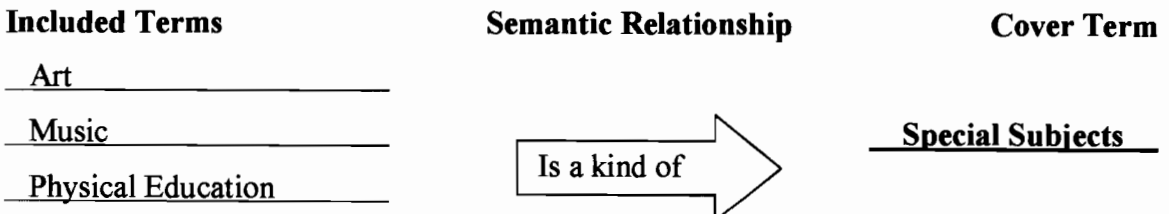
Structural Questions: What are the different English proficiency levels of the students?



Structural Questions: Are there any other kinds of extra curricular activities for students?



Structural Questions: What other kinds of school activities are your students engaged in?



Structural Questions: What other kinds of specials do you have?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Spanish Heritage Month</u> <u>Christmas/Holiday concert</u> <u>Black History Month</u> <u>Cinco de Mayo</u> <u>Kindergarten Graduation</u> <u>2nd Grade Moving-on Ceremony</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div>	<u>School Assemblies</u>
	<u>Magic shows</u>	

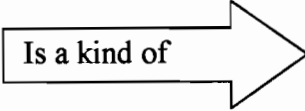
Structural Questions: What other kinds of school assemblies do students participate in?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Volunteering in school</u> <u>Attending ESL classes</u> <u>Attending school trips</u> <u>Attending workshops</u> <u>Food drives</u> <u>Participating in classrooms activities</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div>	<u>Parent Involvement Activities</u>
	<u>Visiting the school anytime</u>	

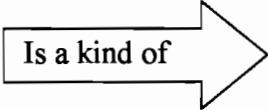
Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of parent involvement activities?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Educational workshops</u> <u>Informative workshops</u> <u>Guest speakers</u> <u>Community representatives</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div>	<u>Parents Meetings</u>
	<u>ESL & nutrition classes</u>	

Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of parents' meetings?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Police officers</u> <u>Nutritionists</u> <u>Dental hygienist</u> <u>Immigration speakers</u> <u>Housing representatives</u> <u>Social services agents</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>Guest</u> <u>Speakers</u>

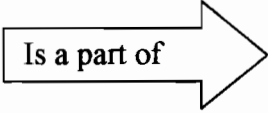
Structural Questions: What are the different kinds of guest speakers invited to the school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Bilingual Teachers</u> <u>Monolingual Teachers</u> <u>A Principal</u> <u>An Assistant Principal</u> <u>ELD/ESL Teachers</u> <u>A secretary</u> <u>A Reading Coach</u> <u>BSI Teachers</u> <u>A Music Teacher</u> <u>Child Study Team</u> <u>A Physical Education Teacher</u> <u>Special Education Teachers</u> <u>In-Class Support Teachers</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a kind of</div> 	<u>School</u> <u>Personnel</u> <u>A School Nurse</u> <u>School Counselor</u> <u>An Art Teacher</u> <u>A Parent Liaison</u> <u>Paraprofessionals</u> <u>Custodians</u> <u>Child Study Team</u> <u>Resource Room Teachers</u>

Structural Question: What other kinds of staff members are there in your school?

Domain Analysis #2

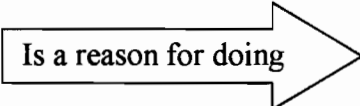
- 1. Semantic Relationship: Spatial
- 2. Form: X (is a place in or a part of) Y
- 3. Example: The rug is a place in the classroom

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>The rug area</u> <u>The word wall</u> <u>The Technology Center</u> <u>The Reading Center</u> <u>The Classroom Library</u> <u>The Listening Center</u> <u>The Writing Center</u>		<u>The Classroom</u>

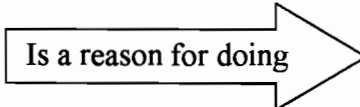
Structural
Questions: What are all the parts of your classroom ?

Domain Analysis #3

1. Semantic Relationship: Rationale
2. Form: X (is a reason for doing) Y
3. Example: Addressing students' individual needs is a reason for doing small group instruction

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Children working at different skills</u> <u>To differentiate instruction</u> <u>To address students' different levels</u> <u>To address students' individual needs</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Is a reason for doing </div> 	<u>Small Group Instruction</u>

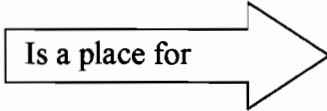
Structural Questions: What other reasons do you have for using small group instruction?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Welcoming parents into school</u> <u>Making parents feel comfortable</u> <u>Educating parents</u> <u>Helping and assisting parents with their needs</u> <u>Bridging a gap between home and school</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Is a reason for doing </div> 	<u>Work with Parents</u>

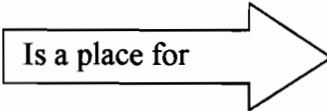
Structural Questions: What are the main reasons for working with parents?

Domain Analysis # 4

1. Semantic Relationship: Location for Action
2. Form: X (is a place for doing) Y
3. Example: The rug is a place for reading

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>The rug area</u> <u>Wiggle Works</u> <u>Guided reading center</u> <u>The technology center</u> <u>Classroom library</u>		<u>Reading</u>

Structural Questions: In what other places does reading take place?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>The writing center</u> <u>The technology center</u> <u>Wiggle Works program</u> <u>Journals</u>		<u>Writing</u>

Structural Questions: In what other places does writing take place?

Domain Analysis # 5

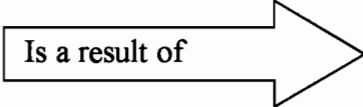
1. Semantic Relationship: Cause and Effect
2. Form: X (is a result of) Y
3. Example: Reaching students different skills is a result of small group instruction

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Increase of parent participation</u>		
<u>Parents helping in school</u>		
<u>Parents volunteering in school</u>		
<u>Constant contact with teachers</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div>	<u>Parent Involvement</u>
<u>Parents reading in Classrooms</u>		
<u>An awareness of students' achievement</u>		
<u>Communication with principal</u>		

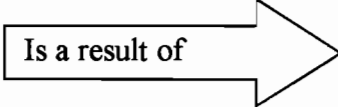
Structural Questions: What other results do you obtain from your Parent Involvement Program?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Reaching students' needs</u>		
<u>Better service children</u>		
<u>Cooperative learning</u>		
<u>Improved Test Scores</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div>	<u>Implemented Scientific Research-Based Best Practices</u>
<u>Change in the classroom environment</u>		
<u>Collaborative workspaces</u>	<u>Students reading on grade level</u>	
<u>Students participating actively</u>	<u>Better instruction in English & Spanish</u>	
<u>Students taking active responsibility</u>		

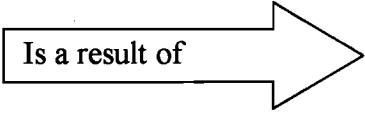
Structural Questions: Can you think of any other results of your identified Best Practices?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Having an academic focus</u> <u>Increased vocabulary</u> <u>Enhanced comprehension skills</u> <u>A common goal</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>School Instructional</u> <u>Focus</u>

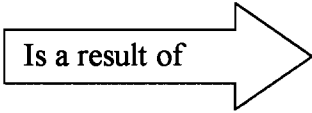
Structural
Questions: What are the results for having a school instructional focus?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Reaching students different skills</u> <u>Better service children</u> <u>Everyone learns and shares</u> <u>Children feel better about themselves</u> <u>Increased participation</u> <u>Meeting bilingual students' needs</u> <u>A lot more smiling</u> <u>Work with students one on one</u> <u>Children have a better understanding</u> <u>Being able to do a lot more with students</u> <u>A lot more conversation and communication</u> <u>Teacher knows every child/their needs/what they don't know/what they need extra practice in</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Small Group</u> <u>Instruction</u>
	<u>Getting to each child's needs</u> <u>A positive learning environment</u> <u>Teachers focus more & better</u> <u>Improved test scores</u> <u>Knowing students' level</u>	

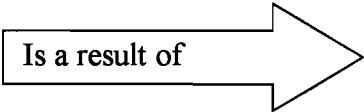
Structural
Questions: Can you think of any other results of small group instruction?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Not knowing all students' needs</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Whole Group Instruction</u>
<u>Not meeting all students' needs</u>		
<u>Not meeting individuals' students</u>		
<u>Loosing students' attention</u>		
<u>Lack of differentiated instruction</u>		
<u>Sink or swim</u>		
<u>Presenting target skills on grade level</u>		
<u>Teachers unable to focus on all students at once</u>		

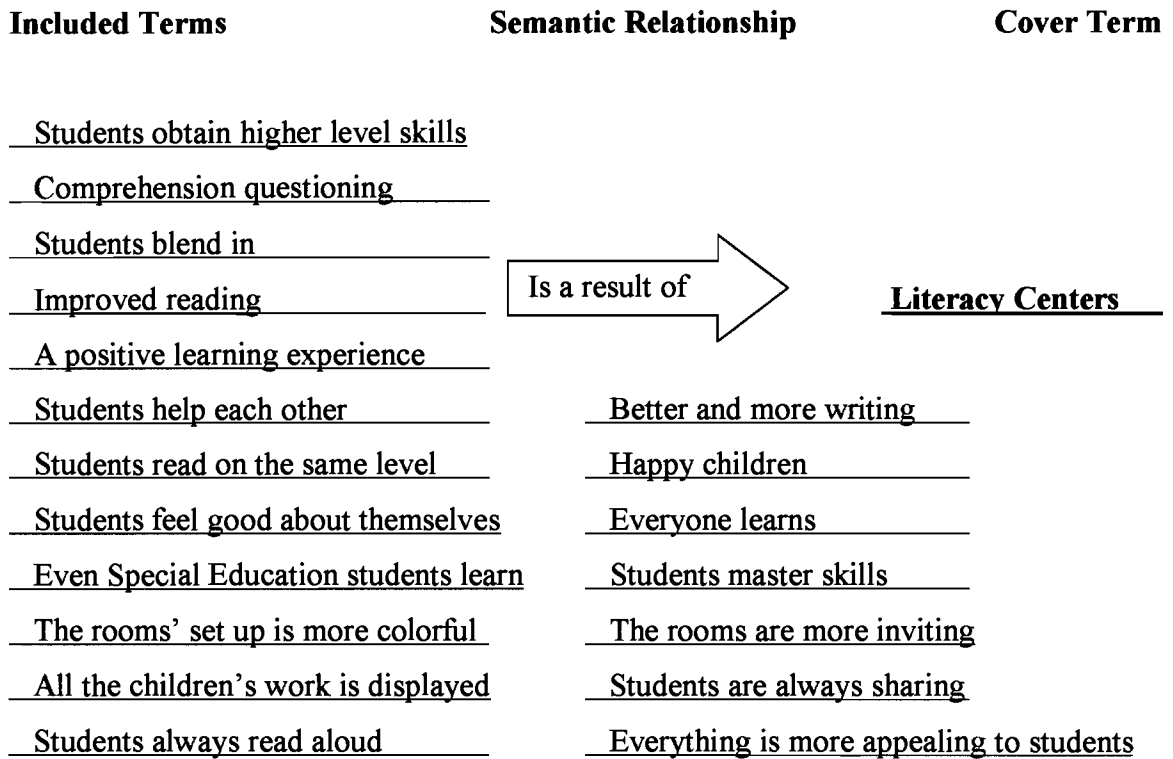
Structural
Questions: Can you think of any other results of whole group instruction?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Conversation</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Read Alouds</u>
<u>Comprehension questioning</u>		
<u>Students are read to</u>		
<u>Elicits vocabulary words</u>		
<u>Students make connections</u>		
<u>Use of Bloom's Taxonomy</u>		

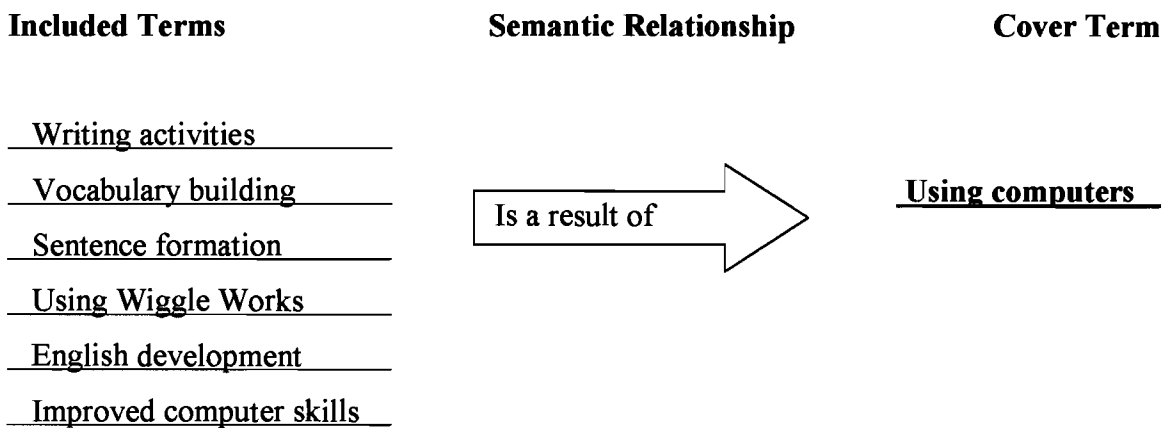
Structural
Questions: What are other results of doing Read Alouds?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Students discussing pictures</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Writing Prompts</u>
<u>Students writing stories</u>		
<u>Students sharing stories</u>		
<u>Use of the writing process</u>		

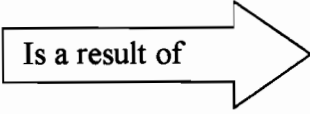
Structural
Questions: What are other results of using writing prompts?



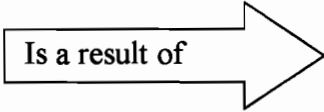
Structural
Questions: What are other results of implementing Literacy Centers?



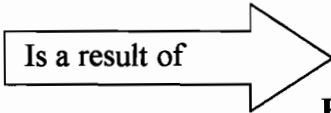
Structural
Questions: What are other results of using computers in your classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Students learn more and better</u> <u>Integration of different subjects</u> <u>Students make connections</u> <u>Skills and concepts are easier to learn and remember</u> <u>Common planning for teachers</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Thematic Units</u>

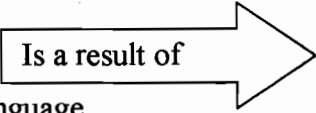
Structural Questions: What are other results of using thematic units?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Receiving principal's information</u> <u>Sharing materials</u> <u>Common planning</u> <u>Interaction among teachers</u> <u>School goals are aligned</u> <u>The lesson plans meet the NJCCCS</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Grade Level Meetings</u>

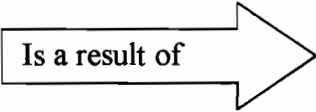
Structural Questions: What are other results of having Grade Level Meetings?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Implementing centers</u> <u>Implementing small group</u> <u>Improved instruction</u> <u>Doing read alouds</u> <u>Doing guided reading</u> <u>Meeting with other teachers</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Training and Professional Development</u>

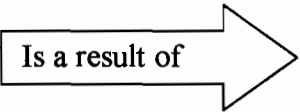
Structural Questions: What other results do you get from the training and professional development?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Acquiring English proficiency</u> <u>Being proficient in 2 languages</u> <u>Mastering concepts in the native language</u> <u>Transferring concepts into a second language</u> <u>Moving up to a higher ESL level</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Bilingual Education</u>

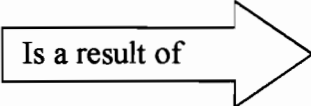
Structural
Questions: What are other results of Bilingual Education?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Development of oral skills</u> <u>Being proficient in 2 languages</u> <u>Become proficient in English</u> <u>Moving up to a higher ESL level</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>English Language Development</u>

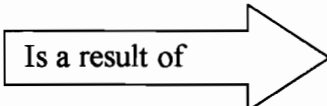
Structural
Questions: What are other results of Bilingual Education?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>A positive school environment</u> <u>Being proficient in 2 languages</u> <u>Become proficient in English</u> <u>Moving up to a higher ESL level</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>A Successful School</u>
<u>Students feel productive</u> <u>Everyone learns</u>	<u>Home & school work together</u> <u>Strong leadership</u>	

Structural
Questions: What are other implications of a successful school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Open communication</u> <u>Constant flexibility</u> <u>A friendly atmosphere</u> <u>Family-oriented</u> <u>Looking to help each other</u> <u>Sharing ideas and successes</u> <u>Improved teaching-learning process</u> <u>Parents are involved</u> <u>Not being afraid of trying new things</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>A Positive School</u> <u>Culture</u>

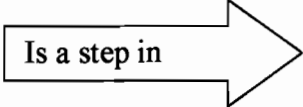
Structural
Questions: What are the consequences of a positive school climate?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Students feel comfortable</u> <u>Students feel confident</u> <u>Students transfer skills into English</u> <u>Solid foundation in native language</u> <u>Better transferring into 2nd language</u> <u>Parents are engaged</u> <u>Parents are able to help students</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a result of</div> 	<u>Native Language</u> <u>Instruction</u>

Structural
Questions: What are the results of native language instruction?

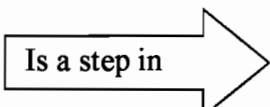
Domain Analysis # 6

1. Semantic Relationship: Sequence
2. Form: X (is a step in) Y
3. Example: Morning exercises is a step in the school day

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Putting belongings away</u>		
<u>Morning exercises</u>		
<u>Flag salute</u>		
<u>Attendance</u>	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Is a step in</div> 	<u>The School Day</u>
<u>Calendar</u>		
<u>Journal writing</u>	<u>Math</u>	
<u>Review alphabet and sounds</u>	<u>Read alouds</u>	
<u>Content Areas</u>	<u>Specials: Art, Music, Phys. Ed.</u>	
<u>Literacy Centers</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	

Structural

Question: What are the other steps in a regular school day?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Preparation</u>		
<u>Building Background</u>		
<u>Comprehensible Input</u>	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Is a step in</div> 	<u>The SIOP Model</u>
<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Practice and Application</u>	
<u>Interaction</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	
<u>Lesson Delivery</u>		

Structural

Questions: What are the different steps of the SIOP Model?

Domain Analysis # 7

1. Semantic Relationship: Function
2. Form: X (is a use for) Y
3. Example: Writing Prompts are used for writing

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Reading</u>		
<u>Review vocabulary words</u>		
<u>Writing</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is a use for</div>	<u>Literacy Centers</u>
<u>Vocabulary words</u>		
<u>Leveled readers</u>	<u>Listening</u>	
<u>Phonics</u>	<u>Computer skills</u>	
<u>Writing</u>	<u>Guided reading</u>	

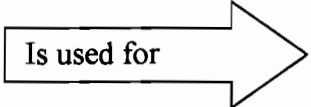
Structural

Questions: What are all the uses of Literacy Center?

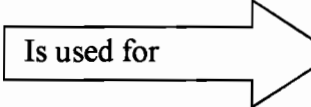
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Writing prompt</u>		
<u>Vocabulary words</u>		
<u>Sentence strips</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is used for</div>	<u>Writing</u>
<u>The word wall</u>		
<u>Wiggle Works program</u>		
<u>Vocabulary center</u>	<u>Journals</u>	
<u>Computers</u>	<u>Students' native language</u>	
<u>Writing tablets</u>	<u>Graphic organizers</u>	

Structural

Questions: What other aids do you or the students use for writing?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term	
<u>Classroom library</u>		<u>Reading</u>	
<u>Read alouds</u>			
<u>Leap Frogs</u>			
<u>Independent reading</u>			
<u>Guided reading</u>			<u>Wiggle Works program</u>
<u>Word walls</u>			<u>Journals</u>
<u>Computers</u>			<u>Basal reader</u>

Structural Questions: What other aids do you or the students use for reading?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term	
<u>The word wall</u>		<u>Learning English</u>	
<u>Vocabulary development</u>			
<u>Vocabulary center</u>			
<u>Books</u>			
<u>Leveled readers</u>			<u>Flash cards</u>
<u>Manipulatives</u>			<u>SIOP Model</u>
<u>Computers</u>			<u>Writing center</u>
<u>Students' native language</u>			<u>ESL strategies</u>

Structural Questions: What other resources do the students use for learning English?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Games</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is used for</div>	<u>Teaching</u>
<u>Flash Cards</u>		
<u>Hands-on activities</u>		
<u>Webs, Charts</u>		
<u>Read alouds</u>	<u>Literacy centers</u>	
<u>Wiggle Works</u>	<u>Guided reading</u>	
<u>Manipulatives</u>	<u>Computers</u>	
<u>Hands-on activities</u>	<u>Thematic units</u>	

Structural Questions: What are all the resources you use for teaching?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>The school instructional focus</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is used for</div>	<u>Vocabulary Development</u>
<u>Vocabulary words</u>		
<u>Computers</u>		
<u>Students' native language</u>		
<u>The word wall</u>	<u>Classroom library</u>	
<u>Vocabulary center</u>	<u>Wiggle Works</u>	

Structural Questions: What do you or the students use to develop Vocabulary?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>ACCESS Test</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is used for</div>	<u>Students' Placement</u>
<u>Home Language Survey</u>		
<u>Running records</u>		
<u>Standardized Tests</u>		

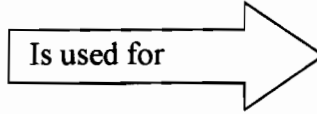
Structural Questions: What other tools do you use for students' placement?

Included Terms

Semantic Relationship

Cover Term

- ACCESS Test
- Comprehension questions
- DIBELS ~ IDELS
- Standardized tests
- ELAS
- Portfolios
- Benchmark assessments
- Unit tests



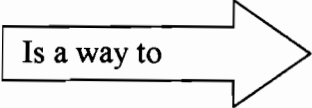
Students' Assessment

Structural

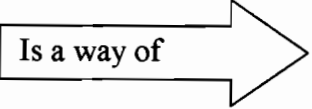
Questions: What other tools do you use to assess your students?

Domain Analysis # 8

1. Semantic Relationship: Means-End
2. Form: X (is a way to do) Y
3. Example: Literacy block is a way of expose students to activities for acquiring reading

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>90-minute literacy block</u> <u>Guided reading</u> <u>Read alouds</u> <u>Students' native language</u> <u>Listening center</u>	 <u>Is a way to</u>	<u>Acquire reading</u> <u>Shared reading</u> <u>Classroom library</u>

Structural Questions: Are there different ways for students to acquire reading skills?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Journal writing</u> <u>Writing centers</u> <u>Practicing penmanship</u> <u>Computer center</u> <u>Writing prompts</u>	 <u>Is a way of</u>	<u>Writing everyday</u> <u>Wiggle Works</u> <u>Writing in first language</u>

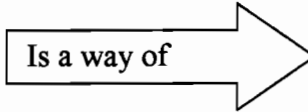
Structural Questions: What are the different ways of motivating students to write?

Included Terms

Semantic Relationship

Cover Term

- A word wall in English
- A word wall in Spanish
- A rich print environment
- Making parents aware
- Sending letters home
- Talking about it at meetings
- Making students aware
- Bulletin boards & displays



**Supporting the
School Instructional
Focus**

Structural

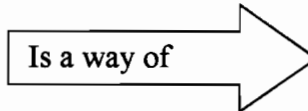
Questions: In what ways do you support the school instructional focus?

Included Terms

Semantic Relationship

Cover Term

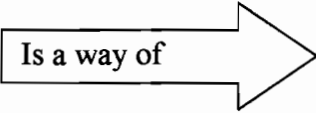
- Two teachers in the room
- Small Group Instruction
- Students' native language
- The Reading Coach
- Hands-on activities
- Manipulatives
- Peer coaching
- Intervention strategies
- Guided reading



Helping children

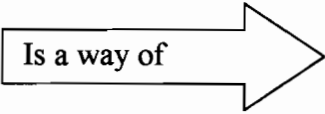
Structural

Questions: In what ways do you help students in the classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Whole group instruction</u>		<u>Teaching</u>
<u>Small group instruction</u>		
<u>Centers oriented</u>		
<u>Bilingual education</u>		
<u>Co-teaching</u>		
<u>Students' native language</u>	<u>Manipulatives</u>	
<u>Thematic units approach</u>	<u>Guided reading</u>	
<u>English language development</u>	<u>Differentiating instruction</u>	
<u>ESL strategies</u>	<u>Games</u>	

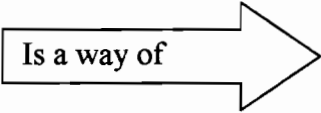
Structural

Questions: What other ways do you use to teach students in the classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>ESL through content areas</u>		<u>Teaching English</u>
<u>Literacy centers</u>		
<u>ESL strategies</u>		
<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Art</u>	
<u>Music, chanting</u>	<u>Physical Education</u>	
<u>A word wall</u>	<u>Sheltered English</u>	
<u>Introducing sounds & words</u>	<u>Listening tapes</u>	
<u>Speaking activities</u>	<u>Vocabulary activities</u>	
<u>SIOP Model</u>	<u>Computers</u>	

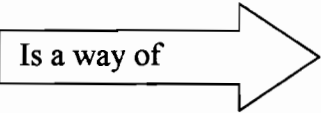
Structural

Questions: In what other ways do you teach/introduce English to the students?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>ESL through Content Areas</u>	 Is a way of	<u>Learning English</u>
<u>Science</u>		
<u>Social Studies</u>		
<u>Mathematics</u>		
<u>Music</u>		
<u>A word wall</u>		
<u>Transferring from native language</u>		
	<u>Art</u>	
	<u>Physical Education</u>	
	<u>Computer center</u>	
	<u>ELD center</u>	

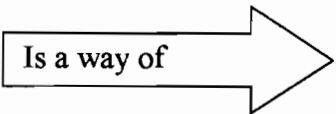
Structural

Questions: In what other ways do the students learn English ?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Timing</u>	 Is a way of	<u>Managing Centers</u>
<u>Charts</u>		
<u>Rotation</u>		
<u>Center work folders</u>		

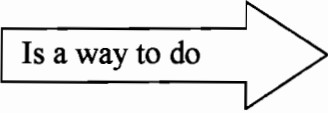
Structural

Questions: How do you manage the centers in your classroom?

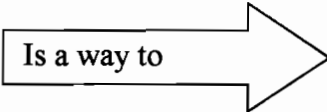
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Working cooperatively</u>	 Is a way of	<u>Being Successful</u> <u>Educators</u>
<u>Having love for teaching</u>		
<u>Loving children</u>		
<u>Being understanding</u>		
<u>Being flexible</u>		
<u>Sharing</u>		
	<u>Co-teaching</u>	
	<u>Common planning</u>	
	<u>Receiving professional development</u>	

Structural

Questions: What are ways of becoming a successful teacher?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term	
<u>Grade level meetings</u>		<u>Professional</u> <u>Development</u>	
<u>Workshops</u>			
<u>Conferences</u>			
<u>Professional articles</u>			
<u>Job-Embedded</u>			
<u>Workshops during lunch</u>			<u>Meeting with the Reading Coach</u>
<u>Videos</u>			<u>Meeting with the Principal</u>
<u>The internet</u>			<u>Meeting with Bilingual Master Teachers</u>
<u>Lessons/Strategies modeled</u>			
<u>Literacy Coaches</u>			

Structural
Questions: What are ways of receiving professional development?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Parent meetings</u>		<u>Inform Parents</u>
<u>Parents' workshops</u>		
<u>Home notices</u>		
<u>Flyers</u>		
<u>Monthly calendars</u>		
<u>Updated voice mail message</u>		
<u>Chats with the principal</u>		

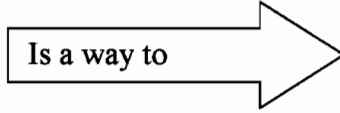
Structural
Questions: What are ways of keeping parents aware of school happenings?

Included Terms

Semantic Relationship

Cover Term

- IPT test
- Home Language Survey
- ACCESS Test
- Standardized tests
- Teacher's recommendation



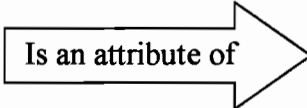
Place Students

Structural

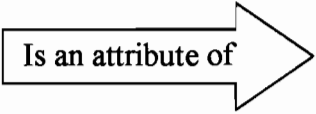
Questions: What are ways of placing students in a particular setting?

Domain Analysis # 9

1. Semantic Relationship: Attribution
2. Form: X is an attribute (characteristic) of Y
3. Example: Interested in bilingual education of children is an attribute of teachers

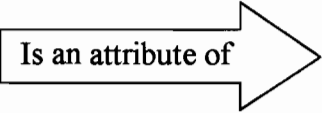
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Welcoming parents</u> <u>Advanced instruction</u> <u>Involving parents</u> <u>Focusing on centers</u> <u>Focusing on vocabulary development</u> <u>Small Group Instruction oriented</u> <u>Having an Instructional Focus</u> <u>Implementing scientifically</u> <u>Researched-Based Best Practices</u> <u>Having highly qualified teachers</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">  </div>	<u>The School</u>
	<u>A safe heaven</u> <u>Opening doors to parents</u> <u>Supporting Native Language Instruction</u> <u>Having and Instructional Leadership Team</u>	

Structural Questions: Can you think of any other attributes of your school?

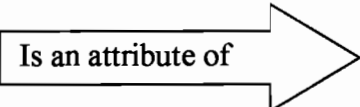
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Being bilingual</u> <u>Teaching parents</u> <u>Learning from students</u> <u>Enjoying coming to work everyday</u> <u>Being challenged everyday</u> <u>Having good parents conferences</u> <u>Having good interaction with parents</u> <u>Open communication with parents</u> <u>Proud of the students' achievements</u> <u>Bilingual/ESL certified</u> <u>Feeling happy and great</u> <u>Try to make it interesting everyday</u> <u>Giving students the best of them</u> <u>Interested in Bilingual Education of children</u>		<u>Teachers</u> <u>Caring</u> <u>Setting up centers</u> <u>Preparing center activities</u> <u>Concerned about students</u> <u>Confident</u> <u>Not feeling threatened</u> <u>Experienced</u> <u>Love working in centers</u> <u>Reaching out to students</u> <u>All teachers work about the same way</u>

Structural Questions: Can you think of any other attributes of the teachers in your school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
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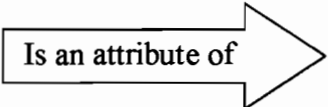
<u>Read aloud to students</u> <u>Plan with classroom teachers</u> <u>Supporting classroom teachers</u> <u>Working with students in centers</u> <u>Supporting school's initiatives</u> <u>Providing differentiated instruction</u>		<u>Co-Teachers</u>
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Structural Questions: Can you think of any other attributes of the co-teachers you work with?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Love for school</u>	<u>Quiet</u>	
<u>Shy</u>	<u>Special need</u>	
<u>Enjoy learning</u>	<u>Sharing</u>	
<u>Polite</u>	<u>Happy</u>	
<u>Enjoy reading</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is an attribute of</div> 	<u>Students</u>
<u>They are hardly absent</u>		
<u>Love coming to school</u>	<u>Belong to different levels</u>	
<u>Love for learning</u>	<u>Learning from teachers</u>	
<u>Enjoy different stories</u>	<u>Look out for help</u>	
<u>Help each other</u>	<u>Higher Self-esteem</u>	
<u>Not intimidated - Not embarrassed about participating in class</u>	<u>Know the school routine</u>	
<u>Wanting to read, write, converse or communicate</u>	<u>Get restless very fast</u>	
<u>Know how to follow the routine</u>	<u>Low socio-economic status</u>	
<u>Very positive thinking</u>	<u>Very hopeful</u>	

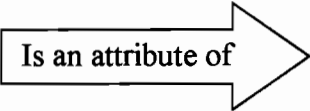
Structural

Questions: Can you think of any other attributes of the students in your school?

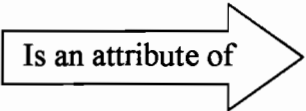
Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Works very hard</u>		
<u>Makes things easier for teachers</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Is an attribute of</div> 	<u>The Principal</u>
<u>Supportive & Caring</u>		
<u>Has an open door policy</u>	<u>Experienced and knowledgeable</u>	
<u>Very open-minded</u>	<u>Provides professional development</u>	
<u>Involves parents</u>	<u>Loves children</u>	

Structural

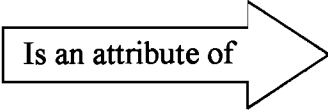
Questions: Can you think of any other attributes of the principal in your school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Sharing wonderful ideas</u>		<u>Reading Coach</u>
<u>Answering teachers' questions</u>		
<u>Giving teachers' a "pep talk"</u>		
<u>Bringing teachers' spirits up</u>		
<u>Providing information</u>		
<u>Providing support</u>		
<u>Reading to children</u>		
<u>Helping teachers</u>		
<u>Getting materials for teachers</u>		
<u>Keeping herself up to date</u>		
<u>Guiding teachers</u>	<u>Modeling lessons</u>	
<u>Providing appropriate professional development</u>	<u>Always available</u>	
<u>Assisting with the implementation of the learning centers</u>	<u>Helping students</u>	
<u>Assisting with the implementation of the School Instructional Focus</u>	<u>Helping organize rooms</u>	
	<u>Caring</u>	

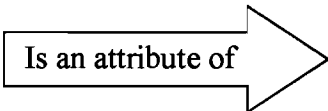
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of your Reading Coach ?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Bilingual</u>		<u>The Parent Liaison</u>
<u>Very organized with the parents</u>		
<u>Planning monthly meetings</u>		
<u>Helping parents with their needs</u>		
<u>Welcoming parents</u>		
<u>Helping needed children</u>		
<u>Concerned about the children</u>	<u>Schedules meetings in the evening</u>	

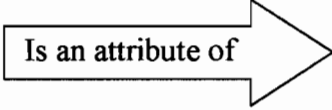
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of the Parent Liaison of your school ?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Bilingual</u> <u>Assisting students</u> <u>Assisting at the literacy centers</u> <u>Reinforcing skills</u> <u>Asking questions</u> <u>Working with parents</u> <u>Supporting school practices</u> <u>Providing intervention for students</u>		<u>Paraprofessionals</u>

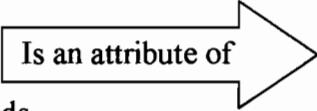
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of the Paraprofessionals in your school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Selecting ideas and themes</u> <u>Dealing with the academic Structure of the school</u> <u>Planning</u> <u>Meeting once or more a month</u> <u>All teachers are represented</u> <u>Selecting the school instructional focus</u> <u>Selecting school's researched-based Instructional successful practices</u> <u>Monitoring the school' successful practices</u>		<u>The Instructional Leadership Team</u>

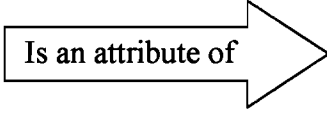
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of the Instructional Leadership Team?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Non-threatening environment</u>		<u>The classroom</u>
<u>Everyone's answer is accepted</u>		
<u>No one is wrong</u>		
<u>Open doors for parents</u>		
<u>A rich print environment</u>		
	<u>A learning environment</u>	
	<u>Everyone learns</u>	

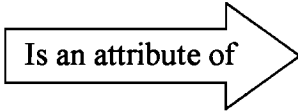
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of your classroom?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term	
<u>Trying to get to the students</u>		<u>Successful Practices</u>	
<u>Getting the best out of students</u>			
<u>Meeting students' instructional needs</u>			
<u>Scientifically researched-based</u>			<u>Instructional ways</u>
<u>Implemented throughout the school</u>			<u>Teaching strategies</u>
<u>Evident throughout the school</u>			<u>Change of teaching experience</u>
<u>Supported by all teachers</u>			<u>Leads to differentiated instruction</u>
<u>Meeting the needs of Bilingual students</u>			<u>Decrease students' behavior problems</u>
<u>Supported by parents</u>			<u>Helping mastering native language</u>
<u>Facilitating transferring into English</u>			

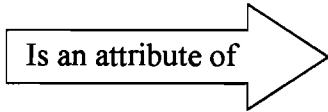
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of your Successful Practices?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Beneficial</u>		<u>Bilingual Education</u>
<u>Native language use</u>		
<u>A lot of strategies are used</u>		
<u>Lots of language development</u>		
<u>Supports students' background</u>		
<u>Facilitates second language acquisition</u>		

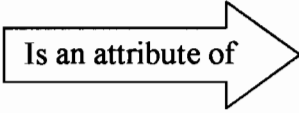
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of Bilingual Education?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>90/120-minute long</u>		<u>Literacy Block</u>
<u>Uninterrupted</u>		
<u>Enhances students' learning skills and abilities for acquiring reading</u>		
<u>Promotes literacy skills</u>		
<u>Provides instruction at students' level</u>		
<u>Offers small group instruction</u>		
<u>Includes literacy centers</u>		

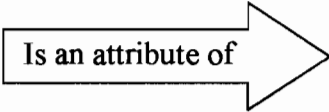
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of implementing a literacy block?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Gradually increases</u>		<u>Word Walls</u>
<u>Supports instructional focus</u>		
<u>Students generated</u>		
<u>Based on the reading stories</u>		
	<u>Facilitates writing activities</u>	

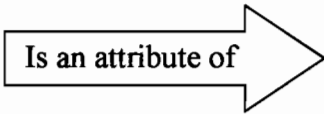
Structural Questions: What are the attributes of Word Walls?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Helping students with difficulties</u>		<u>Small Group</u> <u>Instruction</u>
<u>Working with students one-on-one</u>		
<u>Extra emphasis on skills</u>		
<u>Providing self-confidence to students</u>	<u>Improves Reading</u>	
<u>Positive learning environment</u>	<u>More activities go on</u>	
<u>The best thing that could have happened</u>		
<u>Students learn at their level and pace</u>		
<u>Enhanced students' self-esteem</u>		

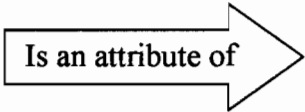
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of Small Group Instruction?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Students enjoy it!</u>		<u>Literacy Centers</u>
<u>Hands-on activities</u>		
<u>Small group of children</u>		
<u>15-20 minutes long</u>		
<u>Made a whole change in instruction</u>	<u>Students work independently</u>	
<u>All students learn</u>	<u>Every week is different</u>	
<u>Being able to reuse and recycle</u>	<u>Children move around</u>	
<u>The furniture is more spacious</u>	<u>Being fun</u>	
<u>Being mobile</u>	<u>Nobody is left out</u>	
<u>Reinforce literacy skills</u>	<u>Students read & write at their level</u>	

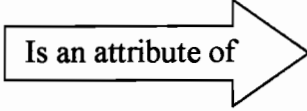
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of Literacy Centers?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Has at least 300 books</u> <u>Includes books in English and Spanish</u> <u>Children love being there</u> <u>It has two big pillows</u> <u>The students feel comfortable there</u> <u>The students read to each other</u> <u>The students select the books</u> <u>Books of different genres</u>		<u>The Classroom Library</u>

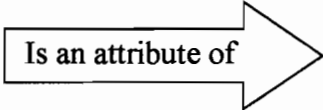
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of the Classroom Library?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Oral</u> <u>Elicits conversation</u> <u>Students get together</u> <u>Students share</u> <u>It is personal</u> <u>It is enjoyable by teachers</u> <u>Students get along</u> <u>Students make connections</u> <u>Students use schema</u> <u>Leads to comprehension questioning</u>		<u>Read Alouds</u>

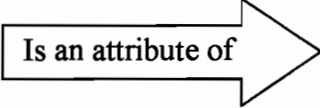
Structural Questions: What are other attributes of a Read Aloud?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Teacher contact</u>		<u>Guided Reading</u>
<u>Teacher instructed</u>		
<u>Small group of children</u>		
<u>Leads to comprehension questioning</u>		
<u>Leveled reading</u>		
<u>Reinforcing reading skills</u>		
<u>Students read at their instructional level</u>		

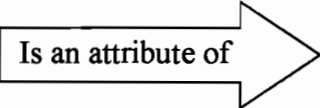
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of a Guided Reading?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>They make a lot of sense</u>		<u>Thematic Units</u>
<u>It is more meaningful</u>		
<u>Supports different content areas</u>		
<u>Supports different skills</u>		
<u>Integrates different content areas</u>		
<u>Conducive to learning centers activities</u>		
<u>Makes learning meaningful</u>		
<u>Students remember better and more</u>		

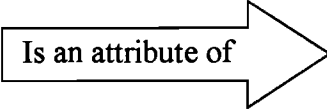
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of thematic units?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Students write about a story</u> <u>Students print what they write</u> <u>Integrates technology</u> <u>Includes reading stories</u> <u>Reinforces reading</u> <u>Reading series supplement</u> <u>Students enjoy seeing the print out</u> <u>Emphasis on reading, comprehension</u> <u>and vocabulary development skills</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">  </div>	<u>Wiggle Works</u>

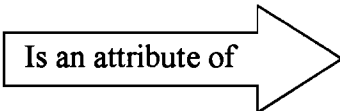
Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of the Wiggle Works?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Feel comfortable at school</u> <u>Express concerns</u> <u>Ask questions and ways</u> <u>for helping their children</u> <u>Volunteer in school</u> <u>Read to the students</u> <u>Help teachers in the classrooms</u> <u>Make customs</u> <u>Support school's initiatives</u> <u>Support school's initiatives</u>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">  </div>	<u>Parents</u> <u>Cook for students</u> <u>Happy about school</u> <u>Uncooperative</u> <u>Attend workshops</u> <u>Participate in school's events</u>

Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of the parents in your school?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term	
<u>An on-going process</u>		<u>Professional</u> <u>Development</u>	
<u>Grade level oriented</u>			
<u>Modeled</u>			
<u>Job-embedded</u>			
<u>Data driven</u>			
<u>Systemic</u>			
<u>Meeting instructional needs</u>			
<u>Hans-on approach</u>			<u>Given by actual teachers</u>
<u>Tailor to teachers' needs</u>			<u>Frequent</u>
<u>Address school instructional focus</u>			
<u>Address school's identified best practices</u>			

Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of the professional development received?

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
<u>Whole group instruction</u>		<u>Students' Native</u> <u>Country Schools</u>
<u>Native Language Instruction</u>		
<u>Large class size</u>		
<u>Limited funds/resources</u>		
<u>Lack of manipulatives</u>		
<u>Lack of instructional materials</u>		
<u>Not providing students with supplies</u>		
<u>Low education</u>		

Structural
Questions: What are other attributes of the students' Native Country Schools?

Appendix D
Making a Taxonomic Analysis

Making a Taxonomic Analysis

Domains Selected for Taxonomic Analysis

Kinds of Literacy Centers
 Kinds of Instructional Strategies
 Kinds of Best Practices
 Kinds of Professional Development
 Kinds of Teaching/Learning Materials
 Kinds of Assessment Tools
 Kinds of Parent Involvement Activities
 Kinds of School Personnel
 Reasons for doing Small Group Instruction
 Reasons for Working with Parents
 Reasons for Having an Instructional Focus
 Results of Parent Involvement
 Results of Implementing Scientific Research-Based Best Practices
 Results of Having a School Instructional Focus
 Results of Small Group Instruction
 Results of Whole Group Instruction
 Results of Literacy Centers
 Results of Read Alouds
 Results of Thematic Units
 Results of Grade Level Meetings
 Results of Professional Development
 Results of Bilingual Education
 Results of English Language Development
 Steps in a School Day
 Uses of Literacy Centers
 Uses for Writing
 Uses for Reading
 Uses for Learning English
 Uses for Vocabulary Development
 Ways to Acquire Reading
 Ways to Write Everyday
 Ways to support the School Instructional Focus
 Ways to Help Children
 Ways to Teach Children
 Ways to Teach English
 Ways to Learn English
 Ways to Become Successful Educators
 Ways to Receive Professional Development
 Ways to Inform Parents
 Attributes of the School
 Attributes of Teachers
 Attributes of Students
 Attributes of the Principal

Attributes of the Reading Coach
Attributes of the Parent Liaison
Attributes of Paraprofessionals
Attributes of the Instructional Leadership Team
Attributes of the Classrooms
Attributes of Identified Research-Based Best Practices
Attributes of Bilingual Education
Attributes of Small Group Instruction
Attributes of Literacy Centers
Attributes of Classroom Libraries
Attributes of Read Alouds
Attributes of Guided Reading
Attributes of Thematic Units
Attributes of Wiggle Works
Attributes of Word Walls
Attributes of Parents
Attributes of Professional Development

Taxonomic Analysis Outline

I. Kinds of Instructional Strategies

A. Research-Based Instructional Best Practices

1. School Instructional Focus
 - a. Literacy
 - b. Vocabulary Development
 - c. Comprehension
 - d. Math
2. Small Group Instruction
3. Native Language Instruction
4. Literacy Centers
 - a. Guided Reading
 1. Teacher directed
 2. Homogeneous group
 - b. Computers center
 1. Wiggle Works
 2. Writing
 3. Reading
 4. Math
 5. Listening
 - c. Independent Reading Center
 1. Reading Library
 - d. Writing Center
 - e. Listening Center
 - f. Vocabulary Center
 1. Vocabulary Development
 2. Spelling
 - g. Skill Center
 - h. Word Study
 - i. ELD Center
5. 90-Minute Literacy Block
 - a. Read Aloud
 1. Mini-Lesson
 - b. Guided Reading
 - c. Literacy Centers
6. Classroom Libraries
 - a. Books in Spanish
 - b. Books in English
 - c. Non-Fiction Books
 - d. Fiction Books
7. Word Walls
 - a. English
 - b. Spanish

- 8. Journal Writing
- 9. Hands-On activities
 - a. Manipulatives
 - 1). Magnetic letters
 - 2). Pictures
 - 3). Sentence strips
 - 4). Linking cubes
 - 5). Counting bears
 - 6). Games
 - 7). Flash cards
 - b. Graphic Organizers
 - 1). Webs
 - 2). Charts
 - 3). Venn Diagrams
- 10. Parent Involvement
- B. Bilingual Education
- C. English as a Second Language
- D. Thematic Units
- E. Co-Teaching

II. Kinds of School Personnel

- A. Certified Personnel
 - 1. School Principal
 - 2. Assistant Principal
 - 3. Teachers
 - a. Bilingual teachers
 - b. Monolingual teachers
 - c. Transitional teachers
 - d. Basic Skills Instruction (BSI)
 - e. English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - f. Music
 - g. Art
 - h. Physical Education
 - i. Reading Coach
 - j. School Nurse
 - k. Child Study Team
 - 1). Psychologist
 - 2). Learning Disability Teacher Consultant
 - 3). Social Worker
- B. Non-Certified Personnel
 - 1. Paraprofessionals
 - a. Monolingual
 - b. Bilingual
 - 2. Administrative Assistant
 - 3. Parent-Liaison
 - 4. Custodians
 - 5. Security Guard

III. Kinds of Professional Development

- A. Reading Materials
 - 1. Articles
 - 2. Journals
 - 3. Interned research
- B. Model Videos
- C. Local college workshops
- D. District workshops
 - 1. Supervisors
 - 2. Master Teachers
- E. School Workshops
 - 1. Reading Coach's workshops
 - 2. Principal's workshops
 - 3. Colleague workshops
 - 4. Job-embedded workshops

IV. Kinds of Assessment Tools

- A. Standardized Tests
 - 1. NJ ASK
 - 2. Terranova
 - 3. Supera
 - 4. Aprenda
 - 5. ACCESS
- B. District Tests
 - 1. IPT
 - 2. Portfolios
 - 3. DIBELS
 - 4. ELAS
 - 5. Writing benchmark
- C. School Tests
 - 1. Unit tests
 - 2. Chapter tests
 - 3. Informal observation
 - 4. Spelling tests

V. Kinds of School Activities

- A. Extra curricular activities
 - 1. Magician show
 - 2. After school program
 - 3. Field trips
 - 4. Dancing program
 - 5. Book fairs

- B. School Assemblies
 1. Hispanic Heritage Month
 2. Holiday concert
 3. Black History Month
 4. Cinco de mayo
 5. Kindergarten graduation
 6. Second Grade moving-on ceremony
- C. Parent Involvement Activities
 1. Volunteering in school
 2. Participation in classroom's activities
 3. ESL classes
 4. Food drives
 5. Attending Parent-Teacher Conferences
 6. Attending meetings
 - a. Educational workshops
 - b. Informative workshops
 - c. Guest speakers
 - 1). Dental Hygienist
 - 2). Nutritionists
 - 3). Immigration speakers
 - 3). Community representatives
 - a). Police officers
 - b). Housing representatives

VI. Results of Parent Involvement

- A. Parents feel welcomed and comfortable in school
- B. Increased parent participation
 1. Parents helping in school
 2. Parents volunteering in school
 3. Parents reading in the classroom
- D. Constant contact and communication with teachers
- E. Constant communication with the principal
- F. An awareness of students' achievement
- G. Parents also receive information and education

VII. Results of Implementing Scientific Research-Based Best Practices

- A. Fulfilling students' different needs
- B. Better service children
- C. Improvement of test scores
- D. Schools choose their instructional best practices according to their needs
 1. Results of small group instruction
 - a. Children work with different skills
 - b. Addressing students' different skills
 - c. Addressing students' individual needs
 - d. Meeting bilingual students' needs
 - e. Everyone learns and shares

- f. Children feel better about themselves
 - g. Increased students' participation
 - h. A lot more smiling
 - i. Work with students one on one
 - j. Teachers focus more and better
 - k. A positive learning environment
 - l. Knowing students' different levels
 - m. Being able to do a lot more with students
 - n. Teachers know every child, their needs, what they don't know and what they need extra practice in.
2. Results of having an instructional focus
- a. Having an academic focus
 - b. Increased vocabulary
 - c. Enhanced reading comprehension skills
3. Results of Read Alouds
- a. More conversation
 - b. Comprehension questioning
 - c. Students are read to
 - d. Elicits vocabulary words
4. Results of Literacy Centers
- a. Students obtain higher level skills
 - b. Comprehension questioning
 - c. A positive learning experience
 - d. Students blend in
 - e. Students help each other
 - f. Students read on the same level
 - g. Students feel good about themselves
 - h. Even special education students learn
 - i. Everything is more appealing to students
 - j. The rooms set up is more colorful
 - 1). The rooms are more inviting
 - 2). All the children's work is displayed
 - l. Students always read aloud
 - m. Improved reading
 - n. Better and more writing
 - o. Happy children
 - p. Everyone learns
 - q. Students master skills
 - r. Students are always sharing
 - s. Students practice words of the week
 - t. Students write vocabulary words and sentences
 - u. Students use computers
 - 1). Students write on the computer
 - 2). Students build vocabulary
 - 3). Students practice sentence formation
 - 4). Students use "Wiggle Works"

5. Results of Thematic Units
 - a. Students learn more and better
 - b. Integration of different subjects
 - c. Students make connections
 - d. Skills and concepts are easier to learn and remember
6. Results of Training and Professional Development
 - a. Implementation of literacy centers
 - b. Implementation of small group instruction
 - c. Improved instruction in the classroom
 - d. Implementation of read alouds
 - e. Doing guided reading
 - f. Meeting with other teachers by grade level
 - 1). Receiving school's principal information
 - 2). Sharing materials
 - 3). Common Planning
 - 4). Interaction among teachers
7. Results of Bilingual Education
 - a. Acquiring English proficiency
 - b. Being proficient in two languages
 - c. Mastering concepts in the native language
 - d. Transferring concepts into a second language
 - e. Moving up to a higher ESL level

VIII. Uses of Literacy Centers

- A. Writing
 1. Uses of writing
 - a. Writing prompts
 - b. Vocabulary words
 - c. Word walls
 - d. Level readers
 - e. Vocabulary center
 - f. Computers
 - g. Wiggle Works Program
 - h. Journals
 - i. Students' native language
- B. Reading
 1. Uses of reading
 - a. Classroom library
 - b. Read alouds
 - c. Independent reading
 - d. Guided reading
 - e. Word walls
 - f. Computers

- C. Computer Skills
- D. Vocabulary
 - 1. Uses of vocabulary development
 - a. The School Instructional Focus
 - b. Vocabulary words
 - c. Students' native language
 - d. The word wall
 - e. Computers

IX. Ways of Teaching

- A. Whole group instruction
- B. Centers oriented
- C. Bilingual education
 - 1. Using students' native language
 - 2. English Language Development
 - a. Through content areas
 - b. Through Science
 - c. Through Social Studies
 - d. Through Mathematics
 - e. Through Music
 - f. Through Art
 - g. Using word walls
- D. Co-Teaching
- E. Thematic units approach
- F. Games
- G. Manipulatives
- H. Helping children
 - 1. Small group instruction
 - 2. Having a Reading Coach
 - 3. Hands-on activities
 - 4. Having two teachers in the classroom

X. Ways of Learning

- A. Ways of acquiring reading
 - 1. 90-minute Literacy Block
 - 2. Guided Reading
 - 3. Read Alouds
 - 4. Using students' native language
- B. Ways of writing everyday
 - 1. Journal writing
 - 2. Writing centers
 - 3. Practicing penmanship
- C. Ways of Learning English
 - 1. Through content areas
 - 2. Through Science
 - 3. Through Social Studies

4. Through Mathematics
5. Through Music
6. Through Art
7. Through Physical Education
8. Using word walls
9. Transferring from native language

XI. Ways of Supporting the School Instructional Focus

- A. Having a word wall in English
- B. Having a word wall in English
- C. Offering a rich print environment
- D. Making students aware
- E. Talking about it at school meetings
- E. Making parents aware
 1. Ways of informing parents
 - a. Sending letters home
 - b. At parents' meetings
 - c. At parents' workshops
 - d. Sending home notices
 - e. Flyers
 - f. Monthly calendars
 - g. Updated voice-mail message
 - h. Chat with the principal

XII. Ways of Being Successful Educators

- A. Working cooperatively
- B. Having love for teaching
- C. Love children
- D. Being understandable
- E. Being flexible
- F. Sharing
- G. Co-teaching
- H. Common planning
- I. Being trained and receiving professional development
 1. Ways of being trained and professional development
 - a. Grade level meetings
 - b. Workshops
 - c. Conferences
 - d. Professional articles
 - e. Brochures
 - f. Workshops during lunch
 - g. Videos
 - h. The internet
 - i. Job-Embedded
 - j. Meeting with the Reading Coach
 - k. Meeting with the Principal
 - l. Meeting with Bilingual Master Teachers

XIII. Attributes of the School

- A. Welcomes parents
 - 1. Involves parents
 - 2. Opens doors to parents
- B. Implements scientifically research-based best practices
 - 1. Has an instructional focus
 - a. Vocabulary development
 - b. Reading comprehension
 - c. Reading skills
 - 2. Supports native language instruction
 - 3. It is centered-oriented
 - 4. Offers small group instruction
- C. It has a good mixture of teachers
- D. Offers an advanced instruction
- E. Has an Instructional Leadership Team

XIV. Attributes of Teachers

- A. Bilingual/ESL Certified
 - 1. Being bilingual
 - 2. Interested in Bilingual Education of students
- B. Enjoy coming to work everyday
- C. Being challenged everyday
- D. Learn from students
- E. Proud of students' achievements
- F. Experienced
- G. Try to make it interesting everyday
- H. Giving students the best of them
- I. Caring
 - 1. Concerned about students
 - 2. Reaching out to centers
- J. Set centers up
 - 1. Prepare center activities
 - 2. Love working in centers
- K. Confident
- L. Don't feel threatened
- M. Feel happy and great
- N. Have good interaction with parents
 - 1. Open communication with parents
 - a. Have good parents' conferences
 - 2. Teach parents

XV. Attributes of Co-Teachers

- A. Read aloud to students
- B. Plan with classroom teachers
- C. Support classroom teachers
- D. Work with students in centers

XVI. Attributes of Students

- A. Love school
 - 1. Love coming to school
 - 2. They are hardly absent
- B. Love for learning
 - 1. Learning from teachers
 - 2. Enjoy learning
 - 3. Enjoy reading
 - 4. Enjoy different stories
 - 5. Wanting to read, write, converse, or communicate
- C. Polite
- D. Help each other and share
- E. Shy
- F. Quiet
- G. Have special needs
- H. Happy
- I. Not intimidated – Not embarrassed about participating in class
- J. Know how to follow the routine
- K. Belong to different levels
- L. Look out for help
- M. High Self-esteem
- N. Get restless very fast
- O. Low socio-economic status

XVII. Attributes of the Principal

- A. Works very hard
- B. Makes things easier for teachers
- C. Supportive
- D. Has an open door policy
- E. Very open-minded
- F. Caring

XVIII. Attributes of the Reading Coach

- A. Provides professional development
 - 1. Providing information
 - 2. Modeling lessons
 - 3. Guiding teachers
- B. Shares wonderful ideas
- C. Answers teachers' questions
- D. Gives teachers a "pep talk"
- E. Brings teachers' spirits up
- F. Provides support
- G. Helps teachers
 - 1. Getting materials for teachers
 - 2. Always available
 - 3. Helping organize rooms
 - 4. Assists with the implementation of the learning centers

- H. Keeps herself up to date
- I. Assists with the implementation of the School Instructional Focus
- J. Reads to students
- K. Helps students
- L. Caring

XIX. Attributes of the Parent Liaison

- A. Bilingual
- B. Very organized with parents
- C. Plans monthly meetings
- D. Welcomes parents
 - 1. Helps parents with their needs
- E. Concerned about children
 - 1. Helps needed children

XX. Attributes of Paraprofessionals

- A. Bilingual
- B. Assist students
- C. Assist at the literacy centers
- D. Reinforce skills
- E. Ask questions

XXI. Attributes of the Instructional Leadership Team

- A. Deals with the academic structure of the school
- B. Selects ideas and themes
 - 1. Selects the School Instructional Focus
 - 2. Selects School's research-based instructional best practices
 - 3. Monitors school's best practices
- C. Planning
- D. All teachers are represented
- E. Meets once or more a month

XXII. Attributes of the Classroom

- A. Non-threatening environment
- B. Everyone's answer is accepted
 - 1. No one is wrong
- C. Open doors for parents
- D. A rich print environment

XXIII. Attributes of Best Practices

- A. Being scientifically research-based
- B. Implemented throughout the school
 - 1. Evident throughout the school
 - 2. Supported by all teachers

- C. Trying to get to the students
 - 1. Getting the best out of students
 - 2. Meeting students' instructional needs
 - 3. Meeting the needs of bilingual students
- D. Instructional ways
- E. Teaching strategies
- F. Change of teaching experience

XXIV. Attributes of Bilingual Education

- A. Beneficial
- B. Native language use
- C. Lots of language development
- D. A lot of strategies used

XXV. Attributes of the Literacy Block

- A. 90-minute long
- B. Uninterrupted
- C. Enhances students' learning skills and abilities for acquiring reading

XXVI. Attributes of Small Group Instruction

- A. Helping students with difficulties
 - 1. Working with students one on one
 - 2. Providing self-confidence to students
- B. Extra emphasis on skills
- C. Positive learning environment
- D. The best thing that could have happened

XXVII. Attributes of Literacy Centers

- A. Small group of children
- B. Rotation
- C. Do not stay the same
- D. 15-20 minutes long
- E. Made a whole change in instruction
- F. All students learn
- G. being able to reuse and recycle
- H. The furniture is more spacious
- I. Being mobile
- J. Students work independently
- K. Every week is different
- L. Children move around
- M. Being fun
- N. Nobody is left out

XXVIII. Attributes of the Classroom library

- A. Has at least 300 books
- B. Includes books in English and Spanish
- C. Children love being there
- D. The students feel comfortable there
 - 1. It has two big pillows
- E. The students read to each other
- F. The students select the books

XXIX. Attributes of Read Alouds

- A. Oral
 - 1. Elicits conversation
- B. Leads to comprehension questioning
- C. Students get together
- D. Students share
- E. It is personal
- F. It is enjoyable by teachers
- G. Students get along

XXX. Attributes of Guided Reading

- A. Teacher contact
- B. Teacher instructed
- C. Small group of children
- D. Leads to comprehension questioning
- E. Leveled Reading
- F. Reinforces reading skills

XXXI. Attributes of Thematic Units

- A. They make a lot of sense
- B. It is more meaningful
- C. Support different content areas
- D. Support different skills
- E. Conducive to learning center activities

XXXII. Attributes of Wiggle Works

- A. Students write about a story
 - 1. Students print what they write
 - 2. Students enjoy the print out
- B. Integrates technology
- C. Reading stories
 - 1. Reinforcement of reading
 - 2. Reading series supplement
- D. Emphasis on reading, comprehension, and vocabulary development

XXXIII. Attributes of Word Walls

- A. Gradually increase
- B. Used to build on
- C. Students' generated
- D. Separates English and Spanish
- E. Based on the reading stories

XXXIV. Attributes of Professional Development

- A. An on-going process
- B. Grade level oriented
- C. Modeled
- D. Job-embedded
- E. Data driven
- F. Meeting instructional needs
- G. Hands-on approach
- H. Tailored to teachers' needs
- I. Addresses school's instructional focus
- J. Addresses school's identified best practices
- K. Given by actual teachers
- L. Frequent

XXXV. Attributes of Parents

- A. Happy about school
- B. Feel more comfortable
- C. Express concerns
 - 1. Ask questions and abilities for acquiring reading
- D. Volunteer in school
 - 1. Read to students
 - 2. Help teachers in the classroom
 - 3. Make customs
 - 4. Cook for students
- E. Uncooperative

XXXV. Attributes of Students' Native Country Schools

- A. Whole group instruction
- B. Native language instruction
- C. Large class size
- D. Limited funds/resources
- E. Lack of manipulatives
- F. Lack of instructional materials
- G. Not providing students with supplies
- H. Low education

Appendix E
Componential Analysis

Componential Analysis

Completed Paradigm: Kinds of Instructional Strategies

Kinds of Instructional Strategies	DIMENSIONS OF CONTRAST			
	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
School Instructional Focus	1.1	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.2	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.3	2.3	3.3	
	1.4	2.4	3.4	
	1.5	2.5	3.5	
			2.6	3.6
Small Group Instruction	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.5	2.2	3.2	4.2
		2.5	3.3	4.3
			3.4	
			3.6	
Native Language Instruction	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.4	2.3	3.4	
	1.5	2.4		
		2.5		
Literacy Centers	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.5	2.3	3.3	4.3
		2.4	3.4	
		2.5	3.6	
90-Minute Literacy Block	1.1	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.2	2.5	3.2	4.2
	1.3		3.3	4.3
	1.4		3.4	
	1.5		3.6	
Word Walls	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
		2.2	3.2	4.2
		2.3	3.3	4.3
		2.4	3.4	
		2.5	3.6	
Journal Writing	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.5	3.2	4.2
				4.3

Hands-On Activities	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.4	2.3	3.3	
	1.5	2.4	3.4	
		2.5	3.6	
Bilingual Education	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.4	2.3	3.3	4.3
	1.5	2.4	3.4	
		2.5		
English as a Second Language	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.4	2.3	3.3	4.3
	1.5	2.4	3.4	
		2.5		
		2.6		
Thematic Units	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.4	2.3	3.3	4.3
	1.5	2.4	3.5	
		2.5	3.6	
		2.6		
Co-Teaching	1.1	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.2
	1.4	2.5	3.3	4.3
			3.4	
			3.6	

Dimensions of Contrast

1.0 Ways of Delivering Instruction

- 1.1 Teacher Centered
- 1.2 Student Centered
- 1.3 Small Group Instruction
- 1.4 Whole Class Instruction
- 1.5 Co-Teaching Approach

2.0 Subjects Using Kinds of Instructional Strategies

- 2.1 Reading and Language Arts
- 2.2 Mathematics
- 2.3 Social Studies
- 2.4 Science
- 2.5 English as a Second Language (ESL)
- 2.6 Special Area Subjects (Art, Music, Physical Education)

3.0 Teachers Using Kinds of Instructional Strategies

- 3.1 Classroom Teachers
- 3.2 Basic Skills Instruction (BSI) Teachers
- 3.3 English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers
- 3.4 Special Education Teachers
- 3.5 Special Area Teachers (Art, Music, Physical Education)
- 3.6 Reading Coach

4.0 Training Received for Instructional Strategies Implementation

- 4.1 District Sponsored Professional Development
- 4.2 School Sponsored Professional Development
- 4.3 Outside Professional Development

Completed Paradigm: Ways of Learning

DIMENSIONS OF CONTRAST				
Ways of Learning	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
Ways of Acquiring Reading	1.1	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.2	2.2		4.2
	1.3			4.3
	1.4			4.4
	1.5			4.5
	1.6			4.6
Ways of Writing	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.2
	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.3
	1.4		3.3	4.4
	1.5			4.5
	1.6			4.6
Ways of Learning English	1.2	2.1	3.1	4.1
	1.3	2.2		4.2
	1.4			4.3
	1.6			4.4
			4.5	
			4.6	

Dimensions of Contrast

1.0 Students' Approaches

- 1.1 Teacher Centered
- 1.2 Student Centered
- 1.3 Small Group Instruction
- 1.4 Whole Class Instruction
- 1.5 Use of Native Language
- 1.6 Through Content Areas

2.0 Frequency of Using Ways of Learning

- 2.1 Daily
- 2.2 Several times during the day
- 2.3 Twice a week
- 2.4 Three times a week
- 2.5 Weekly

3.0 Students Response to Ways of Learning

- 3.1 Like
- 3.2 Dislike
- 3.3 Indifference

4.0 Results of Ways of Learning

- 4.1 Improved Reading
- 4.2 Improved Writing
- 4.3 Differentiated Instruction
- 4.4 Better Test Results
- 4.5 Enhanced Self-Esteem
- 4.6 Parents' Support