

2008

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Michele Anberg-Espinosa

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The University of San Francisco

EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND
THEIR PARENTS IN A TWO-WAY SPANISH IMMERSION PROGRAM

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Michele Anberg-Espinosa
San Francisco
May 2008

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Michele Anberg-Espinosa
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May 15, 2008
Date

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Betty Taylor
Chairperson

Susan Katz

Patricia Mitchell

DEDICATION

To students of African descent studying a foreign language: May you know your intellectual, linguistic and cultural roots, and may these roots give you wings to meet your goal of becoming truly bilingual. May your bilingual skills take you to where you want to go in your life, and may you always remember to utilize those skills to promote justice and peace.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The students in the study: Thank you for your openness and honesty, for your willingness to participate in a project that was unfamiliar to you. Your thoughts and opinions are worth more than gold! Because of you, other students and families will benefit greatly.

The parents of the participating students: Thank you for entrusting me with your children. Thank you for sharing your lives, your perspectives, and your time. Thank you for your unending patience with my questions. I was honored to participate with you in this project.

Dr. Betty Taylor: Thank you for your support, patience, and advocacy. Your trust and belief in me, especially at the very end, was a beautiful act of kindness to my whole family. Thank you.

Dr. Susan Katz: Thank you for your wisdom, guidance, and perseverance throughout this long journey.

Dr. Patricia Mitchell: Thank you for your kindness, confidence, and commitment, even during your sabbatical year.

Dr. Alma Flor Ada: My inspiration and my advisor for two years—the reason I came to the program. You played such a key role in my re-education those first two years and continue to do so. Thank you for helping the scales drop off my eyes. Thank you for sharing your life through your experiences, your literature, and your stories. In doing so, you have impacted mine forever. THANK YOU!

Dra. Laura Campuzano Volpe: Mis respetos por ser una maestra excelente. Su pasión por la sociolingüística me llevó a nuevas alturas y a una realización más profunda de la justificación lingüística de abogar por la legitimidad de todas las lenguas.

Janet Snyder: Thank you for your endless patience and quick responses. You're the best!

Teejay Bersola—the dynamic link! Without you this would just have been a dream.

Martha Quadros: Thank you for your openness, willingness, availability, helpfulness, and above all your endless patience with my questions, deadlines and emails. Your support brought this project to fruition.

Karen Williams: As the parent contact that inspired others to participate, your commitment to the school is exemplary.

The teachers at the Language Institute: Mis respetos...How can I ever thank you? By opening your classroom doors to me, you opened up the potential for a better program for all those involved. Thank you for your openness, honesty, hospitality, and patience. Lalo, special thanks to you for your availability and for going above and beyond to support the project.

Language Institute Office personnel: For your patience in supporting me in the endless amount of information I needed. The Institute is so blessed to have you!

Lorena Garcia: For inspiring me to enroll in at least one class that first semester....

Pam Dungy: For your friendship, inspiration, hospitality, and support to finish....

Julianne Wurm: For your friendship, listening ear, and support as this project has finally come to fruition. Also, for your generosity in printing out and delivering my proposal draft when crisis hit! We will write together someday!

Zena Moore: For revising my draft. Your input was key in the completion of this project.

Rosa Molina: Thank you for opening my eyes to what Two-Way Immersion is supposed to be.

Liz Howard: For your willingness to read over my lit review at short notice. Your generosity and expertise are sincerely appreciated.

Kathryn Lindholm-Leary: Thank you for your ever willingness to share information and help where needed!

Virginia Collier: Your patient explanations and encouragement have truly been a blessing.

Renee Shank: Thank you for sharing your paper on the “teacher’s perspective” of African Americans in TWI with me. It was a godsend. I expect you to get your doctorate soon!

Melissa Simpson: Thank you for your editing skills but, mostly, your graciousness in working under tight deadlines!

The California Department of Education: For granting me educational leave, without which I would not have completed this project. Also, to the Language Policy and Leadership Office personnel for your encouragement to keep going and willingness to fill in for me this last semester when I was away from the office.

Judy Lambert: Thank you for your inspiration. You were there to direct me at the very beginning of this journey into the world of Two-Way Immersion.

Mom and Dad: You have taught me more than I could ever learn in school. Thank you for who you are and what you have done to enable me to complete this dissertation. Your unconditional love has moved mountains. Quite literally, if it hadn’t been for you, I wouldn’t have been able to finish. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, listening ears, guidance, support, editing, patience, devotion, and, of course, babysitting Maya! Your efforts were truly selfless. My hat is off to you....

Steff, Austin, Gianna and Jerry: For your support and assistance along the way. Thank you for being part of the village that took care of Maya, especially during this last semester. Steff, your prayers and encouragement all along this journey have been so important. Thank you for your gracious spirit and unconditional support whenever I was going crazy.

Maya Annaliese: For helping me remember what is most important in life! Thank you, dolly, for your unconditional love when mommy was “busy” or “workin’.” Thank you for coming over to me at the computer and saying “Up peeze, Mommy!” when I needed your hugs the most. Thank you, dolly!

Mia Xitlaly: Did you know you were the impetus for getting this project done? And you were so patient to wait to be born until after I defended the dissertation and graduated. You have made all the difference! Thank you, little dolly!

Luigi: ¿Dónde empiezo? ¡Eres lo máximo! Te agradezco tu paciencia por comprender mi estado perpetuo de ser alumna... Mis respetos por tu apoyo incondicional. Jamás hubiera podido hacerlo sin tí. Gracias sobre todo por cuidar a Maya de tiempo completo durante estos últimos meses. Ahora sí, por fin, te puedo decir que he terminado la tesis...

To other friends, family, colleagues, and fellow students whose names go unmentioned but, nonetheless, are not forgotten, as you encouraged me along the way. Your support and encouragement made all the difference, and without you, it would have certainly been a lonely journey.

“He has shown thee, o man, what is good and what the Lord requires of thee... But to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” (Micah 6:8)

For my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to you be all the glory, honor and praise. Thank you for teaching me about justice through this program. Thank you for the people on the pathway that have changed my life and perspective in the process. Thank you for blessing my life with loved ones who walked with me and so often carried me on this journey that seemed like would never end. Bless them beyond measure. May this project be used for your glory. May it promote justice, love, and peace. Amen.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

In urban areas, both Latino and African Americans compose a significant and increasing portion of the population of students in programs designed to produce bilingual, biliterate, and cross-culturally competent students, entitled Two-Way Immersion (Krause, 1999). However, very few TWI studies specifically have addressed the experiences and perspectives of African American students as participants in these programs.

The overall vision of a unique program entitled Two-Way Immersion (TWI) is to prepare global citizens. Two-Way Immersion is a form of dual language education. The ultimate goal of TWI is to provide all students, regardless of ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, with opportunities to become bilingual, bi-literate, and cross-culturally competent. In this program, native speakers of English are integrated with native speakers of another language, and they receive instruction in and through these two languages. Together they receive at least 50% of their day immersed in the non-English or partner language. Students from both groups are in each class, and they receive content area instruction and language development in both languages. The students are integrated for most or all of their content instruction. The intended outcome of this environment is affirming attitudes toward both languages and cultures (Christian, 1996).

Of the TWI research studies that include information about African American outcomes, there were conflicting findings. For instance, on the one hand, TWI programs have demonstrated overall success for both native English and native Spanish speakers

(Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Concomitantly, other research findings suggested that TWI programs may not have been responsive to the needs of African American students (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003).

In the United States, to speak Standard English and be White is to have the language and culture of power. This same society de-legitimizes people of color as well as speakers of different language varieties, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), also known as Ebonics. Therefore, students of color, particularly those speaking varieties of language other than what is considered “standard,” are often marginalized in school. The schooling experiences of these groups of students are often in conflict with their cultural and family experiences. Students, therefore, often end up wasting valuable time and energy on forming what is considered an oppositional identity (Kohl, 1994) to cope with this marginalization and in order to maintain personal dignity.

Marginalization of students, such as Latinos and speakers of languages other than English, has sparked bilingual programs in the United States, such as TWI, in order to provide more equitable learning opportunities for speakers of languages other than English (e.g., Spanish). The TWI program simultaneously provides foreign language opportunities to native speakers of English. In this program, one goal is that languages such as Spanish and those who speak Spanish have the same status as English and speakers of English. The bilingual program philosophy of utilizing prior knowledge as a bridge to a second language is of primary importance if this is to take place. The philosophy of bilingual education applied to speakers of Ebonics would seem to stipulate a program that also values the language that a large portion of African Americans have

learned in their homes—a program that provides optimal support for development in the language of Standard English (Wiese, 2004).

African American students speaking Ebonics have different linguistic and cultural experiences than their peers in a TWI program. However, the research in regards to these everyday lived experiences, and particularly the effectiveness of TWI for African American students who use Ebonics, was virtually non-existent (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000). Considering that African American students who speak Ebonics may have experienced marginalization culturally and linguistically and may not have the affirmation in regards to their home language in a TWI program, it was beneficial to understand in greater detail how an African American student had persevered through a TWI program to middle school and how they perceived and had navigated through the program in spite of this marginalized status.

A second reality of TWI programs is the issue of student attrition in the upper grades (Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000). Therefore, it was important to investigate factors that impact perseverance in a program. Additionally, because TWI is a program chosen by parents, it was also critical to understand the perspective of the parents of these students in regards to their child's experiences. Student and parent perspectives regarding perseverance in the program, as well as information regarding the unique language and cultural experiences of these students, were under-researched yet critical components to consider in creating equitable opportunities for bilingualism for the increasing number of African American students in TWI.

Background and Need for the Study

The knowledge of and ability to speak more than one language is an important skill for a multilingual society and is becoming a necessity in this global world. Being bilingual also carries many other benefits, such as mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking, and higher order thinking skills (Hakuta, 1986; Landry, 1974). Parents and caregivers who want their children to be prepared for the future are increasingly choosing these programs so their children can become bilingual and equipped cross-culturally. TWI programs have gained momentum in research over the last 20 years, as they have increased across United States. The first program began in 1963 (Howard & Sugarman, 2001, para. 4) and has grown to the now existing 339 programs in 29 states, including Washington, DC (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, para. 1). This program is an especially significant alternative for students in urban areas, considering schools in urban areas are often segregated and have less qualified teachers, less per capita spending, and a higher poverty index (Kozol, 2005).

TWI differs significantly from other children's language programs in that language programs are generally designed for the native or non-native speaker, not both. For example, Foreign Language Immersion is generally designed for the majority (native-speaking) population, and students receive all their instruction in a foreign language. FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) is likewise generally designed for the majority population, and students receive a portion of their instruction in the foreign language. Most other language programs or settings are designed for the non-native speaker of English: Late exit bilingual; Structured English Immersion; pullout ESL to name a few. Late exit bilingual programs utilize the primary language as a resource to

help transition students into English. The curriculum in a Structured English Immersion setting is taught “overwhelmingly” in English. Pullout ESL programs require students to be “pulled out” of their classes to receive special English instruction. TWI, on the other hand, is designed for both native and non-native speakers and integrates native English speakers and native speakers of other languages for most of the day. In addition, at least 50% of the content instruction is provided in languages other than English. Theoretically, since every child has a native language and is learning a second, every child is considered a language model as well as a language learner in the program. TWI programs provide instruction in an environment that is purposefully integrated in order to reach the goals of high academic achievement, bilingualism, and cross-cultural proficiency.

Part of the linguistic rationale for TWI programs is that children have a greater advantage over other second or foreign language programs because they will not only have an early start to a long sequence of language instruction but will also learn school subjects with a foreign language as the medium rather than the content of instruction. In other words, the foreign language is used to teach the lesson instead of simply being the content goal of the lesson, as would be the case in a typical foreign language class. This technique greatly increases levels of proficiency compared to other forms of foreign language education (“Why, How and When,” n.d.). Participation in a TWI program takes advantage of a young child’s facility to learn languages and simultaneously provides him with purposeful integration of students across race, class, and linguistic boundaries, which is not generally typical of a traditional language education program.

The specific goals and rationale of TWI include performing at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages, developing high levels of bilingual proficiency

and positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors, and fostering high levels of self-esteem in all students (Christian, 1994, Goals and Rationale section, para. 2). The research that emerged demonstrated how both native English and native Spanish-speaking children were achieving academically in the TWI school environment, as well as meeting other TWI goals (Howard & Sugarman, 2007, p.1).

In the areas of bilingualism and bi-literacy, there were positive results in large-scale studies, such as those performed by Lindholm-Leary (2001). In small-scale studies of individual schools, there were also positive results. For example, students surveyed on their opinions about students of different races indicated that their friendships were independent of race or ethnicity (Carrigo, 2000; Nicoladis, Taylor, Lambert, & Cazabon, 1998). Additionally, there was evidence that self-esteem was high (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Freeman, 1998; Nicoladis et al., 1998). Positive ethnic feelings on a language attitude survey had also been documented from participation in this program (Rolstad, 1997). At the same time, there were gaps in the literature, especially regarding African Americans in TWI (Howard et al., 2003), such as the very little information available delineating “standard” English speakers from those participants who speak other varieties of English. Lastly, demographically speaking, groups that are underrepresented in TWI programs were particularly underrepresented in TWI research.

The demographic transformation of the United States is an indication of the changing face of TWI; therefore, it is significant to take this information into account in the planning and implementation of TWI programs. For example, currently 40% of the total United States population is composed of people of color. By the year 2050, that number will rise to 60% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996, p. vii). In urban areas, the

transformation has already taken place. According to statistics available on the 100 largest school districts in the United States as of 2004, 70% of the population was composed of students of color. Blacks and Latinos compose a significant portion of the student population in these urban areas. In fact, it is estimated that three fourths of Black and Latino students attend schools that are composed predominantly of students of color, and more than two million attend schools where 99 to 100 % of students are students of color. To compound the issue, the number of teachers of color is not keeping up with this demographic shift. Approximately 90% of teachers are White, meaning that fewer teachers have the cultural framework to make instruction culturally responsive, and erroneous assumptions about the intelligence of people of color might be reinforced by the absence of teachers of color in the work force (Branch, 2001). To confound the issue, a disproportionate number of students in these districts (approximately half) were eligible for free and reduced lunch, and hence considered children of poverty.

Consistent with this nationwide demographic shift, the faces in TWI programs have changed from a primarily White and Latino population to a more diverse body of students. Earlier demographic information stated that 60% of the population in TWI in California and 66% in New York had no clear ethnic/racial majority (Howard & Sugarman, 2001), whereas the national TWI average was at 54%. Of particular significance in the research was that TWI programs were increasingly becoming an option for students in urban areas in particular in order to provide English dominant minority children the advantage of a foreign language (Krause, 1999). With equal opportunities for bilingualism and cross-cultural understanding as important goals of the program, TWI is a unique opportunity that provides access for those who have

historically been underrepresented in foreign language programs, such as African Americans (Huber, 1990; Z. Moore, 2005), as well as intentionally creates opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and appreciation within the classroom. Although current federal accountability measures have generated pressure to focus on the first two tenets, Christian (1994) reminds us of the original rationale "...this educational approach does not emphasize language development over academic and social development; the goal is balanced development in all three areas" (Goals and Rationale section, para. 1).

Despite the importance of analyzing the specific context surrounding TWI programs with African American students, only a handful of studies have addressed the experiences of this population of students in TWI programs: Bender (2000); Carrigo (2000); Cazabon (2000); Cazabon et al.(1993); Krause (1999); Nicoladis et al. (1998); and Parchia (2000). The research was even more meager regarding the parents of these students. Furthermore, available research was inconsistent concerning outcomes for African American students.

Nicoladis et al. (1998) claimed that students of different races who are native speakers of English in a TWI program (e.g., African Americans and Anglo Americans) start school on an equal footing because "the two groups probably do not differ specifically with respect to contact with Spanish" (pp. 136-137); however, the research was yet to be determined in this regard. Some research suggested that the dropout rate for African American students in TWI is higher than that of Whites. Explanations were limited, citing potential reasons such as students who speak African American vernacular might be at a disadvantage (Krause, 1999). TWI is based on the philosophy that English is the dominant language; therefore, Immersion in Spanish theoretically poses no threat to

native English speakers (Nicoladis et al., 1998). TWI programs (approximately 94%) are generally designed around two standard languages: English and Spanish (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004). In urban areas, where students may speak different varieties of English and Spanish and where their exposure to Standard English and Standard Spanish is generally limited to teachers or other school personnel, this design is, therefore, inconsistent with the student population (Wiese, 2004). Theoretically, every student is considered a language model as well as a language learner in the program, but unless they speak Standard English or Standard Spanish, students will not see their language legitimized, much less reflected in the academic context.

Considering the extensive nature of linguistic varieties available in urban settings, the expected outcomes of a TWI program are undoubtedly impacted by the dynamics of a multilingual environment (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004). Rubinstein-Avila (2002) asserted that “the complex demographic changes occurring in major urban areas across the United States today no longer fit the majority vs. minority language binary models” (p. 80). The implementation of the TWI model must, therefore, be analyzed carefully in order to ensure that the goals are met for the participating communities. This concurs with Wiese in her assertion that the TWI program needs to be consciously constructed as opposed to simply implemented based on standards that may not apply to a local context, particularly in urban environments.

African American students who use the vernacular face many challenges in any school context, even without the added layer of learning a foreign language. As stated by Baugh (2003), there are “subtle but substantive barriers that many African American students face as they strive to succeed within an educational system that makes no

accommodation for the dialect that so many of them bring to school” (p. 43).

Furthermore, research addressing African American vernacular speakers studying a foreign language was essentially non-existent (English, 1997). Cloud et al. (2000) echoed this claim: “Research on bi-dialectal education in the United States is scant and is often tainted with political issues. The research on enriched bilingual education for students who speak a non-standard dialect of English is even more meager” (p. 66). Therefore, research concerning the continuation of African American students in a TWI program who speak a non-standard variety of English was not readily existent.

Since the focus of research on foreign language continuation has been mainly on White middle class students (Z. Moore, 2005), important information regarding African American participation in foreign language programs was lacking. Studies cited the need for more information on underrepresented communities in TWI programs, particularly African Americans and other students often considered “at-risk” (Krause, 1999; Lambert & Cazabon, 1994; Nicoladis et al., 1998). This idea is further elaborated upon by Nicoladis et al.: “Certainly, more research is needed to pinpoint the actual social/environmental factor or factors that may be involved in African-American students’ performance in two-way bilingual programmes” (p. 146). Researchers also cited the critical need to have parent perspectives, particularly those from marginalized communities (Delpit, 1992; Nieto, 1999; Thompson, 2003).

As is true in traditional education literature, there was also a paucity in information in TWI regarding strategies that facilitate African American student achievement and retention, particularly for students who speak Ebonics, as well as the impact that these strategies have on the African American population in TWI programs.

Rymes and Anderson (2004) cited the need to “align the bodies of research on AAE and bilingualism” (p. 112). They also stressed the importance of research in settings where different languages and varieties are used, particularly in regards to African American English and Spanish:

Viewing non-standard dialects and languages as deficit forms is an educational method of the past. However, making the link across the multiple home languages and varieties present in most contemporary classrooms is a complicated endeavor, and one that has not been researched in classroom discourse studies. No one has yet studied the interactional dynamics of classrooms in which both Spanish and AAE are spoken, and in which school English is the goal for all. (p. 108)

The proposed study attempted to examine the interactional dynamics of school where English and Spanish were the goals for all.

African American students have historically been denied educational opportunities, and this marginalization is particularly evident in the under-representation of African Americans in the study of foreign languages. TWI, in theory, offers an optimal program for children to learn a second language. However, in order to ensure that African Americans have equal access to opportunities for bilingualism, biliteracy, and increased cross-cultural understanding, it was important to explore whatever has encouraged African American students, particularly those who speak Ebonics, to continue in a TWI program. To discover what had influenced African Americans to continue in a TWI program along with the linguistic and cultural experiences and perspectives of this population of students was the focus of this study. African American student experiences, as well as student and parent perceptions of the TWI program were at best only minimally addressed in the TWI literature.

How the unique cultural and linguistic realities of the African American student interface with their academic experiences and acquisition of a second language was yet to

be explored in depth. Linguistic and cultural experiences and successful academic experiences are inextricably linked. Researching the perspectives and linguistic and cultural experiences of African American students (and their parents) who continue throughout the upper grades was seen as an opportunity to gain insight into how to best consciously construct TWI programs to ensure African American success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to discover experiences and perspectives of African American upper elementary and middle school students and parents in TWI programs to provide insight into the reasons behind perseverance in the TWI program and the role of language and culture in the students' lives. It is incumbent upon teachers and administrators to be fully aware of these students' linguistic and cultural experiences and identities in order to facilitate equal opportunities for bilingualism as well as overall academic success for African American students, particularly those speaking Ebonics in an urban TWI context.

Research Questions

1. What factors have contributed to upper elementary and middle school African American student continued participation in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program?
2. What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to language?

3. What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to culture?

4. What are the perspectives of the parents of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to their children's language and cultural experiences?

Theoretical Framework

Three theoretical frameworks provided underpinnings for this study, and involved the intersection of TWI program tenets with the discourse regarding successful student learning opportunities for African Americans. The frameworks also included sociolinguistic discourse related to language to bring about an understanding of factors connecting successful schooling experiences in African American students within the TWI context. Thus, in order to most accurately address African American students in TWI programs, the researcher utilized three theoretical frameworks: (a) the tenets of Two-Way Immersion (b) multiculturalism, and (c) culturally responsive pedagogy, with a particular focus on language legitimacy in schooling contexts.

Two Way Immersion Tenets

The first theoretical framework was the philosophical foundation on which Two-Way Immersion Education is based: performing at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages; developing high levels of bilingual proficiency; creating positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors; and fostering high levels of self-esteem in all students (Christian, 1994, Goals and Rationale section, para. 2).

Successful TWI programs are theoretically a result of adherence to these principles, but this study proposed that successful implementation of TWI in urban contexts, particularly in which African American students speak Ebonics, requires special attention to context and, therefore, a conscious construction rather than simple implementation of the TWI model.

Multiculturalism

James Banks (1996) posited that multiculturalism is not just teaching about heroes and a celebration of holidays but is

an idea or concept, an educational reform movement and a process. Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students—regardless of their gender and social class and their ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school. (Banks & Banks, 2003, p. 3)

Banks' (1996) definition of *multiculturalism* is equity, and this definition has five different dimensions. These dimensions include content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and an empowering school culture and social structure. These can be used “to guide the implementation and assessment of programs designed to respond to student diversity, and to incorporate transformative scholarship into the curriculum and pedagogy” (Banks, p. 336). These dimensions imply that the whole school environment is changed to create equal educational opportunities for all students. Multiculturalism or cross-cultural sensitivity is one of the three tenets of TWI programs. If TWI programs are to serve all students equitably, multiculturalism needs to be as much a priority as are bilingualism and bi-literacy. However, Banks' definition of multiculturalism is much more than inclusivity of other cultures. It is all encompassing, addressing all the components of school culture. A school fully

implementing these dimensions would theoretically provide an optimal educational experience for African Americans.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

A practical application of Banks' multicultural theory is found in the third theoretical underpinning entitled culturally responsive pedagogy. The overarching philosophy behind TWI programs is the belief that language is accessible to all. However, language may not be accessible to all unless efforts are made to facilitate learning for all students. Not all strategies and techniques that work with one population of students will work for all students. In order to address issues relating to all students, a culturally responsive pedagogy must be employed. Culturally responsive pedagogy stems from Paulo Freire (2000), whose work with Brazilian peasants questioned the status quo of "banking education." By using methods that capitalized on participants' own experiences, they were able to name realities in their world, move from being "objects" to being "subjects" and, therefore, began to empower themselves and also take social action to improve their own realities.

This term does not connote celebrating heroes and holidays; rather, it is used interchangeably with "culturally relevant, sensitive, centered, congruent, reflective, mediated, contextualized, synchronized, and responsive" (Gay, 2000, p. 29), and Gay went on further to define the term as "...using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students" (p. 29). Jordan-Irvine (2002) stated that "the teaching effectiveness research literature informs us that a responsive teacher is sensitive to the

needs, interests, and abilities of all students, their parents, and communities” (p. 2). She asserted that culturally responsive pedagogy “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 18). Gay explained that pedagogy is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative and emancipatory.

Culturally responsive pedagogy was a significant component of the theoretical construct of this study for two reasons: One was in regards to its connection with the social and cultural dimensions of teaching and learning as explained by Luis Moll. Moll (n.d.) stated that “these interpersonal dimensions...are what provide meaning and relevance to our experiences and are what help students develop long term relationships with subject matter.” This ultimately impacts academic achievement (Gay, 2000; Jordan-Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999).

The second important role culturally responsive pedagogy played for this study was in providing a vision for an optimal environment that promotes self-efficacy and ultimately achievement for African American students. Theoretically, TWI programs attempt to fulfill the requirement of academic achievement, provide for optimal second language acquisition, and increase cross-cultural understanding. High expectations and making bilingualism accessible in a way that would recognize and value the African American culture, language, and communication style as well as take into account the unique language development needs of African American students would provide these students with the opportunity to optimize their achievement in TWI programs.

Delimitations of the Study

The study confined itself to a school recommended by experts in the field of TWI with staff who were open to exploring the role the school plays with African American parents and students in TWI programs. It was also limited to a school having a population of both female and male African American students in the upper intermediate and middle school grades.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher's experiences as a White educator limited the study in regards to the African American perspective; as a result, the African American perspective in the study was limited to secondhand experiences. As Tillman (2002) stated, "Culture can be conceptualized and defined differently depending on one's worldview and one's particular needs as a researcher and scholar" (p. 3). The students and parents did not know the researcher before the study took place and, therefore, may have felt inhibited in their conversations, regarding sensitive topics such as race, ethnicity, culture, and the politically charged topic of Ebonics, especially considering the fact that the researcher was White. The answers to interview questions might have, therefore, been impacted by this inhibition.

Another factor limiting the research was that there were only nine participants and the students were from a small charter school in Northern California. Therefore, the findings could not be generalized to other school contexts with other students. Although ten students were identified as eligible to participate, one student's father would not give permission due to what his son claimed was the sensitive nature of the questions,

interpreting the dialogue questions to be biased. His son judged that the research assumed that students in the study were speakers of Ebonics and could not manage academic English, and he did not want to be identified in this way. The father said that he would not make his son participate in something he didn't want to participate in. The father also refused to participate for similar reasons. The research methodology utilized by interviews and other qualitative measures interpreted by the researcher were used to identify commonalities among the participants offering data not available through other forms of scientific methods.

The researcher had been informed that all students in the study utilized Ebonics as their home language, but upon observation and interviews of the students, three students were not actually observed to use Ebonics, and neither their parents nor teachers observed them to use it. Whereas they did not utilize it in their speech patterns, they were definitely exposed to it through family, recognized it, and from time to time utilized it. This was especially the case for two students who were included in the study who were biracial. They were included in the study because their student records had indicated African American as one of more of the ethnicities with which the students identified, which inadvertently included them on the original list provided to the researcher. These two students were maintained in the study because they had one parent with African American roots, and the school wanted to obtain as much input as possible from students and parents.

Two other student's records indicated students were African American, but when interviewed, revealed a discrepancy. One claimed to be Panamanian, though she was part Panamanian and part African American and used Ebonics, and was not a native Spanish

speaker. The other student began her interview stating she was African American, which had appeared in her school records, and was claimed by her mother, who was African American, but in the course of the interview it was revealed she was biracial—half African American and half Mexican. These students were maintained in the study for the same reason listed above. The Panamanian/African American student actually entered the program in second grade. Although the criteria for the study only included students who entered no later than first grade, her case was exceptional because her late entry was officially authorized by the school.

The parents of all these students were also maintained in the study. This meant that in addition to the eight African American parents, there was one biracial (African American/Mexican) parent, one parent (who self-identified as Panamanian, and spoke Ebonics, Standard English, and some Spanish), and one Mexican parent (married to an African American) included in the group of 11 parents.

Of the nine students, there were seven total families, because there were two brother/sister combinations. There were four two-parent families and two single-parent families. All parents in the two-parent families participated except for one father, who was Latino. He was physically present during the interviews with his wife, but they decided he would not participate in the study officially because he was not as involved in the school as his wife and he struggled with literacy. Although the researcher tried to assure him this wasn't important, he only agreed to answer a few general questions about the school and participate in the group meeting for school information purposes. The last family was composed of two households, since the parents lived separately, but both parents still participated in the study. In all cases but one, due to scheduling availability,

the parents were interviewed separately.

Definition of Terms

The terms listed below are intended to clarify their meaning within the context of this research.

African-American/Black: A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “Black, African Am., or Negro,” or provide written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, para. 5)

Ebonics (also referred to as Black English, African American Vernacular (AAVE), Spoken Soul): 1) refers to the study of a language of Black people that “is systematic and rule-governed like all natural speech varieties . . .” (Rickford, 1997, para. 2), and is composed of “...linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represent the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean, and United States slave descendant of African origin” (R. L. Williams, 1975, vi).

Foreign Language (FL): A foreign language is a language not spoken by the indigenous people of a certain place: for example, English is a foreign language in Japan. (“Foreign language,” 2007, para. 1).

Foreign Language Immersion Programs (FI): “An approach to teaching another language that involves immersing students in the target language throughout the school day” (Lenker & Rhodes, 2007, para. 1).

Foreign Language Programs: Refers to educational programs in the United States in which languages other than English are taught.

Funds of Knowledge: Refers to those historically developed and accumulated strategies (e.g., skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning and well-being (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Instruction: One of the three criteria of TWI programs; content and literacy instruction in English and the partner language is provided to all students and all students receive instruction in the partner language at least 50% of the instructional day (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, para. 1).

Integration: One of the three criteria of TWI programs; Language-minority (e.g., Spanish) and language majority (e.g., English) students are integrated for at least 50% of their instructional time at all levels (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, para. 1).

Second Language (L2): Refers to the second (not native) language of the learner.

Population: One of the three criteria of TWI programs; within the program there is a balance of language-minority and language-majority students, with each group making up between one-third and two-thirds of the total student population (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, para. 1).

Two-Way Immersion (TWI): Bilingual education programs in which native English/native other language (e.g., Spanish) students and bilingual students are integrated and receive instruction in the other language at least 50% of their day and whose ultimate goal is bilingualism, bi-literacy and multiculturalism/cross-cultural competency. The program must meet three criteria: integration, instruction, and population (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, para. 1).

White/European-American/Caucasian: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who

indicate their race as “White” or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, para. 4).

Significance of the Study

This study attempted to close apparent gaps in the literature between TWI literature, successful schooling models of African American achievement as well as the linguistic and cultural experiences of these students, from both the student and parent perspectives. Student demographics indicated that students of color are increasing, yet teachers of color are decreasing. African American students in urban areas composed a growing population of students in TWI programs whose experiences are very unique and whose linguistic and cultural formation is more than likely different from other students in the program. The voices of this population of students needed to be shared so that this information could be taken into consideration in order to make the same opportunities for bilingualism, bi-literacy, and cross-cultural competency equally accessible to African Americans, particularly those who spoke Ebonics. The perspectives of African American students and their parents participating in these programs would provide teachers and administrators with inside information and tools to more effectively facilitate bilingualism and ultimately academic achievement for African American students who spoke Ebonics.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

African Americans have a legacy of intellectualism and a history of academic achievement. Despite this rich and unique heritage of intellectualism, they are considered “at risk” academically. T. Howard (2007) asserted that, in spite of significant gains made by African Americans in the last century, other groups have gained as well; therefore, the achievement gap, which generally refers to the disparity in achievement between Whites and students of color as represented on achievement tests and grade point averages (Tatum, 2007), is still intact. Hale (2001) asserted that this achievement gap occurs even in middle and upper income families. Perry (2003b) echoed this claim, contending that districts that have “prided themselves on being liberal, politically progressive towns, multiracial communities, good places for Blacks to live, with excellent school systems report the same achievement gap” (p. 7).

The historical trajectory of this group provides context for understanding the African American philosophical approach to education—literacy for freedom and freedom for literacy—an intellectual legacy paving the way for contemporary public intellectuals such as bell hooks, Cornell West, Derrick Bell, Toni Morrison, Henry Louis Gates, Jim Anderson, Asa Hilliard III, Patricia Williams, and Michael Dyson (Perry, 2003a). It also contextualizes the discussion of the broader reality of African Americans in education today in regards to student potential as well as challenges that they face. It is especially important to contextualize the challenge that TWI could potentially present for African American students, such as the additional layer of second language

acquisition, and the different aspect that cultural components and identity have in this context. This analysis provided insight into the historical background and current realities of African Americans in education, and the present day relevance and relationship to TWI programs, with a particular focus on how to create successful learning opportunities for African Americans in TWI programs.

Overview

In this review of current literature, domains relevant to African American students in TWI were addressed. First, at the broadest level, it was important to understand the historical context of African Americans in the U.S. educational system, with a particular emphasis on successful models of African American schooling. Next, beginning to look at second language acquisition contexts, African American participation in a variety of second/foreign language programs was explored. Finally, narrowing to the topic of interest, the literature on African Americans in TWI was investigated, particularly empirical studies that addressed the challenges facing African American students in TWI, such as language legitimacy and identity development.

The Historical Context of African Americans in Education

African Americans are arguably the only “immigrant” group that has been legally denied educational access (Jackson, 2007). An analysis of the current state of African Americans in education would not be complete without a review of the socio-historical context of this group’s journey, struggles, and triumphs in its quest for educational access, despite immeasurable odds. This quest did not begin just recently or during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960’s. It began approximately 400 years ago with the

slave ships that brought Africans to U.S. soil against their will (Bennett, 1993).

Much strategizing took place on the part of slave owners in order to find ways to maximize exploitation, such as preventing contact between Africans of the same language groups so that they could not communicate with one another and making it illegal for slaves to become literate (Jackson, 2007). Controlling the mind was a tactic slave owners used to control slave actions. As stated by one of the great thinkers of the 20th century, African American historian and educator Carter G. Woodson (1933),

When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. (p. xiii)

Slave owners knew that "literacy among slaves would expose slavery" (H. Williams, 2005, p. 7). Despite attempts to keep slaves illiterate, slaves saw learning to read and write as their tool for liberation. "Literacy for freedom" and "freedom for literacy" became the motto that has encouraged them to persevere in their quest for equal access to education to the present day (Perry, 2003a).

Slaves made heroic efforts to become educated and to educate others, despite laws that punished them for doing so. With no access to books, papers, or pens, they did the unimaginable and risked severe punishment in order to become literate. They stole books or traded food and money for reading material. They copied letters and words onto fences and in the dirt. They begged and pleaded anyone to teach them to read, meeting in clandestine schools before dawn and after sunset, which was against the law. If they were caught, they would most likely be beaten (H. Williams, 2005).

The link between historical and educational injustices is inextricable; therefore,

historical injustices have inflicted irreparable damage on African Americans seeking an education. Perpetuated as the moment after which Blacks were granted equal access, the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865 officially freed slaves but far from provided them equal rights. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, fear ran through the South, whose greatest concern was controlling Blacks. To this end, during 1865 and 1866, Black codes were enacted, which essentially forced freedpeople back into slavery. These codes were very similar to the Slave Codes, which had established Blacks as property (Franklin & Moss, 2000). Vagrancy and apprenticeship laws limited Blacks to menial work, confined them to live in certain areas, and essentially gave permission for any White to arrest any Black under practically any pretense (Bennett, 1993). Without an economic foundation, slaves were not free. Land promised to the freedpeople was returned to the original owners; therefore, the freedpeople had no land, no capital, and no credit. This forced them into sharecropping, which ended up being another economic disaster for freedpeople. Whereas theory held that the sharecropper and planter split the proceeds, since the books were kept and the marketing done by the planter, the longer the sharecropper worked, the more he owed, putting him in a perpetual state of debt (Bennett, 1993).

In addition, disenfranchisement and nullification of Blacks' political power by not allowing them to vote further secured White control over Blacks. Tactics such as setting up polls long distances from their homes (or changing the poll location); enacting poll taxes; creating suffrage disqualifications, such as requiring the ability to read and write any section of the constitution or the ownership of property in order to vote; inflicting severe penalties if Blacks appeared on election day; burning crops; not to mention the

unspeakable—whippings and lynchings—all kept Blacks from obtaining protection through the law (Franklin & Moss, 2000).

After slavery “officially ended,” both adults and children entered classrooms in droves. They knew that “the ability to interpret laws for themselves or to apportion funds for schools, or to teach their own children would give them control over their lives and their communities” (H. Williams, 2005, p. 80). They would spend hours in school and after school, on work breaks and any hour where there was still daylight. Often their teachers, who were also former slaves, knew only slightly more than their students, but there was a sincere desire to pass on what they knew. No one was more invested in teaching freedpeople than the freedpeople themselves. They attempted to be self sufficient yet encountered resistance to these efforts as they still needed material resources. This dependence on outside resources subjected them to others’ judgment of who would teach them and their children. Organizations saw Black independence as detracting from the goal of bringing northern values to the South. Everyone seemed to have the answer for how to “fix” the freedpeople (H. Williams, 2005).

Meanwhile, in 1896 the court upheld the “separate but equal” doctrine set forth in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Jim Crow laws, which had been in place before this ruling, were now supported by state and local legislation. Blacks were denied equal access to hotels, theaters, restaurants, railroad trains, schools, parks, and so on. Keeping Blacks ignorant through educational discrimination paved the way for other forms of discrimination, politically and economically, throughout the twentieth century. Migration to the overcrowded cities after World War I gave way to many social ills that have plagued the Black community and impacted education up to today. Poor housing, unemployment,

inadequate recreational facilities, and similar conditions contributed to delinquency among children, crime, as well as separation among parents (Franklin & Moss, 2000).

For the first half of the twentieth century, it became clear that separate but equal schools were anything but equal. The disparity between the amount of money spent on Whites versus Blacks was no less than criminal. As late as 1948, the amount spent on White students in Tennessee, for example, was more than seven times as much as what was spent on Black students. Eventually, with the realization that desegregation was pending, southern states tried to bolster the quality of their Black schools in an effort to show that separate *was* equal. They were willing to try anything in order to avoid the desegregation of elementary and secondary schools (H. Williams, 2005).

Despite these inequities, African Americans continued to show their determination to obtain an education. The enrollment of African Americans in universities increased greatly, as well as did the number of scholars. “Surprisingly enough, out of the confused pattern of education for Africa Americans in the United States, there emerged a body of highly trained men and women who were scholars by any criterion...”(H. Williams, 2005, p. 454). Scholars such as W.E.B. Dubois shared honors with George E. Haynes, Charles S. Johnson, Aram L. Harris, Sadie T. Alexander, Carter G. Woodson, Dorothy Porter, Kenneth Clark, Alain Locke, George W. Carver, Charles Drew, and David Blackwell, to name a few. This rich intellectual history paved the way for contemporary scholars.

In 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the “separate but equal” law and required schools around the country to desegregate. Whereas schools opened up, there were many pernicious effects. One consequence of desegregation was the elimination of

thousands of Black teachers. With the closure of Black schools, thousands of Black teachers and administrators lost their jobs to Whites. The most qualified were sent to schools that hardly served the Black population. Young Black students suddenly saw their role models for academic achievement drastically reduced. With decreased job opportunities in the 1960's and 70's, fewer Blacks chose teaching as a career, furthering the gap, so that today only 7.5% of the teaching force in the United States is African American (Tatum, 2007). Tatum also explains that it was not only the teachers who changed as a result of desegregation but also the curriculum. In all-Black schools, there was at least some cultural connection with the African American experience, such as inclusion of Black authors in the curriculum. However, currently, students are hard pressed to find this to be the case considering teacher demographics. With 90.7% of the teachers in the United States being White (T. Howard, 2003), and one in three schoolchildren representing a nontraditional racial, ethnic, religious, or linguistic background (Peterson, Cross, & Johnson, 2000), there is a cultural disconnect, particularly at the elementary school level where teachers are predominantly White and female (Tatum, 2007).

In spite of the public's assumption that all students have an equal chance at an education, the facts indicate otherwise. Schools have re-segregated, especially in urban areas (Alim & Baugh, 2007; Tatum, 2007). In urban school districts in the United States, such as New York City, Detroit, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., the percent of African American and Latino students ranges anywhere from 75-94% of the total population (Booker, Stewart, & Anberg-Espinosa, 2006). This increasing re-segregation is strongly correlated with high poverty levels (Alim & Baugh) in that

segregated schools are in areas of high poverty. There is also a chronic teacher shortage, particularly of teachers of color. In many cases, highly qualified White teachers refuse to teach students of color (Kozol, 2005), migrating to the suburbs at their earliest opportunity. In addition, urban teachers earn significantly less than their colleagues in all White schools even in the same district (Sturrock, 2005). Therefore, urban schools are more often than not forced to utilize unqualified teachers who are willing to work for a lower wage. It should be no surprise that academic underachievement in the way of failure to reach grade level standards, high dropout rates, disproportionate numbers of students identified for special education, and low entry rates into universities (T. Howard, 2007) sums up the current state of education for African Americans and is evidence that historical injustices have yet to be overcome.

Hale (2001) asserts that attempts at school reform have focused on parents rather than schools, to try to get them to be like white middle-class parents, and that parental involvement “as it is being espoused requires a high degree of sophistication on the part of parents”(p. 9). Hale goes on to say that “a child’s success in school today is a matter not so much of how smart a child is but rather how smart a child’s mother is”. Hale postulates that, “We will see a difference in the outcomes for African American children only when the educational professionals and members of the community find ways to compensate for backgrounds that do not prepare parents and children to negotiate the schools in a sophisticated manner”(p. 10).

Lastly, in regards to the issue of language in African American education, it is critical to, as Alim and Baugh (2007) stated, “recognize the relationship between language and the larger socio-political and socio-historical phenomena that maintain

unequal power relations in a still-segregated society” (p. 7). The linguistic heritage of African Americans was eliminated with slavery. An eradicationist pedagogy has marginalized students who speak African American vernacular. Teachers typically “fail to acknowledge AAL as a legitimate and harbor negative attitudes toward the students’ language. This attitude in turn leads to negative expectations and negative outcomes for the students” (Lemoine & Hollie, 2007, p. 48). Not only do African Americans continue the struggle for equal educational rights in general but also language rights in education. Until this issue is resolved, full and equal educational access for African American students will never be achieved.

One would be hard pressed not to find African American achievement on the priority list in school districts around the country. However, too much effort has been placed on finding fault with the population, and not enough effort has been made to look into the historical trajectory of intellectualism and the components of effective schooling for this population (Perry, 2003b). The following section seeks to outline effective schooling for African Americans based on a rich intellectual, cultural and linguistic history.

Successful Models of African American Schooling

Successful academic experiences are dependent on the schools themselves. There are many different approaches or models that address the important elements that must be included in order to facilitate academic achievement for African Americans. The two most all-encompassing models are presented in the following paragraphs.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy promoted by Gay (2000), Jordan-Irvine (2002),

Ladson-Billings (1994), Nieto (1999), and Perry (2003a). In order to optimize academic achievement for African Americans, Perry contended that schools must provide certain essential characteristics:

African Americans will achieve in school environments that have a leveling culture, a culture of achievement that extends to all of its members and a strong sense of group membership, where the expectation that everyone achieve is explicit and is regularly communicated in public and group settings. African-American students will achieve in these environments, irrespective of class background, the cultural responsiveness of the setting, or prior level of preparation. (p. 107)

She further claimed that culturally responsive schools will bring out the best in African American students: “In addition to having the aforementioned characteristics, institutions that are culturally responsive and that systematically affirm, draw on, and use cultural formations of African-Americans will produce exceptional academic results from African-American students” (p. 107). Additionally, Perry contended that, in order for African American students to achieve, they need to have their identities well and intact:

...they need to be sufficiently grounded in their identity as members of a racial caste group, such that they have a way to interpret and make sense of instances when they experience discrimination, especially in school. If they are not grounded in this way, they would likely blame themselves when their work is not recognized or not evaluated fairly. On the other hand, if children pay too much attention to their status as members of a racially discriminated group, there might be a tendency not to work hard, not to work as if the society were open. As is quite apparent, balancing these two identities requires the development of psychosocial competencies, as well as explicit racial socialization by the family, church, or community based organization. (p. 106)

In order to continue the legacy of the African American philosophy of education “literacy for freedom” and “freedom for literacy,” teachers need to be trained to recognize the cultural resources that African American students possess, capitalize on them, and scaffold instruction to support these students in obtaining the additional cultural capital for success in mainstream society.

While the number of children of color is increasing, teachers of color are decreasing. Yet many teachers, both Black and White, feel ill-equipped to meet the educational needs of African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. x). Whereas many teachers claim to see students as “all the same,” Ladson-Billings stated that colorblindness is no solution to our racial differences.

Given the significance of race and color in American society, it is impossible to believe that a classroom teacher does not notice the race and ethnicity of the children she is teaching. Further, by claiming not to notice, the teacher is saying that she is dismissing one of the most salient features of the child’s identity and that she does not account for it in her curricular planning and instruction. Saying we are aware of students’ race and ethnic background is not the same as saying we treat students inequitably. The passion for equality in the American ethos has many teachers (and others) equating equality with sameness... The notion of equity as sameness only makes sense when all students ARE exactly the same. But even within the nuclear family children born from the same parents are not exactly the same. Different children have different needs and addressing those different needs is the best way to deal with them equitably. The same is true in the classroom. If teachers pretend not to see students’ racial and ethnic differences, they really do not see the students at all and are limited in their ability to meet their educational needs. (p. 33)

In trying to illustrate the importance of offering an equitable, as opposed to “equal,” education, Ladson-Billings gave the poignant example of a classroom of 30 children with different needs, one who speaks English as a second language, one visually impaired, one wheelchair bound, and one who is gifted. She stated that if the teacher offered the same work in the same manner to all students she would not be dealing equitably with all the children. Ladson-Billings further claimed the following:

One of the problems in US society is that while it is recognized that African Americans make up a distinct racial group, the acknowledgment that this racial group has a distinct culture is still not recognized. It is presumed that African American children are exactly like White children but just need a little extra help. Rarely investigated are the possibilities of distinct cultural characteristics (requiring some specific attention) or the detrimental impact of systemic racism. Thus the reason for their academic failure continues to be seen as wholly environmental and social. Poverty and lack of opportunity often are presented as

the only plausible reasons for poor performance. And the kinds of interventions and remedies proposed attempt to compensate for these deficiencies. (p. 9)

Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that “the primary aim of culturally relevant teaching is the development of a ‘relevant Black personality’ that allows African American students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and African American culture” (p. 17). Culturally responsive classrooms are those that seek excellence:

Teachers who practice culturally relevant methods can be identified by the way they see themselves and others. They see their teaching as an art rather than as a technical skill. They believe that all of their students can succeed rather than that failure is inevitable for some. They see themselves as a part of the community and they see teaching as giving back to the community. They help students make connections between their local, national, racial, cultural, and global identities. Such teachers can also be identified by the ways in which they structure their social interactions: Their relationships with students are fluid and equitable and extend beyond the classroom. They demonstrate a connectedness with all of their students and encourage that same connectedness between the students. They encourage a community of learners; they encourage their students to learn collaboratively. Finally, such teachers are identified by their notions of knowledge: They believe that knowledge is continuously re-created, recycled, and shared by teachers and students alike. They view the content of the curriculum critically and are passionate about it. Rather than expecting students to demonstrate prior knowledge and skills they help students develop that knowledge by building bridges and scaffolding for learning. (Ladson-Billings, p. 25)

Hale (2001) considers that a culturally appropriate pedagogy model of school reform includes a model of classroom instruction emphasizing: cultural salience in teaching, curricular materials, and assignments; and academic rigor in the elementary grades so that students can enter honors classes in the upper grades. It also includes an instructional accountability infrastructure assuring mastery of academic material for every child. Lastly, the school is conceptualized as a Family and the community, the Village. The school coordinates parents and the larger community in planning enrichment

activities around culture, and makes sure that all students receive the support such as what would be provided in middle-class families.

Hale (2001) gave examples of how teachers and parents can use different components of the written word to empower African American students. For example, folktales teach children they can “achieve power in the midst of a powerless community” (p. 168); stories featuring Black heroes “transmit the message to African American children that the quicksand and landmines along the road to achievement for African Americans are obstacles that can be overcome” (p. 168); and proverbs, “teach African American children the folk wisdom and life skills drawn from the African culture” and “play an important role in the resilience African Americans have displayed against overwhelming oppression and should help preserve the foundation of this faith and perseverance” (p. 169). Furthermore, African cultural tradition

teaches African American children important lessons about the struggle implicit in human affairs... When a young person encounters the defeats and frustrations that are a part of living without having a tradition of overcoming adversity, he or she is likely to personalize defeat. (Hale, p. 169)

She added that teachers should “expose children of other ethnic groups to the literature of the African American culture, so as to give them the benefit of stories that emphasize such resilience” (p. 169). Also, she noted very importantly that not only is studying about African civilizations important, but the current situation in Africa is important to study as well. These stories help to “depersonalize oppression when they encounter it and enable them to place their personal difficulties into the context of the overall African American liberation struggle” (Hale, p. 168).

H. Samy Alim (2007) took culturally responsive pedagogy one step further. He considered that a curriculum that is based in the cultural linguistic reality of the students

is ideologically distinct from “a curriculum that is culturally appropriate, culturally responsive, culturally relevant or whatever other term we have produced to describe classroom practices that use the language and culture of the students to teach them part of the ‘acceptable’ curricular canon” (p. 28). He asked, “Why must their language and culture always be used to ‘take them somewhere else?’” He proposed that the paradigm be shifted and that students’ abilities and experiences become the sources of knowledge and learning. This is more consistent with Paulo Freire’s (2000) transformative education model, where the students are “subjects” as opposed to “objects” in their own lives and educational experiences.

African-Centered Pedagogy

African-centered pedagogy builds on culturally relevant pedagogy and constructs African American achievement “by drawing on the full cultural and intellectual heritage of African Americans” (Murrell, 2002, p. 17). The key of this approach, according to Murrell,

is not the individual teacher, but in systems of practice in which the teacher plays the pivotal role. This permits the specification of culturally relevant practice not just in terms of individual teacher’s thoughts, values, and actions, but also in terms of human systems of productive interaction where positive student outcomes are manifest in their performance over time. (p.15)

His construct triangulates (a) teacher action with (b) purposeful learning and development goals for students, as well as (c) student achievement and development performance. The essential cultural practice in an African centered pedagogy includes: engagement and participation practices; identity development practices; community integrity practices; meaning-making practices; and practices of inquiry.

Theoretically, TWI programs attempt to fulfill the requirement of academic

achievement, provide for optimal second language acquisition, and increase cross-cultural understanding. Creating high expectations and making bilingualism accessible in a way that recognizes and values the African American culture, language, and communication style would provide the opportunity to optimize their achievement in TWI programs.

African Americans in Second Language Programs

Whereas numerous studies cite the effectiveness of second language immersion programs with elementary-aged students (Genesee, 1987; Gilzow & Branaman, 2000; Met, 1998), most involve students of the majority culture learning a foreign language. Few address issues of minority students in the United States who speak Ebonics and who are studying a separate minority language (Krause, 1999). Much more research was available at the postsecondary level in regards to African American perspectives about their foreign language experiences. For this reason, research at the postsecondary level was also reviewed.

The small number of African American students in foreign language programs, both at the undergraduate as well as the graduate level of study, is of concern (Huber, 1990; Z. Moore, 2005; Wilberschied & Dassier, 1995). Z. Moore stated that not until the mid-1990's did researchers speculate on the under representation of minority students in foreign languages. She stated that these speculations primarily pointed to social and cultural distance theories, such as the idea that foreign languages are spoken by White Europeans; the lack of Afro-centric perspective in instruction; and the failure to teach African languages as a foreign language.

Davis and Markham (1991) examined students at historically and predominantly

Black colleges (HBCUs) to investigate student attitudes about particular foreign language programs and their cultural content. The participating institutions were 4-year colleges with a 51% or more predominantly Black student population, offering a minimum of one year of a beginning-level foreign language course. Seventy-six institutions in 18 states met these criteria. Results demonstrated that African Americans had a positive attitude toward foreign language study. About 80% indicated that Americans should make more of an effort to learn foreign languages. A majority (84%) had integrative motivation in that they wanted to be able to converse with native speakers (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Around 80% said that studying a foreign language was consistent with their career goals. Davis and Markham found that 84% did not feel that studying a foreign language was a threat to their cultural identity. Around 40% suggested their classes would have been better if some emphasis had been given to African themes.

A lack of emphasis on African themes was also corroborated in the faculty survey. Only 23% of the faculty said they used African themes, but over half of those who did said that the students responded enthusiastically. It should be noted that although HBCUs were studied, the number of African American professors was only 40%. (An additional 10% said they were of African descent and were not native to the United States). Other comments students made were generally in regards to pedagogy. Overall, students desired more emphasis on speaking, more understanding of students' needs and learning styles, more emphasis on culture, more time to learn the material, and more audiovisual material. They also commented that material was presented too fast (Davis & Markham, 1991).

In general, the disconnect between faculty and student perceptions of teaching

effectiveness was significant. Davis and Markham's (1991) study demonstrates the importance of getting student perspectives regarding foreign language study, and that unexpected results can provide much needed insight to faculty/administration about language programs. However, because their study covers foreign language at the university level, younger student perspectives were clearly absent.

According to Z. Moore (2005), "Studies of foreign language continuation or discontinuation have focused mainly on White middle class students" (p. 192). She, therefore, sought to obtain African American student perspectives and personal experiences in foreign language programs. Her ultimate goal was to determine the reason for low enrollments of African Americans at the university level, as well as the reason for such low numbers of African Americans in foreign language teacher education programs. She surveyed 128 students in two different programs and found that few had the opportunity to study a foreign language at the elementary level, but all had at least two years of a high school language class. She found that neither family experiences nor their current language learning experiences were enough to encourage the students to continue at the college level. She also found it was not necessarily a lack of inclusion of African American culture in the curriculum that dissuaded African Americans from the major but rather the fact that there was little effort to encourage them to pursue careers in foreign language. The author concluded, based on student suggestions, that more information about the advantages of learning a foreign language should be disseminated and that there should be a foreign language requirement in all discipline areas.

Dahl (2000) made observations during action research projects that led him to draw conclusions regarding successful components for African American students

participating in college foreign language programs. He posited that the following are necessary in order for a program to be successful for African American students: recruitment of African American students to build community; recruitment of faculty role models; inclusion and emphasis of courses including Afro-Hispanic writers (with whom students can identify); foreign language tutors; inclusion of multicultural texts; and active campaigning to show benefits of learning a second language.

Also relevant in the analysis of African American students in foreign language programs are those studies that took place at the elementary and middle grade levels. Haj-Broussard (2005) found no significant difference between achievements of African Americans in traditional programs versus foreign language immersion (FI) programs. In her study of French immersion program in Louisiana, in which the language and math results of 347 fourth grade students (163 in the FI program and 184 in the traditional education program) were disaggregated by race, there was no significant difference between African American students in traditional or FI programs. Also, she noted no significant difference in math scores between African American students in FI programs and White students in regular programs, despite a significant difference between African American students and White students in the traditional program. One additional detail Haj-Broussard pointed out was that this “bridging” of the achievement gap occurred, in her estimation, despite the fact that the FI setting was “less than ideal” (p. 4). Positive self-esteem was documented on behalf of African Americans in the FI program. Although there was supposedly a qualitative phase to this research, it was unclear why only a few comments and details were included. In addition, she mentioned that French was a heritage language for some of the students but did not include this important factor

in her analysis of the results.

Caldas and Boudreaux (1999) analyzed data from both White and African American students participating in a French Immersion program in Louisiana. It involved 1,941 FI and non-FI students in grades 3, 5, and 7 from 13 schools and looked at test results in language and math. They found that FI students did better overall at all three levels, although it was not clear in this study which students were heritage French learners. Although African American students overall still scored at lower levels than Whites, one very important point is that African American students at schools with low socioeconomic status (SES) performed relatively well compared to other schools with higher SES. Cloud et al. (2000) offered an explanation for African Americans doing just as well as or better than their counterparts in traditional programs: many African American students live in poor neighborhoods and attend substandard and remedial schools (Kozol, 2005). Therefore, TWI schools in these same neighborhoods would offer a contrasting, enriching program.

Holobow, Genesee, and Lambert (1987) analyzed the progress of Black and White socio-economically disadvantaged students in a French immersion program in the Midwestern United States. Their progress in French occurred irrespective of their social class background. In other words, poverty did not have an impact on their learning of French; however, there was a difference in results on English language tests. They concluded that an immersion schooling experience might lessen the impact of social class background.

Holobow, Genesee, and Lambert (1991) provided the results for the second year of the abovementioned study, and found that FI students fared as well as non-FI students

in English and math. In fact, working-class and Black students scored as well on French measures as middle class and White students. The problem with both studies by Holobow et al. is that they only measured progress in kindergarten and first grade, and there appeared to be no record of results from years three and four. In addition, the authors concluded it was yet to be determined if programs which utilized Spanish would have the same results, considering the lower status of the Spanish language in the United States in comparison to French.

Mark English's (1997) study is a testimony to African American student success in studying a foreign language and legitimization of student language study. It is particularly impressive considering that the foreign language, Arabic, was a lesser-known language. He concluded, "The use of AAE does not interfere with a person's ability to excel in any academic endeavor if the proper instruction and learning environment are provided" (p. 18). English utilized the methodology of a case study where, as participant-observer, he spent six months teaching Arabic to seventh and eighth grade middle school students. The researcher used various data sources, such as surveys regarding individual learning styles, strategies, and general approaches to classroom academic environments to form a hypothesis regarding language-learning influences. He found several factors that impacted students' ability to learn a foreign language, using exploratory teaching methods and student journals to determine what factors influenced their academic performance.

English (1997) was able to design a program that served to motivate students to achieve in Arabic, which was measured not only by class performance but also by the American Council on the Teaching for Foreign Language proficiency guidelines. He used

contrastive analysis of Arabic, Standard English, and African American vernacular to make connections, comparing and contrasting native and target languages. Whereas difficulties in foreign language learning for African American students are often attributed to the students themselves, he claimed that these difficulties may be more of an issue of teacher attitudes and perceptions. He concluded that foreign language learning for African American students “can be enhanced through a culturally compatible classroom which addresses the perceptual, motivational, and behavioral styles of these students” (p. vii).

English (1997) recommended that future studies “must inherently recognize and critically address how African American English informs the learning process in general and how it affects the language acquisition process specifically” (p. 184). He also emphasized the importance of practical steps teachers can take to help students bridge the comparisons of other languages and cultures with the students’ own language and culture” (p. 202). The focus of making pedagogy relevant and addressing the three linguistic systems makes his study unique and extremely applicable to the current study.

Lastly, Tse (2000) recognized the connection between linguistic outcomes and foreign language student experiences, using student foreign language biographies in order to discover how students view their FL classes in regards to teaching methods, their own success, and to whom they attribute their level of achievement. She collected data from 14 male and 37 female students, aged 21-60 (most were in their early 20’s) who were enrolled in three education courses and who had studied FL in high school or college. She utilized retrospective autobiographies in which students reflected on their learning experiences over time. They were asked to respond to 10 open-ended questions regarding

FL student history, experiences, and opinions. Tse found that students attributed progress to teacher attention and sympathy and complained about a lack of emphasis on communication, oral language development, and practical application of language presented in class.

In regards to self-evaluation of achievement, 38% felt they were successful (which they either defined as attaining proficiency, being able to communicate, understanding of the culture, or getting a good grade), whereas 68% did not. Those who did not explain their failure as a lack of ability in the language, particularly the inability to develop oral and listening skills; attrition of what was learned; and inability to read or write in the FL. The reasons they gave for success related to teacher or classroom environment, family or community assistance, and a personal motivation to learn. Those who did not feel successful attributed their lack of success to not studying enough, not being motivated enough, and disliking the teacher or teaching method. They also mentioned the student composition of the courses as a factor (Tse, 2000, p. 79). Whereas Tse's research did not involve African American students, her research is nonetheless significant for this study. She stated that "little systematic study has been made of how students perceive their FL experiences when given an open opportunity to comment on them, unrestricted by surveys or forced-choice questionnaires" (p. 69). She went on to state that it is important to hear personally from students and that this information ultimately will impact their retention in foreign language programs:

. . . We know almost nothing about student attributions of success or failure in the FL classroom and how those attributions may affect their beliefs about their ability to learn languages, which in turn affects whether they will continue their study in FL programs. (p. 69)

She further insisted that "relatively few studies have used in-depth qualitative approaches

in understanding student views of their language learning experiences in their totality” (p. 69).

The information from the aforementioned studies is conflicting. Whereas some research demonstrates evidence of successful experiences for African Americans, some of the same studies have shown students complaining about the lack of information regarding benefits of studying a foreign language and the need for African cultural infusion in the curriculum. More extensive exploration into how a TWI environment might impact perspectives and opinions of African American students towards Spanish at the elementary and middle school level was lacking in the research base. The current study helped to fill in this gap.

African Americans in Two-Way Immersion Programs

Two-Way Immersion is different from Foreign Language Immersion. Whereas the goals of each are high academic achievement, bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural competency, the populations are completely different. In FI the population consists of students who are all learning the foreign language, for example, Spanish. In TWI programs in the United States, both English learners and foreign language students are integrated for most instruction, at least 50% at all grade levels. TWI is a form of dual language education that originally came about in 1963 as a result of Cuban immigrants in Florida who wanted their children to have the opportunity to learn Spanish, as they were planning to return to Cuba. The first program began at Coral Way Elementary, in Dade County, Florida, where a TWI program was formed to address the needs of Cuban immigrants and simultaneously provided early foreign language learning for White students, who made up the native English-speaking component of the program. Hakuta

(1986) concluded that the Cuban immigrants did well in both languages and the White students learned some Spanish and did well in English (Krause, 1999).

The success of Coral Way Elementary led other programs to adopt the TWI model. There were fewer than 10 programs before 1981, after which growth expanded substantially. The current national directory of TWI programs includes 334 programs in 27 states and the District of Columbia, with grade levels being added each year to existing programs and often expanding programs into middle and high school. Growth has been particularly significant in the last 15 years. In fact, an estimated 269 new elementary programs have been added since the year 1992, in addition to expansion in already existing programs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, para. 1).

As of 2000, the population of native English speakers in these programs had no clear majority ethnic group (where 75% or more students in the program were from one particular ethnic group); however, Whites and Latinos made up the biggest portion, followed by much smaller numbers of African Americans (2%), as well as even smaller numbers of Asians (1%) and Native Americans (1%; Howard & Sugarman, 2001). The trend is that numbers of African Americans participating in TWI are increasing, especially in urban schools (Krause, 1999). In fact, roughly one third of the TWI programs in the country have some population of African American students (from 5-100%) composing their English-only population of students (J. Sugarman, personal communication, April 28, 2008). However, there is a dearth of research regarding African American students learning a foreign language at any level, much less elementary school (English, 1997; Z. Moore, 2005) and particularly TWI programs. Considering these programs have grown so extensively, the need for TWI research is even greater.

Studies documenting achievement in a second language (addressing the first and second tenets of bilingualism and bi-literacy) have dominated TWI literature. Since 2001, federal laws, as well as “English-Only” movements across many states, have pressured educators to demonstrate empirically that TWI programs are producing “results”, causing a frenzy for more “achievement-focused” research. Lindholm-Leary and Howard (2008) stated, “The academic achievement of students in TWI programs has been a central concern of U.S. educators, parents, and policymakers, and as a result, much of the research on two-way immersion has focused on the academic outcomes of students” (p. 5).

Thomas and Collier (2002), in a landmark study, measured the success of over 2 million students in five districts in the United States. The main focus was regarding English learners, but they also demonstrated achievement for a large number of English-only students and sought to document multiple items. Thomas and Collier analyzed school testing data in both English and Spanish from schools that began TWI programs in pre-kindergarten. Among this data was the achievement of African American students in Houston. English only students participating in these programs were shown to have high achievement in both Spanish and English. Whereas the results were not disaggregated by race or ethnicity, the high levels led them to conclude that high achievement was true for African American students. This was encouraging regarding the potential of other African American students in TWI programs. It was noteworthy that African Americans made up the majority of teachers in the district; however, it was not clear how many were teachers in TWI programs.

Lindholm-Leary (2005a) found that TWI African American students were able to

reach the same levels of achievement in English as their African American peers in traditional education programs (despite the fact that the TWI students had received much of their content instruction in Spanish). They also noted that the achievement gap between White and African American students was approximately equal to the achievement gap between these two groups in traditional educational programs; however, the TWI group obviously had the advantage of having learned an additional language, as demonstrated in Spanish achievement measures.

Nicoladis et al. (1998) performed a study in response to the book *The Bell Curve* (Hernstein & Murray, 1994), which suggested the intellectual inferiority of African Americans. The authors analyzed the performance of African American students in TWI in comparison to the students' White counterparts, using the hypothesis that if race accounted for the differences, African Americans would score lower on both the English and Spanish tests. However, if social/environmental factors accounted for the differences, then there should be no difference in test scores for Spanish, only for English. They found that African Americans were outperformed by the White students in both English reading and math, even when controlling for non-verbal intelligence. However, in grades 1, 3 and 4, there was no significant difference in Spanish reading. In fact, in third grade, when controlled for nonverbal intelligence, African American students performed better than their White counterparts in Spanish. Nicoladis et al. concluded that social/environmental factors accounted for the differences in English standardized test scores. The sample size appeared small and, therefore, is difficult to generalize; however, the implications of the study would point to the need for future research on the topic in regards to the all-important component of ethnicity, and how different language varieties

of English play a significant role in English achievement test results.

Wiese (2004) used ethnography to analyze one particular program's interpretation of the TWI model and how this interpretation plays out at the school site. She discussed the diversity within the implementation of the TWI program, particularly in regards to populations of students. Using August and Hakuta's (1997) data regarding the type of variation that exists, she emphasized that rather than just simply implementing a program, it is of key importance to consciously construct it based on the local context. She suggested that having a program that was considered the 50-50 model (meaning that half the program was delivered in English, half in Spanish) instead of the 90-10 model (where 90% of the program was delivered in Spanish in kinder, 80% in first grade, 70% in second grade and so on, until reaching 50%) would be a more effective program for African Americans speaking the vernacular, as it would allow for more attention to first language from which speakers of other varieties of English might benefit, as opposed to being expected to perform primarily in Spanish and only some in Standard English all day long in the 90-10 model.

Abbate-Vaughn (2004) analyzed the challenges facing TWI programs in urban environments. She stated that "lack of resources, insufficient parental presence in the schools, less qualified teachers and overcrowding (to name a few) do not disappear with the implementation of TWI. She spoke of the demographic shift and how in areas of concentrated poverty, the native English speakers are often Ebonics speakers. She stated that culturally sensitive ways of educating all minority children can contribute to "improve the design and implementation of the TWI in urban high poverty settings" (p. 28).

For her doctoral dissertation, Krause (1999) utilized a mixed methods correlational study including qualitative components in which she gathered information about African American students in TWI programs in a Midwestern inner city. She used data and observations to find that although 33% of the program is composed of African American students in kindergarten, only 22% of fifth grade graduates are African American. She found that only 36% of African American students that had entered the program graduated (completed 5th grade), compared to 81% of the White student population and noticed that each year fewer African Americans were graduating. After controlling for variables such as age at entry, gender, SES, and ethnicity, she found that African American status was negatively related to reading on grade level. She concluded that African American students who already had a command of Standard English were more successful at acquiring Spanish than the students who tended to use Ebonics more extensively. She also concluded that the needs of African American students, specifically those of low SES, were not being met at the school and that further investigation would need to be done in order to determine if this was due to the fact that students spoke Ebonics, which implied a negotiation of three languages.

Bender (2000) performed a comprehensive qualitative research study in TWI, which was carried out over a two-year period through observation and participation in program and activities, as well as analytical discourse methods. She analyzed and interpreted the implementation of a new program in a context of urban poverty, segregation, and underachievement of students of African American and Puerto Rican descent. She concluded, among other things, that teachers at the elementary level lacked training in second language theory and methods, which limited the experiences they

could provide to African American students in their acquisition of Spanish. One example of such a problem was having no differentiation between the techniques used for native and non-native Spanish speakers in the curriculum. Therefore, equal access was not afforded these students.

This study is significant in drawing out the importance of second language teaching strategies and the impact these strategies have on achievement. Perhaps even more relevant to the TWI literature is the fact that this is one of few studies addressing both African American and Latino (specifically Puerto Rican) students. Together, African Americans and Latinos composed 92% of the population of the school in the proposed study. Adding to the body of literature regarding this topic will help provide a very important resource to schools that are adding TWI as an enrichment program in the inner cities with populations primarily composed of Latino and African American students.

Cazabon (2000) used mixed methods in her study that analyzed perceived success in language, language use and cross-cultural attitudes. She found that African Americans and European Americans considered themselves more bilingual than “English dominant” and that there was no difference between these two groups in their perceived language dominance, which suggests positive attitudinal outcomes in terms of self-perception of bilingualism. There was a significant difference between African American and European American students in regards to instrumental motivation in that African Americans seemed to be more instrumentally motivated than European Americans. They were more interested in the benefit that being bilingual offered in terms of future job opportunities and such, as opposed to integrative motivation, or simply wanting to simply integrate more into the culture.

Although positive attitudes toward other cultures were promoted, inclusion or cultural responsiveness of African Americans most likely was not present. Cross-cultural questionnaires indicated that all three ethnic groups thought they knew well how European American and Latinos think but that they knew only somewhat well how African Americans think. In the research, questions for pupils coming from Spanish-speaking homes asked if they would be just as happy being an English-speaking American; however, the study failed to specify whether the same was true for both European Americans and African Americans. Another glaring omission the author recognized was the lack of testimony by an African American student. This information would have enabled a point of comparison between groups.

Cazabon, Nicoladis, and Lambert (1998), whereas results were not disaggregated by race, also discovered that student attitudes toward bilingualism were positive. Also, that students were learning about students from other backgrounds. They stated that “. . . students are gaining an appreciation of and knowledge about the culture of the other group.” They also found that students valued their cross cultural relationships: “. . .they enjoy learning about a new and different cultural group through long-term daily contact with members of a second ethno-linguistic group, who become like brothers and sisters to them.”

Carrigo (2000) examined a TWI program with ethnographic methods. She used observations, interviews, and questionnaires to assess student and teacher language use, percentage of Spanish use, and the existence of an additive bilingual environment for both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers. She concluded that “. . . the school has not been as successful, particularly in the support and reinforcement of African-American culture, especially in classes taught in Spanish” (p. 232).

Emphasizing the overrepresentation of African Americans in the lower tracks

during Spanish time, Carrigo (2000) also stressed that among peers, African Americans had much lower academic status than European Americans or Latinos. She stated, “Not one student from any ethnicity ever chose an African American student as the smartest in the class” and that African American students “are not offered an opportunity to academically shine due to a lack of a curriculum which actively builds on the knowledge they bring from their homes” (p. 232). She posited that African Americans might resist the all-Spanish environment because they do not see their needs being met during Spanish time. She claimed that efforts to infuse African American culture in the curriculum in English “may have reinforced to African American students that the Spanish curriculum did not necessarily include their concerns” and that the disproportionate amount of resistance to use Spanish on the part of African Americans may, in fact, be resistance against a “curriculum that was not fully inclusive of their educational needs, particularly those lessons taught in Spanish” (p. 235). This may be a symptom of a consistent problem throughout TWI: the perception that African American cultural and linguistic elements and Latino cultural and linguistic elements are mutually exclusive, which overlooks a very strong connection between both cultures—the product of the African Diaspora—the rich and very present Afro-Latino history and culture represented all over the Americas and particularly salient in Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Panamanians, Colombians, and Ecuadorians.

Rolstad (1997) explored ethnic identity in a TWI program in Korean/English which had a significant number of third language (Spanish-speaking Latino) students. She used what is entitled “Bipolar” Ethnic Attitude Survey and compared students who had with those who had not participated in the TWI program. She found that positive

ethnic attitudes resulted from participation in this program, and that the ability to obtain English was significantly increased even for the group participating as a third language group (the Spanish-dominant Latinos). Although this study does not address African Americans, positive ethnic attitudes of students who are not part of the majority population is a relevant consideration for African American students, who generally are not in the majority population in TWI programs.

Hadi-Tabassum's (2006) ethnography of a fifth grade TWI classroom shed light on the interplay of power, language, ethnicity and identity. She used the idea of "the third space" as her framework through which students analyze language and language use meta-linguistically. She stated the importance of this third space for students "so that they are able to voice their concerns about language use linguistic borders and boundaries" (p. 19). She found that encouraging "metalinguage" inspired students to question their own linguistic and cultural realities. She also found that the ideal as expressed by the national dual language model versus what happens in the "real world" of everyday TWI experiences at the local level were very different but that this truth was only exposed through "dialectical discussions surrounding language use and linguistic borders" (p. 284). For example, students and teachers identified that Spanish was marginalized, yet no measures were taken to alleviate this problem. She posited that due to the contradictions between the local and national levels, "dual language" is open to refutation: "...it became evident that the idealized definition of a dual immersion model was not able to conceal the contradictions between what it represented and what the utopian representation of linguistic equity was to be" (p. 285).

Hadi-Tabassum (2006) stated that the perspectives of African American parents in

TWI programs are often neglected: “Ofentimes, research on dual immersion education neglects to focus on the Black and Asian parents who send their children to dual immersion programs” (p. 37). Parchia’s (2000) qualitative study is one of the few studies that included African American parent input. It emphasized two very successful TWI schools on the East Coast in regards to social and academic experiences of African American students and their parents. Interviews were conducted with parents, teachers and students, and study results indicated that the programs promoted cross-cultural understanding, increased students’ self-esteem, and consistently provided equitable educational opportunities for all children. All students had friends from all ethnic groups, and most wanted to continue learning Spanish. The research findings indicated that African American parents decided to put their children in programs not necessarily to learn a second language, but for the quality of the education offered and also for what Parchia termed “Black flight”—choosing the TWI programs to escape the segregated underachieving schools in the inner cities. Most parents agreed with the program and were willing to sacrifice representation of African Americans, as well as inclusion of African American cultural elements and the teaching of English. In other words, despite positive outcomes in one sense, these TWI parents did not have the option of both a strong educational program and African American representation and infusion of African American cultural elements. Even in these two reputable TWI programs, these two elements were essentially mutually exclusive.

Bostick-Mason (personal communication, April 23, 2008) discussed elements relating to the parent component of a Title VII project focusing on a TWI program in San Bernardino, California. This program’s English only participants were primarily African

American students utilizing AAVE. She shared the importance of creating opportunities for these parent voices to be heard. During monthly parent meetings, parents were invited to speak openly about race and ethnicity issues, including the multicultural goal of the program, and its effectiveness. Utilizing family focus groups (including African American families) as a tool, the school was able to clarify how to best meet the needs of the community. For example, in regards to recruiting, the African American parents shared that depending on brochures with English and Spanish was not a good strategy to attract the African American community. They stated this was because when the African American community saw Spanish in the brochure, they assumed it wasn't a program for African American students. The parents suggested videos and photos that showcased African American students. As a result, the parents were empowered and trained to use "I-movie" to make 90 second short public service announcements for recruiting purposes.

This same grant provided teacher professional development, such as through the Academic English Mastery Program created by Lemoine and Hollie (2007), which provided teachers with strategies on how to address the needs of Standard English learners, particularly African Americans. Examples of strategies provided through this training were contrastive analysis and culturally responsive curricula. As a result of this training, some teachers began developing lessons for the English portion of the day including literature representing the African American culture in general to better meet the needs of the students. Very important to note is that the students in this program were shown to be achieving higher than other English-only students in the other strands at the school in English and Spanish. Students were also found to have positive attitudes about bilingualism and indicated they had relationships across linguistic and cultural lines.

Lastly, the parents were satisfied overall and would recommend the program to other parents (Olsen, 2006).

Lindholm-Leary (2007) evaluated and reported on the Language Institute program, the school in the present study. She utilized data from 333 students in grades K-8 on the California Achievement Test (CAT) for students in grades 3 and 7 only, the FLOSEM (Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix), Aprenda, California Standards Test (CST) for students in grades 2 through 8, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), and a student attitude questionnaire for students in grades 5 through 7. Whereas results were not disaggregated by race/ethnicity, she found that, overall, students had positive attitudes toward their language, academic, and cultural competencies. In particular, students had positive attitudes toward their own bilingual skills, the value of bilingualism, their understanding and knowledge of culture, and their comfort level in interacting with other cultural groups.

Lindholm-Leary (2007) noted that there was progress toward grade level development; however, there were still issues to address. For example, in sixth grade, native English students were performing lower than the district average compared to their monolingual English peers. Also, third grade results were much lower than expected for TWI programs. She recommended particular attention to reading and language arts in both languages.

The motto of “bilingualism for all” in TWI programs communicates that all students participating in this program have an excellent opportunity to learn a second language. However, whether the “all” includes African American students is yet to be determined. Information available about African American academic achievement in

TWI was limited as well as inconclusive, as very few studies have been performed with a particular focus on African Americans in these programs. Whereas there is some evidence of effective strategies and outcomes utilized, conflicting findings in terms of African American student outcomes still remain, and it has not yet been determined if African American students have equal access to the program, or if there is program responsiveness to African American student needs. Although numbers may be small, they were significant enough to appear in the literature as issues of concern for TWI programs.

Howard et al. (2003) stated that “the limited research on African American participation in TWI programs indicates that programs are not always responsive to these students’ needs, and there are conflicting findings in terms of African American student outcomes” (p. 41). Z. Moore (2005) corroborated the need for further research in regard to African American students studying foreign languages at the elementary school level: “Further research on FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary Schools) programs and continuation in foreign language study should be conducted to examine the usefulness and/or effectiveness of such programs as they relate to African-American students” (p. 196). Whereas TWI and FLES have different populations of students, Moore’s exhortation nonetheless is applicable to elementary students studying foreign language in TWI programs.

Challenges Facing African Americans in a TWI Program

Language and Cultural Legitimacy

The inclusion of AAVE is not officially part of the curriculum of a TWI program. However, given the TWI philosophy of the importance of primary languages for English and Spanish speakers as a cultural and linguistic resource, the question arises as to the

significance of AAVE for the African American student in this type of environment. If a student enters the program in kindergarten speaking AAVE, since it is not a “target language” of the program (and in many cases is outright ignored or ridiculed by teachers, fellow students, the school community, not to mention greater society), then this student does not have the status as the other native English speakers or Spanish speakers in serving as a language model. Rubinstein-Avila (2002) stated that the underlying assumption about TWI programs is that all students are supposedly experts, as native language speaking models. She also posed an important question that seems to have been left out of the equation in TWI programs: “Can a native speaker feel like an expert even when the language he/she brings to school is not awarded legitimate status?” (p. 67) For many Standard English learners (SELs)—that is students learning Standard English as a second language, at no time of the day is the student’s home language legitimized. Standard English learners are totally immersed in a “second language environment” during Spanish and English time, all day, every day.

Although the rationale for native English speaking students to participate in TWI programs is that they will be immersed in a foreign language environment, the cognitive challenge and likely stress are not the same for White students, who typically speak Standard English. Upon entry into kindergarten in a TWI program, African American students who speak Ebonics are learning both Spanish and Standard English. Cloud et al. (2000) stated that these students are dealing with three linguistic systems, which must not be ignored: “Programs with African American students must...pay special attention to the fact that these students must develop proficiency in two clearly different dialects in addition to a second language” (p. 66). Alexander (2007) cited the problem that language

limitations can cause:

It is generally accepted among educators that the self-confidence of the learner is vital to success in school. Anyone who lacks proficiency in the language of instruction is, ipso facto, disadvantaged. Such an individual cannot be spontaneous and is seldom in a position to enjoy the learning process. Above all, severe limitations are placed on the creativity and initiative of that individual when the link between term and concept has to be mediated by a process of halting self-translation. Among other things, this is the cause of the widely observed reticence displayed by most second-language speakers in conversational settings. (p. 146-7)

Ebonics is estimated to be used by 80-90% of the African American population at some time or another in their daily lives (Smitherman, 1977). Also termed AAVE, Spoken Soul, and Black English, among others, Ebonics is a home language that is generally not recognized or valued either in school or greater society (Baugh, 1999; Delpit, 2003; Kunjufu, 1989; Lewis, 2004; Lippi-Green, 1997; O'Neil, 1997; Perry & Delpit, 1998; Smitherman, 2000). Ebonics as a cultural resource has been especially misunderstood and, therefore, has raised a great deal of controversy (Baugh; Delpit; Kunjufu; Lewis; Lippi-Green; O'Neil; Perry & Delpit; Rickford & Rickford, 2002; Smitherman). Determined by linguists to be rule governed (Baugh; Dillard, 1972; Fasold, 1987; Labov, 1972; Rickford & Rickford) and worthy of the status of any other world language, it nonetheless has been labeled pejoratively by those not familiar with linguistic principles as non-standard, "just bad grammar" or even "gutter" English.

The Oakland School Board resolution in 1996 comes to mind for many people when they hear the term "Ebonics." Misinformation coupled with media frenzy created confusion about the topic that persists to this day. The school board's plan to use Ebonics as a linguistic and cultural resource that could better facilitate the effective acquisition of Standard English was portrayed as a "plan to teach Ebonics." According to Fasold

(1987), negative attitudes towards the use of language can be a reflection of negative attitudes towards particular groups. Smitherman (1998) asserted the following:

Research on language attitudes consistently indicates that teachers believe Black English-speaking youngsters are nonverbal and possess limited vocabularies. They are perceived to be slow learners or uneducable. Their speech is seen as unsystematic and is constantly corrected. Thus, they are made somehow to feel inferior. (p. 167)

African Americans have historically been misrepresented as being culturally disadvantaged (Bereiter & Englemann, 1966), linguistically deficient, and intellectually inferior (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969). Teachers who are uninformed about the validity of Ebonics and who work with students who speak what they consider “bastardized” English continue to perpetuate this image through low expectations. This linguicism (language prejudice) can go unchecked. “[It] remains a ‘legitimate’ prejudice; that is, one can generally say the most appalling things about people’s speech without fear of correction or contradiction” (O’Neil, 1997, p. 42). Ladson-Billings (1994) stated, “Teachers do not understand that their perceptions of African American students interfere with their ability to be effective teachers for them” (p. 21). Taylor (1987) stressed the fact that the use of the vernacular allows validation among peers, however, in the school setting almost always guarantees academic problems.

When students’ communication norms conflict with the school’s communication norms, erosion of academic performance and acceptable classroom behavior frequently follows. Thus, while the use of Black vernacular speech by African American males may be perceived as “fresh” by peers, it is viewed by teachers, all too often and incorrectly, as indicators of a slow learning, violent, undisciplined, and obnoxious individual. (p. 3)

Jordan-Irvine (2002) suggested that a lack of cultural synchronization and responsiveness on behalf of teachers inhibits African American students’ school achievement. Rymes and Anderson (2004) also discussed this problem in their study,

which documented student interaction between those who speak Ebonics and Spanish, stating that “Teachers have a responsibility to be informed about both kinds of linguistic variation. Without knowledge of AAE conventions, students like Danny can be perceived as ‘not having language’...rather than having different set of conventions for their perfectly competent language use” (p. 126).

The classic study by Piestrup (1973) is still upheld as a research model to follow. She studied 14 first-grade classrooms and found that sanctions by teachers for the use of AAVE resulted in increased use of those same features by the end of the year. In contrast, classrooms where teachers did not sanction the use of AAVE actually decreased the use of those features throughout the year (in exchange for Standard English features). Piestrup claimed that this group of teachers, also referred to as the “Black Artful” group of teachers was successful because they were skillful in keeping children on task in a playful manner without such distractions as conflicts over dialect differences. Promoting bidialectalism most likely was the outcome of this group of teachers, which supported students in learning the concept of appropriate “register” rather than communicating language dominance or superiority.

Cazden (1999) referred to the importance of students becoming competent in Standard English while, at the same time not giving up, their Ebonics identity:

Students can become bi-discoursal as well as bi-dialectal if—a big and important if—the teacher works constantly toward egalitarian relationships within the classroom community. Here the influential micro level variable is not the African American students’ authoritative role or stance toward what they are talking about...but rather their equal-status interactions with their peers. In both cases, though in different ways, qualities of classroom group life assume importance for African American students’ discourse development and academic achievement. (p. 37)

Developing competence in Standard English is one of the challenges for teachers

and students in the TWI program, as differing philosophies exist regarding student integration during this time of day. One option is keeping all students together for the purpose of having native English speaking models to further support English learners. Another is that students might be divided up in order to more accurately address the needs students according to their particular proficiency level of English. Programs that divide up students by English language development level undoubtedly struggle with where to place African American students who might need support in Standard English. Some programs might even have the flawed concept of placing these students in introductory ESL classes with students who have emerging English communication skills, with the rationale that African American students need to learn Standard English from a very basic level. However, there is a clear misunderstanding of English skill development needs in this case. The beginning ESL student needs survival vocabulary and comprehensible input; African American students need support in becoming bi-dialectal.

Rubinstein-Avila (2002) used ethnographic methods to construct a portrait of a Portuguese and English TWI program with similar issues faced by speakers of Ebonics in regards to legitimization of non-standard varieties of language. The population was composed of Brazilians (speaking Brazilian Portuguese), Portuguese and Azoreans (speaking Iberian, also known as “standard” Portuguese) and Cape Verdeans (speaking another variety of Portuguese considered “non-standard”). She found that many issues emerged in teacher meetings, particularly tensions around the different varieties used in classrooms, with materials, in communication with parents. Some of the discussions were

very tense, so much so that after one exchange amongst Brazilian and Portuguese teachers over the use of certain words, she stated the following:

It seemed clear from the charged atmosphere in the room that the heated issue regarding language variety went far beyond pure linguistics. As teachers became more aware of the language differences, they finally decided that more collaboration with each other would be necessary. Since linguistic biases and prejudices are often not at a conscious level, it took several meetings to realize the need to address issues regarding language variety. (p. 81)

Whereas this particular issue was resolved through a consensus as to how to assess students in Portuguese on an exam, she noted other situations that didn't have resolution. She gave the example of the lack of scaffolding strategies to help Cape Verdean students utilize their background knowledge in oral Creole to support their transfer into Portuguese. She noted that "neither the Portuguese nor the Brazilian teachers in the program were observed using any strategies that tapped into Cape Verdean students' knowledge of Creole" (p. 82). On the other hand, she observed one teacher, a Cape Verdean, who "was well aware that language standards were more an issue of power and control than a question of linguistic merit" (p. 82). This Cape Verdean teacher worked hard to incorporate the different varieties, and critiqued how traditional teachers in the program were set on the colonial language standards. This teacher stated, "Even though there is a common language, it is used differently...we all have to have an open mind and understand that they both [Brazilian and European/Iberian varieties] are valid. We need to recognize that fact and go from there . . ." (p. 83).

Rubinstein-Avila (2002) concluded that even in multicultural and multilingual environments, the socio-cultural and historical tensions impact how the school operates on a daily basis, especially in regards to the legitimization of one language over another. She insists on the importance of open communication: of finding a safe space for teachers

to discuss language varieties, particularly considering the changing demographics of TWI programs, and of addressing the accompanying “potential subconscious ethnocentric sentiments” (p. 83). She stated that “Inquiry into teachers’ and administrators’ levels of awareness of linguistic varieties and the historical, political, and social forces that shape language use is essential for cogent planning and implementation of dual-immersion programs” (p. 84). She also insisted on the importance of not blindly replicating a program model and of being aware of the fact that hiring teachers who speak the same language as the students does not guarantee language legitimization for students.

Taylor (1987) stressed that in order to address the issue of student language use coming into conflict with school expectations for language use, schools must have a policy of acceptance of all varieties of language, with the caveat that there is a time and place for all these varieties, and students must learn the different contexts in which to utilize them.

In order to address these issues, schools must build into their curricula (particularly in the language arts area) the notion that there is a time and place for all language. In this way, respect can be given to students’ culturally based vernaculars when used in informal, nonacademic activities, while teaching them the necessity and validity of the school’s language in formal academic settings. Indeed, the creative teacher uses the vernacular linguistic system for contrastive analysis during the process of teaching standard English. (p. 3)

Whereas African American vernacular may be the most salient feature of Black communication, many other linguistic and paralinguistic aspects are often overlooked and may be significant parts of the identity of African American students. Some of these include speech code, speech acts, style, nonverbal behavior, special speaking behaviors, and sociolinguistic rules for speaking as well as moral teachings (Dandy, 1991). Perry and Delpit (1998) considered that

There exists a rich African American oral and written tradition that draws, in part,

upon a distinctive set of stylistic and rhetorical features that are as evident in the writings of Frederick Douglass in the 1830s as in the speeches of Malcolm X in the 1960's and in the essays of Toni Morrison in the 1990's. (p. 121)

These traditions go much further than what are considered “simplistic stereotypes” about Ebonics absorbed from the popular media. Perry and Delpit give an example of how these differences are played out:

By the time they enter kindergarten African American children are likely to have formed a sense of identity and self-efficacy strongly linked to their ability to use oral language in highly sophisticated and stylized ways. From rhyming games to rap songs, from talking their way out of trouble to instigating trouble, many African American children use language to display their intelligence and their competence in negotiating the world. In their communities, they are applauded for their quick verbal responses, their creative plays on words and sounds, their imaginative improvisations of familiar stories and themes, and their ability to best an “opponent” through superior verbal reasoning. (p. 121)

Perhaps somewhat problematic in this regard is that programs that are called “90-10” (meaning that, in kindergarten, students have 90% of their school day in Spanish and 10% in English and each successive year increase 10% in English until they reach 50-50%), students only have 30 minutes of their day in English in kindergarten, one hour in first grade, one and a half hours in second grade, and so on. If only a small percentage of the day is officially utilized for English usage and primarily focuses on English language development for English as a Second Language learners, Standard English learners (SELS) such as African Americans might not have opportunities for expression to exhibit these oral and other language abilities. They might have an impact on the experiences of African Americans in TWI in attitude, identity, and achievement.

Whereas more extensive research regarding this type of programmatic issue is still yet to be done, a project in San Bernardino, California, yielding successful results for African American students speaking Ebonics in a 90-10 program suggests that the

assumption that African American students might need a 50/50 program to meet their individual linguistic needs was not necessarily accurate (Bostick-Mason, personal communication, September 21, 2007). The relationship between language and expression, and language legitimacy, therefore, as a factor in the TWI schooling of African American students must be carefully considered as programs are carried out.

Isolation

Originally, the first TWI program was created at Coral Way Elementary in Florida in 1963 to support Cuban immigrants who began arriving in the 1960's (Pellerano, Fradd, & Rovira, 1998). Across the country, the population of African American TWI students, though growing, is sparse in many programs (J. Sugarman, personal communication, April 28, 2008). For this reason, as often occurs in the traditional educational program, the small number of African American students are often divided up into different classes for the sake of "diversity," resulting in these students rarely having contact with one another.

Lewis (2004) spent time at a TWI program in Northern California for the purpose of ethnographic research and observed that the school had very small numbers of African American students: "Within the first few weeks of school, I knew who all the African American students in the upper grades were. There was literally one African American in each class" (p. 110). Lewis stated that isolation may pose a challenge for African American students in a program such as TWI: ". . . being Black in a setting where you are one of many is quite different from being one of eight Black students in a school of six hundred. Context clearly matters" (p. 143). She explained further how context affects a person's identity: "Context shapes not only how we think about others but also how and

whether we think about our own racial identities” (p. 145). Take, for example, how she recounted an African American mother’s experience in choosing a school for her son. The mother opted to forego the advantages that a TWI program offers due to the emotional cost her son might have had to pay. “She had decided that he was more likely to do well in a setting where he did not have to deal with the social and emotional toll of being one of few Black students” (Lewis, p. 179).

On the other hand, Parchia (2000) outlined how African American parents generally placed their students in TWI due to the academic rigor that other inner-city schools did not offer. They realized that their children might be spending time on Spanish instead of English, instead of learning about their own cultural background, and spending time on multicultural topics in the school. However, they were willing to make those trade-offs, including isolation.

Most students can go through 12 years of schooling without ever having met a teacher of color, and about 70% of students of color continue to attend mostly minority schools (Collier, 2002), with mostly White teachers. In TWI programs, teacher ethnicity appears to be more representative of the student population than traditional programs, at least with regard to Latino students. Howard and Loeb’s (1998) sample of 181 teachers from eight different programs around the country found that approximately 50% of the teachers grew up speaking Spanish:

This pattern indicates a much greater balance than the national situation in public elementary schools, in which the majority of all teachers are White (non-Hispanic), and there are about three times as many Latino students as Latino teachers (12% vs. 4%).

Nonetheless, only Latino and White teachers are mentioned in the study. Although the label “Latino” can certainly include teachers of Afro-Latino descent, there was no

indication of this subpopulation. This, coupled with the fact that the current African American teacher population in the United States is less than 10%, and that among undergraduates, African Americans are underrepresented in the field of foreign language study (Huber, 1990; Z. Moore, 2005), would lead one to believe that very few teachers of African American descent are teaching the Spanish component of TWI programs.

Carrigo (2000) highlighted the low numbers of African American teachers at schools where research had taken place with a significant African American population. Only two African American teachers at the TWI program were in her study, and in the program entitled “Amigos” in Massachusetts, there was only one. Therefore, not only may African American students feel isolated, but also they do not have the same benefits as other students in the program in terms of having a “mirror” (African American teachers and fellow students) in which to see themselves or an advocate who understands their cultural background. Thompson (2004) claimed the following:

Despite the fact that race and ethnicity do not necessarily ensure that African American teachers will be more successful with African American students than non-Black teachers, there is clearly a greater likelihood of African American teachers sharing cultural commonalities and insights with the students that non-Black teachers might not share. (p. 239)

However, Nicoladis et al. (1998) stated that having a Latino teacher may be advantageous for African American students, as African American students may respond better to the emotional, affective teaching style of many Latino teachers, as opposed to the general discourse and interactional style of White teachers in traditional programs. “It could be that the Hispanic teachers’ discourse and interactional style is closer to the discourse and interactional style African-American students are exposed to at home” (p. 146).

To assume that African Americans make up a homogeneous group, such as saying that all speak Ebonics or all want to be called African American, would be erroneous. Therefore, to attempt to generalize research findings across this group would also be erroneous. Nonetheless, finding out from African American students personally about the abovementioned issues in TWI can potentially shed light into the experiences of a population of African Americans in a program.

Identity Development

Identity formation was also an important part of this review due to the close relationship that exists between language and identity. African American students in any educational program benefit from a strong ethnic identity, which plays a key role in their efforts to succeed. African Americans who have a strong ethnic identity have much more potential to learn (L. Moore, 2004), especially in programs such as TWI, where additional factors exist that could tax even students who are very secure in their self-identities.

As Gloria Anzaldúa (1997) stated, “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity, I am my language” (p.113). Sociolinguists have long stressed the connection between language, culture and identity. Genesee, Paradis, and Crago (2004) discussed this in detail:

Erasing a child’s language or cultural patterns of language use is a great loss for the child. Children’s identities and senses of self are inextricably linked to the language they speak and the culture to which they have been socialized. They are, even at an early age, speakers of their languages and members of their cultures. Language and culture are essential to children’s identities. All of the affectionate talk and interpersonal communication of their childhoods and family life are embedded in their languages and cultures. (p. 33)

In a TWI program where only Spanish and Standard English are recognized as legitimate,

African American students who grew up speaking African American vernacular may encounter issues of identity. Schneider (2000) stated the importance of language for identity:

Linguistic expressions serve as markers of group solidarity or desired group membership—and part of the complexity of our speech ways arises from the fact that every individual associates himself or herself with several groups, thus constructing a distinct personal identity. (p. 361)

He is convinced that identity has a very large impact on language:

I suggest that neither region nor social class accounts for a person's speech behavior sufficiently; rather, a third factor, identity, has the greatest influence upon how an individual speaks . . . There is more to language behavior than merely being determined by one's background and origin: we also use language to actively signal who we want to be. (p. 359)

Identity formation is a complex process. Jordan-Irvine (2002) stated that many factors are involved in this process: “Identity and the development of a worldview is a complex process that is influenced by a variety of factors, such as prior socialization, history, family, social and political contexts, gender, race and sexual orientation” (p. 13). Race may not be as salient at this point in time for upper elementary and middle school students in regards to perceptions of themselves, and in fact, just as important for these students' identities may be sports, academics, church activities, hobbies, family or other personal interests. Whereas upper elementary and middle school students are most likely in the stage of pre-racial identity formation, nonetheless it is a critical time for setting the stage for racial identity formation.

Beverly Daniel-Tatum (1997) discussed the complexity of identity development in her book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* She described the five stages of racial identity development for African Americans based on William Cross's model as (a) pre-encounter stage (Race is not salient; Black individual accepts

White view of racial groups; Pro-White and Anti-Black sentiments); (b) encounter stage (An external event causes individual to start to grapple with being part of a group targeted by racism; individual recognizes current view of race as inadequate); (c) immersion/emersion (The individual struggles to destroy old paradigms of race; immerses oneself in Black culture, studies and symbols; and withdraws from interaction with Whites.); (d) internalization (The individual develops secure Black identity and reconnects with Whites.); and (e) internalization-commitment (The individual develops ways to maintain ongoing commitment to racial equality not only for the Black community but society as a whole.).

Tatum (1997) considered the first two stages as most relevant for adolescents, as her analysis of research suggests examination of racial or ethnic identity may begin as early as junior high school. Students in TWI programs in the intermediate and middle school years are just about to enter (if they have not already) into the stage where they will ask themselves “Who am I?” According to Tatum, Black students ask the additional question, “Who am I ethnically and/or racially? What does it mean to be Black?” (p. 53). In a TWI program, all students also are faced with the additional question, “What does it mean to be bilingual/bicultural?” For African Americans, particularly those speaking the vernacular, another question arises: “What does it mean to navigate three different linguistic and cultural systems when my language and culture have neither significant numbers nor power?”

African Americans are enculturated in African American ways of knowing but required to function in both the culture of mainstream schooling as well as the culture of a TWI Spanish program, including utilizing Standard English and Spanish. As a result,

African American students have “double minority” status and, therefore, must contend with very different identity issues than other students in the program. Furthermore, Swain and Lapkin (1995) stated that the needs of pre-adolescents and adolescents to use language that is accepted by the peer group must also be taken into consideration in the analysis of social context:

. . . Preadolescents and adolescents need a vernacular style as a way of signaling their identities. . . It becomes important to most preadolescents and adolescents to present the right image and to talk the right talk. The right talk is constantly changing as older adolescents move out of this particular age group and younger adolescents move in. (p. 169)

Carrigo (2000) highlighted that vernacular is not typically accepted in the academic environment; therefore, the social needs of students at pre-adolescence and adolescence may not be addressed in school. Schools that are not set up to give African Americans a sense of belonging (such as a TWI program that is mainly Latino yet operating under a mainstream power structure) could potentially pave the way for a deconstruction of one’s identity (Fordham, 1991). “Achieving academic success in a context where a Eurocentric ethos dominates necessitates divorcing one’s commitment to a changing yet familiar African-American identity and embracing instead an unpredictable, unfolding meaning of both Self and Other” (Fordham, p. 2). It was yet to be determined how a school primarily populated with Latinos played into the identity equation in terms of power and influence.

Fordham (1991) gathered ethnographic information from African American students and parents of those who had been students at elite “White” preparatory schools and found that even if students were successful, they suffered what she termed an “identity implosion/explosion” (p. 5). Included in Fordham’s article were references to

research by Anson about students who left Exeter Preparatory School not because of academic rigor but because they had been “psychologically crushed” (p. 7). Fordham considered that African Americans in this context have to deconstruct their identity, which does not protect them; rather it crushes them and essentially forces them to take on a raceless persona. An inability to take on this raceless persona might mean failure in this kind of environment. Also, she pointed out that it is not personal, but rather institutional racism that causes the powerlessness that African American students feel in this environment. A parent of a student who had been slain shared about her son’s experience at Exeter:

Personal racism you can deal with. Someone calls you nigger and you can smack him in the mouth and if you are bigger than him, he’s gonna know not to call you a nigger again. Edmund had dealt with that kind of racism all of his life—we all do—but before he went to Exeter, he had never, ever in his life dealt with institutional racism. That was something he couldn’t fight against. How do you fight an assumption? How do you tackle history? How do you get your hands on an environment? You can’t—you can’t even begin to come to grips with it. That’s what makes it so insidious and hard to deal with. And the thing is, it’s never personal. It’s just there. (p. 7)

Fordham ends by asking what changes private schools must make in order to ensure that African-American adolescents feel a sense of belonging in these institutions. Although Fordham’s article was based on student experiences in White private schools, it was important to take into account the sense of belonging that African American students might experience in a TWI environment, such as in the current study, with a majority Latino population.

The importance of maintaining a strong sense of personal cultural (i.e., African American) identity while adapting to the new culture (i.e., Latino culture in Spanish TWI programs) is paramount (Garrett, 1996), especially for African Americans who already

must contend with mainstream hegemony in their everyday schooling experiences.

LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) asserted the following:

We define bicultural efficacy as the belief, or confidence, that one can live effectively, and in a satisfying manner, within two groups without compromising one's sense of cultural identity. This belief will support an individual through the highly difficult tasks of developing and maintaining effective support groups in both the minority and the majority culture. It will also enable the person to persist through periods when he or she may experience rejection from one or both of the cultures in which he or she is working to develop or maintain competence... the tension of solving internal conflicts caused by bicultural stress need not have a negative psychological impact but could instead lead to personal and emotional growth. (p. 404)

For African Americans in TWI, living within the African American culture as well as other cultures, poses an increased challenge as it becomes essential to live within three groups (Latino, White, and African American) without compromising one's sense of cultural identity. LaFramboise et al. (1997) claimed that

Most psychologists theorize an internal sense of self that is separate from a person's environment. This sense develops, in relationship to the individual's psychosocial experience, to the point where a psychologically healthy individual has a secure sense of which he or she is or is not (De La Torre, 1977). This sense of self interacts with the individual's cultural context in a reciprocally deterministic manner to develop an ethnic identity (Mego, 1988). We hypothesize that the strength or weakness of this identity will affect the development of a person's ability to acquire bicultural competence. (p. 402)

Applied to the TWI context, African American students with a strong self-identity will be more apt to acquire bicultural competence. Yeh and Huang (1996) also contended that ethnic identity is closely related to the self, others and the social context.

Ethnic identity must be considered within a specific social context since the contrast an individual experiences between his or her culture of origin and the dominant culture will significantly affect the self. Further, an individual's ethnic identity may vary according to the influence of other individuals and the social context.

Tatum (1997) contended that "the ability to see oneself as part of a larger group

from which one can draw support is an important coping strategy” (p. 70). Individuals who do not have such a strategy available to them because they do not experience a shared identity with at least some subset of their racial group are at risk for considerable social isolation. Black students who are few in numbers in a TWI program may be at risk for this social isolation. As Tatum asserted, “For some, the attempt to bridge two worlds results in alienation from both” (p. 139).

This idea of two worlds was first articulated by W. E. B. Dubois (1994), who utilized the terminology of “double consciousness” to describe the experience of the African American in a society where power belongs to Whites:

Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 2)

In a TWI context, African Americans ever feel their three-ness: American, African American, and Spanish bilingual. They have to navigate the linguistic and cultural norms of mainstream culture and of Latino culture and language in addition to their own.

Because identity plays a critical role in optimizing academic potential, Beebe and Giles (1984) posited that students are less likely to obtain L2 or cultural proficiency when they believe that by learning a new language or culture they are betraying their own language and culture. Since their own language and culture are not considered the target language or culture, African American students in a TWI environment may be challenged

to identify with the other principal language and cultural groups in the program (Latino and mainstream cultures).

Herbert Kohl (1994) also addresses a similar concept in relationship to African Americans in his book *I Won't Learn from You*, the idea being that if teachers ask students to abandon their identity; these students will protect themselves by not learning from the teacher. Delpit (2003) explains that this involves “enlisting various forms of classroom disruption and disengagement to thwart the system that disrespects them, and that assumes their intellectual inferiority” (p. 18). Cose (1999) stated that what he considers the racial gap has to be dealt with directly:

The racial gap... can only be closed by recognizing it and by recognizing why it exists. That will not come to pass as long as we insist on dividing people into different camps and then swearing that differences don't count or that repeated blows to the soul shouldn't be taken seriously. For the truth is that the often hurtful and seemingly trivial encounters of daily existence are in the end what most of life is. (pp. 191-192)

African Americans in a TWI program, undoubtedly face pressure by greater society to assimilate yet experience a natural expectation on the part of the African American community to maintain their own African American identity. Maintaining cultural identity in the midst of participation in language programs has been shown to be a concern of parents. Lambert and Tucker (1972) demonstrated that language majority (English speaking) students participating in an immersion program identified with the target linguistic/ethnic group, but their identification conflicted with what English-speaking parents wanted. These parents wanted their children to acquire the French language without becoming “too French” in the process.

Perry (2003a) argued that an African American student's success rests on his ability to navigate three different identities:

In order for African-American children to achieve in school, they have to be able to negotiate three distinct social identities: their identity as members of a caste-like group, their identity as members of mainstream society and their identity as members of a cultural group in opposition to which Whiteness historically and contemporarily continues to be defined. Given the sociopolitical arrangements of the larger society, these identities are often seen and experienced as contradictory and oppositional to each other. African-American youth have to be capable of dealing with the dilemmas that emerge from the socially constructed contradictory nature of these identities, as well as those inherent in the identities themselves. (p. 104)

An African American student will most likely feel pressure to negotiate all three identities in most schools in the United States, but in TWI schools, where the status of the minority language (Spanish, for example) and culture (Latino) is an important goal, African Americans might face additional challenges. For African American students, the status of Spanish and “the other minority” culture could be interpreted as more important than their own culture. There is the potential that they might ask themselves, “I’m not White and I’m not Latino; then how do I fit in, and where is my value in this program? Mainstream culture and Standard English have the power, Latino culture, and Spanish I can live without on a daily basis outside of school, but in school, I must learn to navigate and understand. What about my culture? Where is it represented?”

African American participants are in a context where they are few in number and where neither their non-standardized language/communication styles nor culture have power. They essentially need to manage four identities: the three listed above plus the identity of an African American in a language program where the goals include appreciation and status raising of Spanish and the Latino culture.

Summary

It was important to gain a historical perspective of the African American

educational journey in order to contextualize the discussion of African American students in TWI programs which outlined the determination and resilience of African Americans in the face of racism throughout this country's history. It was also critical to see successful theory and models of African American schooling, such as that offered by culturally responsive pedagogy, which provides a challenging environment, including scaffolding and connections to students' real life experiences, as well as African-centered pedagogy, offering a model that draws on the full cultural and intellectual heritage of African Americans.

The research addressing African American students in foreign language classrooms was limited. Whereas theorists have hypothesized reasons for lack of involvement and achievement in foreign language programs, overall studies claimed that African Americans are generally interested in foreign language study. Lack of awareness of the benefits of foreign language study was an underlying theme, and poor pedagogy appeared a frustration for many. On the other hand, there was some evidence that schools with FL programs and low SES were successful. In addition, African American success in culturally-responsive programs was a testimony to the potential these students have for foreign language learning, especially for the lesser-known languages. Very few studies looked in depth into the personal learning experiences of students who had been successful in foreign language learning.

Two-Way Immersion studies including African Americans were limited in their scope and problematic. The results were inconclusive as to the performance of African Americans, even though the overall theme seemed to be that achievement was possible despite the fact that some programs were not providing students and environment

promoting equal access. In addition, in spite of the fact that TWI theoretically offers the opportunity for all students to learn cross-cultural competence, non-African American students indicated that they were not familiar with African American students and, in addition, African Americans were rated less favorably when compared to White and Latino students. Researching more in depth about these issues was paramount for finding out how to best address issues facing African American students.

Several challenges that are faced by African American students in TWI programs emerged, particularly in regards to language legitimacy for speakers of Ebonics. Results from several studies suggested the lack of awareness on the part of teachers regarding their own perceptions of language and the impact that language variety can have, depending upon the perspective of the school community: either as a resource to build upon, or as a problem to be avoided.

Additionally since isolation plays an important role in the development of racial identity for African Americans, this isolation may very well thwart identity development. Identity development in African Americans, both culturally and linguistically, is of extreme importance for their schooling experiences. However, the literature clearly indicated that this has essentially been ignored by educators. Getting students' perspectives about their schooling would provide important insight into how to offer a TWI program that provides equal opportunity for all students.

Research studies have yet to address the complexities found in a Two-Way Immersion program with a primarily Latino population serving a small populace of African American students who have (a) persevered to the upper elementary or middle school level, (b) who spoke Ebonics, and (c) who were learning Spanish and Standard

English. The development of an understanding of the experiences and perspectives of African American students in TWI programs is of particular importance in the effort to unlock ideas for what works best for African American students in these programs.

This study attempted to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring linguistic and cultural realities and attitudes of African American students in TWI programs through student experiences and perspectives, as well as those of their parents. This study will add to the literature regarding African American student participation in TWI programs and, most importantly, provide insight into how TWI programs can optimize achievement for African American students, particularly those who use Ebonics.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide an opportunity for nine upper elementary and middle school African American students and their parents to share their perspectives and opinions about participation in Two-Way Immersion. The hope was to use their input to ultimately provide teachers and administrators with inside information and tools to more effectively facilitate bilingualism and overall academic achievement for African American students who are participating in Two-Way Immersion programs and who speak Ebonics. This study entailed engaging participants in dialogues about reasons for continuation in the program, as well as about their language and cultural experiences and perspectives. It also involved observations of language use and the gathering of student records, work samples and other relevant information.

Research Design

This study used qualitative methods in order to most accurately address the nature of the experiences of African American students participating in TWI programs, providing a window into their experiences and perspectives. Quantitative researchers generally define their subjects in terms of observable behavior and define that behavior with the operations used to measure it. Most qualitative research, on the other hand, subscribes to the epistemological position of “interpretivism.” Interpretivists believe that aspects of the human environment are constructed by the individuals participating in that environment. As a result, a phenomenon does not exist apart from its participants and will

have different meanings for the different individuals who participate in it. One of the primary reasons for qualitative methods is to discover the nature of those meanings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999, p. 289). The qualitative approach is particularly appropriate when culturally and linguistically diverse students are involved. Moll et al. (1992) asserted the following:

Qualitative research offers a range of methodological alternatives that can fathom the array of cultural and intellectual resources available to students and teachers within these households. This approach is particularly important in dealing with students whose households are usually viewed as being “poor,” not only economically but in terms of experiences for the child. (p. 132)

Researchers need to employ methods that encapsulate the multidimensionality of the human experience when investigating living dynamic systems (Deacon, 2000). By using multiple data collection methods, researchers can analyze research questions from different angles, which can result in increased trustworthiness in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During this investigation, the researcher utilized different data collection tools, including language logs, document analysis, and dialogic interviews, to provide a more complete picture of the students’ experiences and to increase the trustworthiness of the data. The research questions were addressed one by one; however, more than finding “answers” to the questions individually, the ultimate goal was to create, although not quite as in ethnography, a type of “thick description” of the overall experiences and perspectives of the students.

Within the paradigm of qualitative research, participatory research was utilized. Participatory research is “a committed dialogue for service and action among researchers and their communities” (Ada & Beutel, 1993, p. 7). Participatory research has its roots with Paulo Freire (2000), a Brazilian educator who worked with peasants to “name their world,” and in doing so, they began to critically reflect on its cultural and political

realities. One of the goals put forth is to achieve emancipation through collective action.

Ada and Beutel explained how the goals of participatory research are summarized as social justice:

Participatory Research is a way in which to conduct research with oppressed people, respecting and encouraging their ability to know and to critically reflect, so that tangible improvements to their lives are achieved and movement is sustained towards the transformation of social reality into a more just society. (p. 27)

African Americans have a history of oppression, particularly salient in the schooling context where cultural and linguistic differences meet head-on with mainstream hegemony. This study engaged participants in dialogic interviews, which allowed participants to discuss and reflect upon the topic of research. Transformation through personal reflection on participant experiences in TWI programs as well as dissemination of information to the community and those in power were the primary objectives of the study.

Ada and Beutel (1993) claimed that participatory research does not fit the traditional model of research. They stated that, in traditional academic research, the emphasis is on control, with the participants as passive objects who provide data. The researcher is isolated and learns *about* (rather than *with*) the “subjects,” providing little, if any, opportunity for a mutually empowering educational relationship between the researcher and participants. In addition, they asserted that traditional research tends to force participants to choose (i.e., as in questionnaires), which may not accurately represent them as people or their interests. Neither does it provide an explanation for the choices made. “By engaging in Participatory Research, we begin a transformative educational process with our community of participants” (Ada & Beutel, p. 34).

Therefore, participatory research not only informs in regard to the research questions but also empowers the participants and their respective communities. Ada and Beutel further stated the purpose of this type of research:

It is the basic structure of the Participatory Research process, the fact that participants are listened to and encouraged to think and reflect upon their own life experience, that makes it fundamentally educational and empowering. This is apart from the concrete information that may be gained or new skills, which may be acquired, valuable as these may be. (p. 40)

Transformative education is the antithesis of what Freire (2000) called “banking education.” Transformative education attempts to “construct knowledge with people, rather than handing it to them” (Freire, p. 82). Through naming, reflecting upon, and giving form to their experiences of using language, experiencing culture, and forming their own identities, students and parents are empowered. “Knowledge that is constructed with participants . . . reflects the participants’ own experience, encouraging them to use their own language and hear their own voices in understanding what is happening to them, with them, and around them” (Ada & Beutel, 1993, p. 20). Participatory research is not only an approach to research, but it also represents a philosophical approach to education.

The nature of participatory research is to “go after knowledge that is not traditionally part of the already established and published score of knowledge” (Ada & Beutel, 1993, p. 12). Ada and Beutel asserted that identifying, naming, and giving voice to knowledge that is not yet codified or legitimated by the dominant society are the goals of this process. They went on to say,

In participatory research, the researcher and participant embark together on an exploration of the unknown and the unnamed. Together they engage in naming, reflecting upon, and giving form to what is, but what has been undifferentiated from the totality of their world. (p. 12)

As it pertains to this particular research project, knowledge not yet legitimated by the dominant society includes the experiences of African American students and their parents in TWI programs. As Ada and Beutel stated, “All students, even the very youngest, are capable of their own research, not only those who have reached the doctoral level” (p. 38).

Nieto (1999) corroborated that student perspectives are not common in research and that, although students have a lot to say about schools and learning, their perspectives frequently are not sought:

Students frequently have been overlooked as central players in school restructuring and reform efforts. If included at all, it is most often as recipients of particular policies and practices. Yet just as the redefinition of the role of teachers is crucial in developing a critical pedagogy, so too, is the redefinition of students’ roles. (p. 120)

Nieto went on to posit that listening to students is the key for understanding how to restructure learning environments so that they are responsive to students:

Listening to students can reveal whether they perceive schools as responsive or unresponsive to them and why. Students’ views have important implication for educational reform because their insights can prove to be important for developing meaningful, liberating, and engaging educational experiences. Through this process, students can become energized and motivated about schooling. The very act of speaking about their ideas can act as a catalyst for more critical thinking about their education in general. Young people often feel encouraged by the mere fact that somebody wants to listen to them and take their views seriously. Listening seriously to students is especially important for young people whose cultures and languages are invisible in the school setting and who may feel alienated due to their cultural, racial, social, class, linguistic or other difference. Giving voice to the challenges they face in school and at home, and to the frustration of accommodating to an environment that may be hostile to their differences, can indeed be empowering for them. (pp. 123-124)

H. Samy Alim (2007) wrote that students are the resources for their own cultural and linguistic realities:

It is one thing to view the culture of our students as a resource for teaching about other subjects, and it is quite another to see our students as the *sources*, *investigators* and *archivers* of varied and rich bodies of knowledge rooted in their cultural-linguistic reality. (p. 17)

Nieto (1999) mentioned how Phelan, Locke-Davidson, and Cao (1992) discovered that student views on teaching and learning (as evidenced by their two-year research project that identified students' thoughts about school) were "notably consistent with learning theory, cognitive science, and the sociology of work" (Nieto, p. 124). However, more importantly, as Nieto later noted, "listening is not enough if it is not accompanied by profound changes in expectations of student learning and achievement" (p. 124).

Also a critical factor, another example of knowledge not legitimated by the dominant society, is the perspective of African American parents. The parent perspective on schooling is clearly missing in the literature, especially in regard to marginalized populations (Nieto, 2004). The importance of gaining the perspective of these parents in order to get a more complete picture of the child's experiences cannot be understated. It is this perspective that greatly informs teachers and administrators and, at the same time, communicates to parents that their opinions and perspectives are valued. Citing a teacher's efforts at interviewing parents, Nieto (1999) discussed the importance of this act for families: "...the mere act of bringing parents into their children's education through questions about the children proved to be a powerful mechanism for letting families know that their insights and ideas were valued" (p. 172). Therefore, the participatory approach for this study included parent as well as student participation in the construction of knowledge.

Participatory research contains a phase of inner and outer preparation. Inner preparation involves becoming informed of the issues of the community and becoming

part of the community so as to forge a connection that will facilitate the dialogue. Outer preparation involves identification of the people with whom to begin dialoguing and then a description of areas of possible study with members of the community. At that point, one begins to collect information that will be useful in learning about the issues of significant concern (Ada & Beutel, 1993, p. 65). To prepare, the researcher performed a review of the literature; added to this review through courses addressing African Americans in education, specifically African American Literature, Pan-African Language and Culture and the History of African Americans in Education; and performed two qualitative projects: one involving interviews with an African American parent; the second, where she observed classes and spoke with teachers and parents of the students. She also made a school visit at the proposed school site during which she visited classrooms and spoke with teachers, students, and administrators. In the meeting with administrators, the researcher explained the research proposal, which was later presented to and accepted by the board. Potential participants were identified by the principal and TWI coordinator.

Research Setting

A demographic analysis of TWI programs in Northern California was performed to identify potential school partners for the study. The limiting factor was the number of African American students participating at the upper elementary and middle school grade levels. One school that had a relatively significant concentration of African American students at this level was located in a large metropolitan city in northern California, San Luis. The Language Institute of San Luis was a charter school located in Elmwood Park,

an inner-city neighborhood in San Luis. Elmwood Park was a very diverse community full of cultural and linguistic resources. The population was 30% African American, 40% Latino, 18% Asian, and 5% Caucasian, with approximately half of the students in the community speaking English as a second language. Approximately 94% of students from the area were economically disadvantaged and qualified for free/reduced lunch, while 71% of the students at the Language Institute qualified for free/reduced lunch. Schools in the Elmwood Park area were historically ranked near the bottom compared to other schools in the district (Language Institute of San Luis, 2008).

The Language Institute originally began 13 years ago as a “90-10” TWI strand at a low-ranked school, Coral Ridge, to offer an alternative form of education to students in the community. With the passage of Proposition 227, and the “English-only” movement in California, the Two-Way Immersion program suddenly was at risk. Teachers who had been successful in creating an alternative for the community through the Two-Way Immersion environment were prompted to consider the charter school option. In 2002, with the community’s support, parents, teachers and administrators formed a core charter development team, which embarked on the long and arduous planning and development process. In 2003, the school was awarded close to a half million dollar startup grant to ensure its proper development and full implementation of this plan by 2004. Part of this plan was encouraging students living within the area to attend the school since, at the time, only 11% attending the strand at Coral Ridge were from the Elmwood Park area. The proposal included sharing facilities and property with Coral Ridge, such as the lunchroom, auditorium, and playgrounds. The total number of students grew from 31 the first year to full capacity (206) before becoming an independent charter school in 2004.

At the time of this study, the Language Institute was an independent charter school composed of a diverse body of 301 students K-8 (The year 2006-07 was the first year grade 8 was offered). Of these students, 61% were English learners. Approximately 87% of the student body resided within the sponsoring school district area, while 13% were inter-district transfers (Language Institute of San Luis, 2008, para. 2-3). Fifty percent of the African American students participating in this study resided within the school district area. Given the specialized program offered by the Language Institute, it drew students from three neighboring, more affluent school districts. The mission statement of the Language Institute of San Luis was the following: “to educate culturally and economically diverse students in grades K-8 through a dual-language immersion model designed to achieve bi-literacy, multicultural competence and academic excellence while promoting self-motivated, socially responsible lifelong learners” (Language Institute of San Luis, para. 1). The current Language Institute school demographics are presented in Table 1; parent education levels are presented in Appendix A.

Table 1

Language Institute School Demographics

Ethnic Group	Percentage of Student Body
Latino	89
African American	5
Filipino	2
White	2
Chinese	1

School personnel consisted of almost an entire Latino teaching and support staff, with one Filipina two White teachers, and one male.

The Language Institute was not without its share of challenges that one parent referred to as dealing with “the elements” in an urban area. At one of the first meetings with the researcher on campus, there was an incident in the neighborhood involving a weapon. Due to the proximity to the school and police involvement, the school was put on lockdown. Sporting events in the field next to campus had been cancelled for the same reason. Students were also very familiar with gang activity in the neighborhood, identifying with “the Bloods,” an infamous gang in California known by their red clothing and, therefore, expressed fear of wearing blue, the color associated with their rival “the Crips” (W. Smith, personal communication, April 16, 2008). Both gangs are primarily African American.

Research Participants

The study included nine African American students and their parents. The literature shows very little evidence of research that seeks out students, particularly child language learners, who can provide insight into their own experiences and perspectives in language learning. Tse (2000) echoed this when she discussed the dearth of research of student perceptions, specifically in regard to their foreign language experiences:

. . . Little systematic study has been made of how students perceive their FL experiences when given an open opportunity to comment on them, unrestricted by surveys or forced choice questionnaires. . . .we know almost nothing about student attributions of success or failure in the FL classroom and how those attributions may affect their beliefs about their ability to learn languages, which in turn affects whether they will continue their study in FL programs. . . .Relatively few studies have used in-depth, qualitative approaches in understanding student views of their language learning experiences in their totality (p. 69)

Decisions regarding language education and two-way methodology and instruction are made by teachers and administrators, most likely without any input from students. Even though it is understandable that adults must make decisions about their classrooms, considering student input may make those classrooms more effective. In addition, since parents make the initial decision to enroll their child in a Two-Way Bilingual Immersion program, having parent perspectives about student continuation in the program give a more complete picture of the student's experience in the program.

The criteria for student selection were as follows:

1. Students whose parents identified their children as primarily African American;
2. Students at the upper elementary or middle school level (grades 4-8) in the Language Institute TWI program;
3. Students who had been participating in the program since kindergarten or first grade; and
4. Students who were identified as using African American vernacular, Standard English, and Spanish in the school setting.

This criteria ensured that students had been in the TWI program long enough to demonstrate a level of perseverance. This theoretically translated into many cultural and linguistic exchanges and other TWI schooling experiences over the years, which provided a window into language use behaviors and language and cultural attitudes, as well as perspectives of pre-adolescents and adolescents at the beginning stages of identity development. The perspectives of students who had progressed through the program provided insight into adjustments and changes that could be made for the upcoming and

increasing population of African American students in TWI programs in this and other urban areas.

Student perspectives were the main focus of the research, with parent perspectives playing an important complementary role. Nine upper elementary and middle school students, aged 9-14, and at least one parent per student participated in the study. Six girls and three boys in grades 4 through 8 included both two parent homes and single parent homes. Parent participants included parents and/or caregivers of the students. Both parents were invited to participate.

Research Questions and Questions to Guide the Dialogues

The research questions which guided this study and the questions used to guide the dialogues are as follows:

Research Question 1: What factors have contributed to upper elementary and middle school African American students' continued participation in a Two-Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program?

Student Questions	Parent Questions
1) Tell me how you think this school is special or unique. a) What makes your school more special than other schools, etc.? b) What do you most like about the school?	1) What is the reason you enrolled your child in the Language Institute? 2) Explain how you think this school is special or unique. 3) What does your child most like about the school? What do you most like about the school?
2) What do you most like about being in a bilingual program?	

- 3) How do you see two languages helping you in the future?
- 4) Tell me what you can do in Spanish (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and in English (reading, writing, speaking, listening).
- 5) You made it to _____ grade in this program. Good for you!
 - a) Can you tell me why you have stayed with the TWI program?
 - b) If it were only up to you, would you stay in the program? (If yes, what makes you want to stay in the program? If no, what would be your reason for wanting to go to another school?)
 - c) Why do you think other students stay in the program?
- 6) Tell me about some really positive or good times you have had at school.
- 7) Tell me about a time when you might have felt upset (discouraged) or unmotivated. Tell me about how that made you feel.
- 4) What do you most like about your child being in a bilingual program?
- 5) How do you see this program helping your child in the future?
- 6) Tell me about how your child is doing in Spanish (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and in English (reading, writing, speaking, listening).
- 7) Your child made it to _____ grade in this program. A) Can you tell me why you and/or your child made the decision to stay with the TWI program? B) Do you want your child to stay in the TWI program through 8th grade? If it were possible, through high school? C) Has anything in particular made your child want to stay in the program?/made you want your child to stay in the program?
- 8) Tell me if there have been any positive or really good times your child has had at school from being at LISL.
- 9) Has there been anything in particular that has made your child feel upset/discouraged or unmotivated?

- 8) What type of student do you think would do well in this program?
 - 9) Would you recommend this program to other African American students?
 - 10) Has he/she had any really difficult moments, for example, where he/she might have wanted to quit studying at this school? In Spanish? Explain one or more of those moments. Have there been any moments where you might have wanted to change him/her to another school or program? Explain one or more of those moments.
 - 11) How have you as a parent been involved in your child's learning of Spanish and in the Two-Way Immersion program in general?
 - 12) Is there anything that might encourage you be more involved?
 - 13) What type of student/family would you recommend this program to?
 - 14) Would you recommend this program to other African American families?
 - 15) Do you know of any other African American families who were thinking about having their kids in the program and then decided not to? (Why?)
 - 16) Can you tell me about any other African American students who were in the program but are no longer there? Do you know why?
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Research Question 2: What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion

program in regards to language?

Student Questions	Parent Questions
<p>1) What languages do you speak? Do you speak English differently (for example, by the words you use or the way you use them) depending on who you are with? Explain. Some people call the English and/or style that African American people sometimes use as “coolspeak,” slang, informal English, Black English, African American vernacular, etc. Do you call it anything in particular?</p>	<p>1) What languages does your child speak? Does your child speak English any differently at home than at school? Some parents call the English and/or style that African American students sometimes use as “coolspeak,” slang, informal English, Black English, African American vernacular, etc. Do you call it anything in particular?</p>
<p>2) What language do you use with your friends/at school/when you think/read books/watch movies/watch TV/listen to the radio?</p>	<p>2) What language does he/she prefer to use with his/her friends/at school/when he/she thinks/reads books/watches movies/watches TV/listens to the radio?</p>
<p>3) Which language are you most comfortable using? Explain.</p>	<p>3) Which of the languages he/she uses do you think he/she is most comfortable using? Explain.</p>
<p>4) When and with whom do you tend to use Spanish? Standard English? _____/Black English?</p>	<p>4) When and with whom does he/she tend to use Spanish? Standard English? _____/Black English?</p>

- 5) Are you aware when you use different languages (do you have to think about it?), or is it just natural? (Do you feel any different when you use the different languages?)
- 6) With which group do you think you have the most in common: people who speak Spanish, people who speak the kind of English you usually use in the classroom, or people who speak the kind of English we were referring to e.g., like what you might use with other African Americans (or a combination?)
- 7) Do you think any one language is better than the other?
- 8) Do you feel you are good at using the different languages? A) Do you ever feel anxious when you use Spanish (e.g., Do you ever feel anxious if you have to give a speech or write or use Spanish with others who speak it as their first language?)? b) Tell me how well you are doing in Spanish and English. C) Have you ever needed to get extra help in Spanish or English (in reading, writing,
- 5) Does he/she have a particular attitude or opinion about Spanish? Standard English? _____/Black English? Do you have a particular attitude about Spanish? Standard English? _____/Black English?
- 6) With which group do you think he/she has the most in common: Spanish speakers, Standard English speakers, _____/Black English speakers, or a mixture? Explain.
- 7) Does he/she think any one language is better than the other?
- 8) Do you think he/she is good at using the languages of Spanish and Standard English? What about _____/Black English/ Black styles of communication in general?
- 9) Does he/she ever seem anxious when he/she uses Spanish or Standard English?
- 10) How well is he/she doing in Spanish and Standard English?
Has he/she ever needed to get extra help in Spanish or Standard English (in reading,

- speaking, etc.)? What about how you use _____/Black English? Do you feel you're good at that? Explain.
- 9) Tell me about what you like about learning Spanish? English? Tell me what you don't like.
- 10) Have you ever had the experience speaking with those who only use Spanish? How do you feel about doing that?
- 11) Have you ever been told which language to use? Or not to use? How did you respond? Did you do what you were asked to do? How did you feel about that? (NOW, how would you feel if you were told which language to use or not to use? How would you respond?)
- 12) Can you think of a funny moment when you were learning Spanish and made a mistake and everybody laughed? How about a time when someone might have treated you differently or made fun of you at school because of how you spoke?
- 13) Explain if you think the way that you use language is different from other students writing, speaking, etc.) that you know of?
- 11) Have you ever felt worried about his/her ability to learn English considering the program is carried out in Spanish?
- 12) Tell me about his/her/your plans for your child using Spanish in the future?
- 13) Does he/she seem to like learning Spanish? Standard English?
- 14) Does he/she seem to like learning Spanish? Standard English?
- 15) Do you think he/she feels comfortable speaking with those who only speak Spanish (younger children, adults, etc.)?
- 16) As far as you know, has he/she ever been told which language to use? Or not to use? Do you know how he/she responded and felt about that? How do you feel about that?
- 17) Can you give me an example of a time when someone might have treated him/her

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| <p>in the program? In your neighborhood?
In your family?</p> <p>14) Tell me about family events at school.
Do you and your family participate?
How else do your parents help you?</p> | <p>differently or made fun of him/her at school
because of how he/she spoke?</p> <p>18) Explain if you think the way that he/she uses
language is different from other students in
the program. In your neighborhood? In your
family?</p> <p>19) Do you think the way he/she uses language
has made his/her experience at school
different from other students?</p> |
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Research Question 3: What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to culture?

Student Questions	Parent Questions
1) Do you consider yourself African American, Latino, White, a combination, or other?	1) Does he/she consider him/herself African American, Latino, White, a combination, or other?
2) How does speaking Spanish affect the way you see yourself? (Do you think your way of thinking about yourself as an _____ [African American, Latino, etc.] has changed or is different because you are here? If yes, explain how.)	2) Do you think speaking Spanish has affected the way he/she sees him/herself? (Do you think his/her way of thinking about him/herself as an _____ [African American, Latino, etc.] has changed or is different because he/she is here? If yes, explain how. Do you think his/her way of thinking about him/herself culturally has changed or is different because he/she is a
3) How do you think being African American has affected/might affect your experience at school? What about your friendships with	

- other students? With teachers? With principal or other adults on campus?
- 4) Do you feel as though you can truly be yourself at LISL? Especially in regards to being African American. Explain why or why not.
- 5) Do you think there are many other African Americans at the school? (Do you notice it? Is it comfortable, uncomfortable, etc.?) How has being one of a few African American students at the school made/make a difference for you in the program? How do you think it would be different if there were more African Americans at the school?
- 6) Have there been any activities at the school that focus on African Americans in particular? If yes, what? (Can you name more than one?) Tell me your opinion about that.
- A) Have you ever done class activities (like reading books or stories or having celebrations) that have focused on African Americans? If yes, what? Do you have an opinion about that? B) Can you think of a time when you discussed culture (especially African American culture) in classrooms or meetings and/or with teachers?
- student at the Language Institute?
- 3) How do you think being African American has affected/might affect his/her experience at LISL? What about his/her relationships with other students? With teachers? With principal or other adults on campus?
- 4) Do you feel as though he/she can truly be him/herself (particularly in regards to being African American) at LISL? Explain why or why not. Do you feel you can truly be yourself; e.g., participate fully, etc., as a parent?
- 5) Are you aware of the number of African Americans at the school? Explain your child's experience of being one of only a few African American students at your school. How do you think being one of a few African American students at the school may have made/make a difference for your child in the program? (Do you or your child notice it? Is it comfortable, uncomfortable, etc.?) How do you think it would be different if there were more African Americans at the school?

- 7) Have you or do you ever talk about culture (especially your culture) in the classroom/with your friends or classmates/at home?
- 8) With which group do you think you have the most in common: people who are Latino/African American/Asian/White/biracial/mixed race/other?
- 9) Tell me who your 5 closest friends are. What is their culture? A) Do you feel you understand other cultures better now that you have been in the TWI program? Explain. B) Do you feel that your classmates understand your culture better after being in the program together?
- 10) Can you think of a time when you might have been teased, made fun of, or experienced anything negative at school because of your culture? Explain what happened. A) Do you feel you know how to handle this kind of a situation if it does occur? Have you ever talked at home or school about how to handle this situation? B) Have you ever teased or made fun of others because of their culture? Explain.
- 6) Are you aware of any school activities that focus on African Americans? If yes, what? As far as you know, does your child have an opinion about that? Do you have an opinion about that?
- 7) Are you aware of any activities in the classroom (stories or celebrations, etc.) that focus on African Americans in particular? If yes, what? Tell me your opinion about that?
- 8) Can you think of a time when he/she might have discussed culture (especially African American culture) in classrooms or meetings and/or with teachers?
- 9) Are you aware of any time when culture (especially his or her culture) was discussed with his/her friends or classmates? At home?
- 10) With which group do you think he/she has the most in common: people who are Latino/African American/Asian/White/biracial/mixed race/other?
- 11) Tell me who his/her 5 closest friends are. What is their culture? A) Do you think he/she

- 11) Is there something you would like to add to the school (if you could) so it would be a better experience for you? (What classes or activities might make it more interesting for you?)
- understands other cultures better now that he/she has been in the TWI program?
Explain. B) Do you feel that his/her classmates understand his/her culture better after being in the program together?
- 12) Do you feel you understand other cultures better now that your child has been in the TWI program?
- 13) Can you think of a time when he/she might have been teased, made fun of, or experienced anything negative at school because of his/her culture? Explain what happened. A) Tell me about whether you think your child knows how to handle this kind of a situation if it does occur. Has there ever been a time in which you discussed these kind of situations at home (or that your child may have discussed this at school)?
- b) Can you think of a time when your child might have ever teased or made fun of others because of their culture? Explain.
- 14) Can you think of any recommendation you might have to improve the program for students, particularly African American students/families?
-

Research Question 4: What are the experiences and perspectives of the parents of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to their child's language and cultural experiences? (See parent columns in Research Questions 2 and 3.)

Data Collection Procedures

More than seeking answers to the research questions as separate entities, the data collection instead sought to gather and synthesize information from all the questions in an effort to create a window into the collective experiences of these students. Participatory research is an approach to research, rather than a data collection mechanism. This study utilized the dialogues as the principal methodology. Data were collected over a 4-month period. In addition, to support the data obtained through the dialogues, the researcher used documentation available in student cumulative files, reports of test results, student work samples, and other relevant documentation. Also included were language logs—records of observations the researcher made to determine language use, as well as informal conversations with teachers. All this information was used to support the extraction of common themes.

The following steps were followed in the collection of data: A parent volunteer/representative chosen by the principal assisted in contacting parents to inform them about the project and to obtain permission for the researcher to contact them by phone. The parent representative provided the researcher a list of parents who had agreed to be contacted by the researcher. The researcher subsequently contacted each parent by phone, provided information about the study, and then provided the documentation to each individual family who expressed an interest in participating in the study. Students

and parents were mailed or presented with an invitation letter, a cover letter, an informed consent form for self-participation (Appendix B), an informed consent (or assent) for dialogue form (Appendix C), a parental/caregiver consent form (for the students) in order to secure parent permission (Appendix D), and a copy of the questions to guide the dialogue. Parents were encouraged to discuss the project with their children to determine interest, after which the researcher would follow up and discuss the project individually with each student. However, in all cases, when the parents chose to participate, their child participated also. Therefore, the researcher did not hold a separate meeting to explain the project to students.

Following receipt of the documents, the researcher contacted parents by phone to determine whether the parents had questions or concerns about the research and whether they agreed to participate. An appointment was subsequently set up for the first interview. Before the first interview began, the consent and assent forms were collected from the participants, and the researcher answered any further questions or concerns that the participants might have had regarding the research process.

Dialogues

Dialogue was utilized in an effort to find out about student perspectives regarding their own experiences in the program, as well as their linguistic and cultural experiences, language use, and overall attitudes as students in the program. This type of dialogue is different from formal interviews, conversation, or discourse because “there are no reserved comments, no force of argument, no intended outcomes of persuasion” (Ada & Beutel, 1993, p. 89). Whereas the research questions are formed in advance, in participatory research they are open and preliminary and not totally formulated. In other

words, in the process of the research, initial observations and conversations with people in the community can alter the questions (Ada & Beutel, p. 70). According to Ada and Beutel, “This respects the openness of Participatory Research and its receptivity to the deeper insights to be gained in the project” (p. 69-70). Based on the research questions, a second set of questions was used by the researcher to guide the dialogue. As stated by Ada and Beutel, “The questions should be formulated with the community and participants assuring that the research is controlled by those who are co-researching their reality with you” (p. 70).

Therefore, the questions that were used to help guide the dialogues were piloted on one parent volunteer and the principal. The parent volunteer and principal met with the researcher to revise and edit the questions. A copy of the questions was provided to the parents and participants with the consent forms so that the students and parents could review them in advance and formulate answers.

The location of the dialogues was determined according to the preference of the parents, which included vacant classrooms at the school, a parent’s workplace, an automobile while awaiting their child at a dance studio, and a few homes. One parent requested a phone dialogue due to his work schedule and one due to his medical condition. In the case of phone dialogues, the conversations were recorded through a telephone recording device to facilitate transcription. In addition, also due to limitations in their own scheduling, some parents scheduled their second dialogue soon after the first dialogue was finished. While the parents had the audio for review before the second dialogue, it was impossible to provide the first transcription before the second dialogue took place. Therefore, both transcriptions were provided for review after the second one

was completed.

To comply with parents' wishes, parents were given the option to be present during the dialogues with their children, particularly because, on a few occasions, both parent and child arrived together to meet the researcher and it was not logistically possible to separate them during the interviews. About half the parents chose to be in relative proximity during the dialogues, whether it meant sitting next to the student or being in the room as the dialogue was being conducted. In one case, a parent helped explain questions she thought the student did not fully understand, which clarified the questions for him. Overall, the presence of parents during the dialogues was essentially unobtrusive. When it was time for the parent dialogues, the students were sometimes in earshot and would, from time to time, interject answers about superficial items. However, parents did not let student interruptions interfere with or impact their answers in any significant way.

The researcher engaged in dialogues two times with each student participant, followed by one final conversation for the purpose of member checking (Creswell, 2003), in order to share the student findings, and in order to determine if the findings represented the ideas of the student participants. For the first dialogue session, student perspectives about their persistence in the program were discussed, as well as their linguistic experiences and perspectives in the program. During the second dialogues, students' cultural experiences and perspectives were discussed. The third meeting was an individual meeting for the purpose of member checking, in which the researcher shared the student findings in order to determine if the findings represented the ideas of student participants.

The researcher engaged in dialogues twice with each parent participant. For the first dialogue session, their perspectives about their child's persistence in the program as well as student linguistic experiences were discussed. In the second dialogue, student cultural experiences and perspectives were discussed. In some cases, if the answers to the first set of questions were extensive, only perspectives about the program were discussed in the first dialogue, and then the last two sets of questions (which addressed language and culture) were covered in the second dialogue. The third meeting was a parent group gathering for the purpose of member checking, in which the researcher shared the student and parent findings in order to determine if the findings represented the ideas of parent participants.

The second dialogue for both students and parents began with follow up to the prior dialogue, with the researcher asking if students or parents had any changes, adjustments, or reflections to offer before beginning the second dialogue. Although the guiding questions were used, the dialogue was open to allow for divergence in the conversation, according to what most concerned the students and parents. Each dialogue lasted anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes. The researcher audiotaped each dialogue and transcribed them for accuracy. The participants were given the opportunity to either review the audio recording or the transcript to provide feedback regarding items they wanted added, deleted, or changed. As a condition of giving permission for her children to participate in the study, one parent insisted that her children not be audiotaped even though the assurance of confidentiality had been explained. She stated that she simply did not want her children audiotaped due to the risk of someone obtaining a copy and potentially using it for malicious purposes. In this case, the researcher took copious notes,

mostly verbatim, of what students said, and these notes were reviewed carefully by the students to ensure accuracy. At all times, the researcher was in touch with the families by either phone or email or in person to ensure that any changes, adjustments, or additions were taken into account. In sum, the researcher conducted 50 dialogues, including both parent and student dialogues, group member checking and individual member checking.

Student Records

The researcher reviewed student cumulative files in order to obtain student record information. These data included demographic as well as academic information. Demographic information included age, ethnicity, primary language, living arrangement and socioeconomic status. Student academic information included standardized test scores, support services received, behavior and work habits and other salient features for each individual student, such as the grade in which the student entered the program or if he or she was retained (see Appendix E). Current report cards (including current academic performance as well as work habits and behavior) were obtained from teachers because the latest report card included in the cumulative files was from the prior academic year.

Parent Demographic Information

Parent demographic information was obtained from the parent consent form and during the dialogues. This information was combined and compiled into Table 2.

Table 2

Parent Demographic Data

Student	Sex/Age Range	Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity	Occupation
Family A			
Parent 1	Female/31-40	Panamanian	Business Process Analyst
Family B			
Parent 1	Female/41-50	African American	Domestic Engineer
Parent 2	Male/Not indicated	African American	Self-employed
Family C			
Parent 1	Female/31-40	African American	Office Manager

Table 2

Parent Demographic Data continued

Parent	Sex/Age Range	Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity	Occupation
Family D			
Parent 1	Female/31-40	African American	Dental Office Patient Coordinator
Parent 2	Male/Not indicated	African American	Loan Officer
Family E			
Parent 1	41-50/Female	Mexican/Black	Tax Collector

Table 2

Parent Demographic Data continued

Parent	Sex/Age Range	Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity	Occupation
Family F			
Parent 1	Female/41-50	Latina	Teacher
Parent 2	Male/41-50	African American	Firefighter
Family G			
Parent 1	Female/31-40	Black	Dispatcher
Parent 2	Male/Not indicated	Black	Not indicated

Language Logs

Language logs are a language diary used to obtain self-reported data about language use:

In the same way as an ordinary diary functions as a record of events and emotions, the language diary is a record of speaker's perceptions of their language choice over a given period of time and thus provide the research with insights into the basis for those language choices. (Lawson & Sachdev, 2004, p. 52)

Lawson and Sachdev (2004) went on to assert the usefulness of language logs in their study of student language varieties: "The fact that the diary is completed relatively soon after the interaction has taken place, and that it refers to concrete instances of language use, should allow interactions to be recorded with a high level of accuracy and detail" (p. 52). They posited that language logs have been useful in different contexts to document student language use in different settings and with different interlocutors.

Language logs for this particular study were used in the following manner:

Whereas language logs are generally used as a method for self-reporting, the researcher used this method to document her observations of student language use. The researcher documented their use of language in the classroom. Based on Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) model, the researcher used a chart that provides documentation of the language used (Standard English, Spanish, African American vernacular, code mixing), setting, topic, and interlocutor. The researcher added the concept of "volitional control" to this model, thereby documenting the language that is theoretically "supposed" to be used during this interaction, based on TWI principles, if applicable. For example, in TWI programs, subject areas are often taught in only one language; therefore, only that language is expected to be used during that subject. The researcher observed and recorded this information by hand. The logs were used to support dialogues about

language use and perspectives towards this use in the successive dialogues.

In order to create a portrait of student language use, the researcher observed students primarily in the classroom and combined this information with the questions that were asked in the parent and student dialogues in regard to language. During the class observations, the researcher filled out language logs (see Appendix F) that indicated the language that was used in interactions in class. The researcher observed 1-2 students at a time in their respective classes in both English and Spanish. At a minimum, students in grades 4 and 5 were individually observed during the greater part of a school day so that the researcher could shadow the students and observe them in as many language contexts as possible.

The scheduling for grades 6 through 8 did not allow for the same flexibility due to the reduced number of classes offered in Spanish; a reduced number of school days because of parent-teacher conferencing and spring break; and other temporary and unannounced changes in scheduling because of assemblies, rallies, career fairs, etc., at the school. Therefore, students in grades 6-8 were observed for a minimum of one entire class period in both English and Spanish. The researcher used language logs to record languages used, with whom, and for what purposes. The researcher also took field notes, including teacher answers and other relevant comments to questions regarding student language use.

The researcher was careful to remain at a comfortable distance so as not to interfere with class activities but close enough to hear student speech. Teachers assured the researcher that visitors are very common in the school and that students were used to carrying on “business as usual” when visitors were in the room. The researcher found this

to be the case. Whereas students were aware most of the time that the researcher was observing, they acted very naturally and did not seem to be distracted in terms of their conversations or general work at hand.

The information from observations, together with information obtained in dialogues from students and parents regarding language attitudes, use, and perspectives was used to triangulate the data. In sum, the researcher spent approximately 300 hours on campus including: observations, arranging for dialogues, checking records, document analysis, informal conversations with staff and dialogues and meetings with students and parents.

Data Analysis Procedures

The individual dialogues were combined with the other student and parent dialogues and analyzed for overarching themes and common programmatic components. The researcher simultaneously compiled information from cumulative files, work samples, and observations into charts from which to analyze the data. The following is an outline of the steps taken to analyze the data.

Step 1

1. The audiotapes of individual dialogues were transcribed.
2. The researcher provided the student/parent with a copy of the transcription or audiotape, and the student/parent reviewed the audiotape/transcription for accuracy, informing the researcher of any items that they wanted added, deleted, changed, or rerecorded.
3. The researcher edited the transcriptions according to the participants'

directions.

4. The researcher repeated steps 1-3 for all dialogues with each student/parent.

Step 2

1. Researcher codified dialogues 1 and 2 from all students/parents.

Step 3

1. The researcher codified results from other data sources: language logs, observations, and document analysis.
2. The researcher combined results from other data sources with the dialogue themes to formulate overall student/parent findings and conclusions.

Step 4

1. The researcher met with the parents as a group for “member checking” (to present themes identified by parents and students and to get their input on the findings).
2. The researcher provided the parent with a copy of the transcription, and the parent reviewed the transcription for accuracy, informing the researcher of any items that they wanted added, deleted, changed, or rerecorded.
3. The researcher edited the transcriptions according to the participants’ directions.
4. The researcher met individually with students for “member checking” (to present codification results and get their input on the findings).
5. Any additional comments, reflections, thoughts, etc., that emerged from the parent group meeting or individual student meetings were included in the findings and recommendations.

Protection of Human Subjects

The protection of human subjects is of utmost importance to the researcher. To this end, the researcher actively sought out ways to ensure participant confidence in the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Language Institute of San Luis (see Appendix G), was obtained from all the participants, and remains on file. Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Francisco (see Appendix H) and remains on file. The researcher provided each participant with a Subject's Bill of Rights and provided full disclosure of the research process. The researcher assured participants of full confidentiality: names would not be revealed in the study (rather, pseudonyms would be used) and published results would not identify individuals or the school.

To minimize discomfort, participants had the option to choose which questions they wanted to answer and were given the option to decline to answer part or all of the research questions that might provide discomfort at any given time. They also had the option of choosing not to be audiotaped at any given time. The researcher provided audiotape of the dialogues to the participants for their feedback, editing, and final review. Parents or caregivers were encouraged to read over and review the questions that the researcher asked the students, as well as to review the audio and/or transcript of the dialogues between their child and the researcher. Copies of email and notes on telephone communications were also available to participants upon request. The researcher attempted to minimize stress and fatigue by providing a comfortable environment (including healthy snacks) and accommodating her schedule to locations and times that

were most convenient for participants.

Background of the Researcher

I am a 40-year-old White educator who began my career in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1991 as a Spanish bilingual teacher. After several years of teaching, I took a leave of absence to live in Guadalajara, Mexico, the area from which the majority of my students immigrated. While there, I decided to enroll in a master's program in Applied Linguistics at a local university, during which I was reminded that my true passion was for language learning and culture (which I learned through the different lens of the discipline of sociolinguistics) for the purposes of social justice. Having already been aware of the issues faced by Spanish-speaking students in the United States learning English, through sociolinguistics, I gained an appreciation for the language legitimacy struggles faced by speakers of "non-standard" languages, such as Ebonics.

When I returned to the United States and became a doctoral student, as well as TWI coordinator in a large urban district, the issues for African American students across the district TWI Spanish programs were consistent: African American parents were often not aware of the TWI programs; the populations of African Americans in the programs were small, especially beyond second grade; and African Americans struggled behaviorally and academically and dropped out disproportionately compared to other students. Yet, at the same time, other African American students seemed extremely happy and successful in the program.

Upon closer analysis, I realized that many of the students who were struggling were from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and many used Ebonics. Some teachers of

these students argued that Two-Way Immersion may not be the correct placement for them, supporting their return to the traditional English-only learning environment.

Therefore, with these inequities in mind, I sought to research this topic with the expectation that I could add to the literature in a way that would ultimately better serve African American students whose parents have chosen the goal of bilingualism for their children.

Additionally, my teaching experiences have been in underperforming schools with ethnically and linguistically diverse populations. I have always felt that in order for me, as a White woman, to offer my best in the communities within which I work, it is imperative that I become informed regarding the lived experiences of the biggest groups of people of color in the United States: Latinos and African Americans. Due to the historical background of inequities experienced by both groups and my firm belief in the goal of equity and the power of bilingualism (tempered with the sociolinguistic tenet that no language is superior to any other), this topic was of particular interest to me. It is my true belief (and bias) that TWI programs, if consciously constructed, have the potential to be an excellent, world class educational option for any student learning a second language.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to allow nine upper elementary and middle school African American students and parents the opportunity to share their perspectives and opinions about their participation in Two-Way Immersion. In addition, this study gave them the opportunity to share their language and cultural experiences as a result of participating in this program. The hope is that the study will ultimately provide teachers and administrators with inside information and tools to more effectively facilitate bilingualism and academic achievement for African American students who participate in Two-Way Immersion programs and who speak Ebonics. The participants engaged in the dialogic process of participatory research to explore reasons for continued participation in the Two-Way Immersion program, as well as to more closely examine the lived linguistic and cultural experiences of students participating in the program.

The chapter is organized around four research questions and the questions that helped guide the dialogues. The questions that helped guide the dialogues were open-ended so that they could be taken in the direction which the participant wanted or the researcher saw could provide insight through further probing. After the researcher dialogued with seven different families in 40 total dialogues, major themes emerged and were analyzed. These themes were then confirmed through ten more “member checking” meetings.

This chapter identifies the findings from the different sources of data: dialogic dialogues, observations, student records, and teacher comments. The first section

provides general findings of the school; the second section offers a profile of each family; the third section highlights the major themes that emerged from the data; and the fourth section presents a discussion of these findings.

General Findings about the Language Institute

Besides the information provided in the methodology section, some findings about the school in general were not obvious at the onset of the data collection. A few of the families had been there since the school began in 1998 as a strand at neighboring Coral Ridge, and they participated in the charter proposal, that resulted in it becoming autonomous in 2004-2005. Therefore, at the time of the study, the school was only in its fifth year of being independent (besides some shared facilities) from neighboring Coral Ridge. The current third grade class was the first class to have the advantage of starting and remaining at the current facility. The eighth grade graduating class of 2008-2009 was only the second graduating class with middle school students, as each year another grade has been added. Teachers were all women except for one male. All staff members were Latino, except for two Whites and one of Filipino descent.

In the formative years of the program, there were several struggles, one of which had to do with placement of students in kindergarten based on language skill level. At the time, a parent questionnaire regarding student language proficiency was used as a measure of student language, which often did not accurately represent language ability levels; therefore, not until it was too late did teachers realize that students were misplaced. This went on for a few years, so the linguistic balance in classes was skewed towards more Spanish-speaking students composing the middle school population at the

time of the study. This provided for more of a one-way immersion model instead of two-way for students in the middle grades. Additionally, at the middle school level, attrition had been significant. Only 17 of the original 40 students remained in the eighth grade class. Parents of two of the students (males) in the study mentioned they might not remain in the program after sixth grade because the school was small and did not offer the programs (such as athletic programs) that their children could access at a larger middle school. These same parents felt that they completed their obligation to remain in the program for the K-6 timeframe to which they had committed when they began the program and that, by changing schools, their children would have the necessary exposure and preparation for what high school might be like: large, multicultural, many more opportunities, and not to mention, overwhelming.

Profiles of the Family Participants

The participants in the study represented both two-parent and single-parent families. Some of the students were only children, and some were members of relatively large families. They encompassed different linguistic and cultural experiences, academic achievement, economic status, and family structures, yet they had many things in common in terms of their perspective of the school as well as their vision and goals for bilingualism and multiculturalism.

Table 3

Student Demographic Data

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student A (Janée Foster)	10/4 th /Female	African American	Home Language Survey implemented in Grade 2 4; Language spoken by adults in home=Spanish	Lives with mother Siblings: None	No

Table 3

Student Demographic Data continued

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student B1 (Lakeisha Brown)	9/4 th / Female	African American	English	Lives with mother, father, and 3 siblings: brother, 12 brother, 7 sister, 4,	Yes

Table 3

Student Demographic Data continued

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student C (Alyssa Martin)	10/5 th / Female	African American	English	Lives with mother Siblings: None	No
Student D (Keshawn Thomas)	11/5 th / Male	African American	English	Lives with father and mother Siblings: None	No

Table 3
 Student Demographic Data continued

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student E (Natalia López)	11/6 th / Female	Mexican/ Black	English; Home Language Survey implemented in K (Language spoken by adults in home)= English, some Spanish	Lives with father, mother and two siblings: Sister, 9, Brother, 6 Has two older step-sisters: 25 & 24	No

Table 3

Student Demographic Data continued

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student B2 (Devon Brown)	12/6 th / Male	African American	English;	Lives with mother, father, and three siblings: sister , 9, brother, 7, sister, 4	Yes
Student F (Elena Jones- Hernández)	13/7 th / Female	Latina and African American	English and Spanish;	Lives with mother, father, and one sibling: sister, 7	Yes

Table 3

Student Demographic Data continued

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student G1 (William Wilson)	14/8 th /Male	Black	English	Lives with mother, and four siblings: sister, 13 half-sister, 5 half-brother, 17 half-brother, 18	No

Table 3

Student Demographic Data continued

Student	Age/ Grade/ Sex	Race/Ethnicity (reported by parents in student records)	Primary Language	Living Arrangement	Inter-district Transfer
Student G2 (Michelle Wilson)	13/8 th / Female	Black	English	Lives with mother, and four siblings: brother, 14 half-sister, 5 half-brother, 17 half-brother, 18	No

The following are descriptions of these seven families. These descriptions were obtained from the dialogues, student records, observations, and teacher comments. The descriptions include family cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the students' linguistic and cultural profiles at the Language Institute, as well as information about general student academic achievement and social behaviors.

Family A (The Fosters)

Family A was comprised of two family members: a mother and daughter. The mother identified herself as being of Panamanian descent. Her daughter's father was of African American descent. The student who participated in the study, Janée, was 9 years old and in fourth grade at the time of the study. The mother worked outside of the home, and whereas the household currently only consisted of the mother and daughter, the maternal grandmother had an active role in caregiving. Members of the extended family also played an active role in Janée's development of Spanish, as she spoke to many of them solely in Spanish (either on the phone to those in Panama or in person to those living locally). However, English was her primary and preferred language.

Janée entered the Language Institute late, at second grade, which runs counter to school policy for an English-speaking student. However, because her family contained many Spanish-speaking members, a special plan was outlined and established for her to bring her up to grade level. It was especially important to Janée's mother that Janée attend the school because she did not have the opportunity to become bilingual as a child. Therefore, Janée's mother wanted to ensure that Janée was afforded the opportunity, especially since Spanish is part of her heritage. The mother even mentioned her own desire to take classes in Spanish.

Unfortunately, the first year in the program as a second grader was extremely difficult for Janée, as she was trying to catch up academically in Spanish. At the end of second grade, it was recommended that she be retained. However, the mother opted not to do so. By the time Janée was in third grade, the material was too difficult to manage, and she was recommended again for retention, to which the mother conceded. On the most recent report card, Janée was either approaching or on grade level in both languages in fourth grade, including math. On state-level English achievement tests, she was working at a basic level, although she remained below basic in the English language arts portion. Her mother was convinced that retention was a good idea and was very impressed with the level of support provided to Janée to enable her to get to the level she was at currently.

Janée preferred English but could easily move in and out of Spanish and English as necessary. She also purported to use Ebonics in communication with her mother and other family members, although Ebonics was not something her teacher typically heard in class. Her teacher indicated that she would, from time to time, code mix.

Janée enjoyed friendships at the school and generally related well to peers, although on her last report card it was stated that she could work better with peers. She complained that sometimes children made fun of her because of the way she spoke, which made her want to leave the program, but then her friends made her feel better. (However, it's important to note that in the member checking session she corrected herself and stated she really did not want to leave the program.) She enjoyed projects, science experiments, and the after school programs, especially knitting and hip-hop dance. Friendly and jovial, Janée had a good sense of humor, appeared self-assured, and

was proud of her heritage. When asked to which racial/ethnic group she belonged, she stated that she was a “young, vibrant, intelligent Panamanian girl.” She also stated that most of her friends are Mexican; however, when she named her five best friends, they were all Black.

Family B (The Browns)

Family B was a family of six members: a mother, father, two sons, and two daughters. All but the youngest daughter were enrolled in the Language Institute. At the time of the study, the oldest son was 12; the daughter, 9; a brother, 7; and a sister, 4. Both the 12-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter participated in the study. Both of the parents were of African American descent. The father was self-employed and had an extremely busy schedule. While he participated as he could, the mother, who self-identified as a “domestic engineer,” had the primary responsibility for the children. She was very busy and involved at the school, as well as with the children’s many extracurricular activities. In addition, she provided a great deal of support for the children’s homework, including tutoring them in order to ensure that they made adequate progress in English as well as Spanish. Both of the parents were extremely committed to the idea of bilingualism and multiculturalism for their children and were very satisfied with the program.

Devon, a sixth grader, entered the program mid-first grade. His mother and father were very interested in bilingual programs, but because they lived outside the district, they had not heard about the Language Institute. The father spoke Spanish as his second language, and because he wanted Devon to learn Spanish, he spoke to Devon strictly in Spanish when he was younger.

Because Devon was considered a native English speaker, he was allowed to enter

the school on a trial basis to ensure his success. Through extensive personal effort and teamwork, his mother and father did an intensive language study with him for a few weeks before he began classes mid-year. He was able to do very well with this new formal structure after having been spoken to in Spanish by his father for so many years. From then on, as his father stated, he “went to the head of the class,” and teachers even commented that they did not know he was a late entry student.

During the transition in first grade, however, Devon’s father noted that being a new student at the school (which had yet not separated into its own charter) was very challenging for him. He encountered a lot of racism from the other students at school. His father, who is originally from the Elmwood Park area, claimed this was part of being the new kid on the block, which he had anticipated after “returning to the hood.” He claimed that the negative interaction at the school was not only “Latino on Black” but also “Black on Black.” The father, however, maintained that, in the process, Devon learned how to stand up for himself and he also matured. Since the charter school became independent, Devon had experienced a few incidences of name calling but nothing noteworthy in comparison to those first years. Devon was extremely proud that he had friends from all cultures.

Devon had a very sophisticated level of Spanish, particularly in writing, where his vocabulary was considered outstanding by his teachers. His teachers also claimed that he could use humor in Spanish in a way that was funny to the native speaker. He preferred English and was very articulate in speaking and writing academic English but also claimed to use Ebonics from time to time in appropriate contexts. His teachers claimed that, indeed, he was very savvy at using language in the appropriate context. In fact, he

was proud of the fact that he had recently given a speech that transitioned smoothly from Ebonics to academic English. Teachers stated that although he was more than capable of “staying in the language” during Spanish classes, he had to be reminded to do so when in groups. Whereas his family recognized he probably used Ebonics with his friends, they generally discouraged its use.

In dialogues with the researcher, Devon came across as extremely focused, determined in his future goals (particularly in regard to how bilingualism could help him in his applications to high school and college), and mature for his age. He was very respectful, and he effused self-confidence, both about his academic and linguistic abilities as well as his cultural heritage. At the same time, he expressed a genuine desire to learn about other cultures. Socially, he seemed to relate well with peers. He had many extracurricular interests and was playing on three sports teams at the time of the study. What he liked most about school was the after school programs and wished that there were more opportunities to participate in theater and sports.

Devon was formally identified as a student who was gifted and talented, also known as GATE, and at the time of the study working at or above grade level in his sixth grade subject areas. He was even participating with the seventh graders in some math and English language arts. His most recent report card asserted a 3.76 overall GPA, with a “B” in English language arts (at the 7th grade level), an “A-” in Spanish language arts (at the 7th grade level), and a “B” in math (at the 7th grade level). His most current scores on standardized tests in English included “advanced” in English language arts and math and “proficient” in science.

Lakeisha, Devon’s younger sister, was a 9-year-old in the fourth grade at the time

of the study. She was very happy and contented at the school and with her teachers and friends, and she enjoyed learning two languages. Unlike her brother, she entered the program in kindergarten. She received additional support in English, mainly through her mother, who arranged for tutoring and asked for supplemental materials so she could support Lakeisha at home in English, particularly before third grade and during fourth grade. Lakeisha was performing at grade level in Spanish, English, and math and at a basic level in both English language arts and math in state level achievement tests in English.

Lakeisha could communicate well in English and Spanish. She claimed to feel comfortable in both languages and not prefer one over the other. She stated that she thought by learning Spanish she would be able to communicate better with Spanish-speaking people in the future. Teachers claimed she generally stayed consistent in the language when in class and stated they did not hear her utilize Ebonics. Her mother doubted that Lakeisha utilized it or even knew what it was.

Her mother also stated that Lakeisha was pretty much color blind and had not had any negative experiences at the school; rather, she saw all her friends as the same. However, Lakeisha did state she had once been told by another girl that she did not want to play with her because she was Black, and her father stated that, just recently, she had been called the “N word.” However, both stated that the situation was handled appropriately by school personnel. Her father stated that Lakeisha was a very kind person who wanted to help others and did not interpret that situation as racially based.

Lakeisha stated that she enjoyed Black History Month activities and that she would like to learn more about African American culture at school. Her friends at school

were primarily Latina but also a mixture of other races and ethnicities, as she was involved in many extracurricular activities.

Family C (The Martins)

Family C was a single-parent home, consisting of a mother and an only child. The mother worked outside the home and was of African American descent. Both the mother and Alyssa, her fifth grade 10-year-old daughter, identified themselves as African American, but they both also stated that Alyssa is of mixed Latina and African American heritage. The mother claimed that being a single mom was definitely a struggle, both financially and in terms of providing the necessary support to ensure her child's academic success in Spanish, especially considering she had only a small amount of Spanish in high school herself. Since the mother worked at neighboring Coral Ridge, it was convenient for Alyssa to attend school at the Language Institute. The mother made a very concerted effort for Alyssa to participate in many extracurricular activities, such as sports.

The mother recognized that she needed to be more involved at the school as she only went to some parent events, mainly the activities that Alyssa informed her were mandatory for her grades in class. She allowed Alyssa a substantial amount of autonomy, and only through Alyssa's consent would the mother agree to her continued participation in the program and/or participation in activities, such as family events. The mother stated that if Alyssa was happy with the program, then she was happy with the program. They reassessed the decision to stay at the Language Institute every year. This year, they decided to stay because Alyssa wanted to learn Spanish and because she did not want to make new friends at a different school. The mother considered that attending a bilingual

school would give Alyssa more opportunities than other kids.

Alyssa entered the program in kindergarten. She had consistently received extra support, such as tutoring and after school interventions, throughout her schooling experience. She had also had a history of impulsive behavior and difficulty focusing. Teachers claimed that her struggles with Spanish skills and behavior inhibited her ability to learn. She was even recommended for retention in third grade. Recently, however, her teachers reported a much more focused Alyssa. In addition, she was either approaching grade level or working on grade level in Spanish, English, and math. She performed below basic on the prior year's annual language arts and math standardized testing.

Alyssa preferred English but could communicate in both academic English and Spanish. She used Spanish and English, although her mother stated that the only time she had observed Alyssa speaking Spanish was with her teacher. According to the mother, Alyssa had few opportunities to interact in Spanish outside of school, as most of the social interaction they had as a family is with the mother's side of the family, who speaks in English. Alyssa stated that she did not like to use Spanish all the time at school, and she claimed to speak English the same way no matter whom she was with. Alyssa claimed that she was not familiar at all with the concept of Ebonics, and the mother also considered that Alyssa did not use Ebonics as she did not model it for Alyssa, since "slang" was not acceptable in her family. However, in observations of informal interactions with her mother, the researcher noted that both the mother and the daughter appeared to exhibit styles of communication consistent with the definition of Ebonics and other Black styles of communication.

In the dialogues with the researcher, Alyssa was very good at expressing her

needs, was not shy at all, and had a dry, sarcastic sense of humor. She was able to utilize voice, rhythm, and tone to express herself in a unique way. It was clear that she was very social and had many friends of different backgrounds at both the Language Institute and Coral Ridge. She claimed she had most in common with students from different backgrounds, but her main friends were Mexican. Her mother claimed she was very popular with the boys and had more male than female friends. Alyssa seemed to be very interested in “girl topics,” however, such as clothes, makeup, and shoes. She also enjoyed participating in the fine arts; dancing, such as hip-hop; singing; and playing sports, such as swimming and soccer.

Family D (The Thomases)

The Thomas family was a two-parent family, mother and father, with an only child, Keshawn, an 11-year-old fifth grader. Both parents worked outside the home, and the mother was attending community college at the time of the study. They found out about the Language Institute through Keshawn’s grandmother, who had lived in the area for 30 years. Keshawn’s mother and many relatives attended Coral Ridge. Since Keshawn was very verbal as a youngster, his grandmother recommended the Language Institute. Neither parent spoke Spanish fluently, but both were exposed to it in their high school classes. Keshawn began the program in kindergarten, and the parents were very impressed with the teachers and the cultural and linguistic outcomes. They were also pleased with how Keshawn had thrived overall in the Language Institute environment.

The Thomases both expressed that the program required much outside support from parents. In the early years, homework was provided with an explanation in English; however, as the grades progressed, the homework became more and more difficult. In

second and third grade, they both were extremely concerned about Keshawn's reading ability in English and considered taking him out of the program. During his first and third grade years, truancy problems may have contributed to his difficulty. The teachers were very supportive and explained that the parents just needed to be patient, as development in two languages was a process. He received extra support during third and fourth grades in English, including summer school and after school interventions. While the parents recognized that their role was important for his success, they believed that his drive and personality were key factors in his sticking with the program when it became difficult. On the most current report card, Keshawn was working on grade level in most areas and approaching grade level in others. He was at a basic level in both English language arts and math on the annual state English achievement tests. The parents were extremely impressed with his level of Spanish, the opportunity to make friends that he might not have made in another school, and the genuine nature of his friendships.

Keshawn's teacher, who was also his teacher the previous year in fourth grade, said that he had improved his level of Spanish to the degree that he could remain in the language during Spanish time, which he was not able to do in prior years. According to Keshawn, he really liked his teachers and friends and the fact that they spoke two languages at school. Keshawn did not express a preference for one language over the other and said he used both Spanish and English at school and with his friends. Although he read books in English and Spanish, he generally watched movies in English and listened to music in English and Ebonics. Whereas he was not conscious of his use of Ebonics, both his parents and teacher stated that he regularly used Ebonics in many different contexts: in class, outside of class, with friends and some family members, and

in the context of sports.

In observations of Keshawn, the researcher noted that he appeared to enjoy school. He actively participated in class; was in constant dialogue with the teacher, whether it was in academic English, Spanish, or Ebonics; and seemed to have very positive relationships with peers. He did not hesitate to express himself out loud in Ebonics, including singing and using phrases that perhaps could only be fully understood by other Ebonics speakers, even if there were no Ebonics speakers present. His parents claimed that he did not change for anyone and knew that he was Black; however, Keshawn claimed he was mixed, as his dad was half Filipino. According to his father, since Keshawn was very competitive, Keshawn relished the fact that being bilingual made him special because he knew something others did not. His father also expressed that he believed Keshawn thought he was the “star” on campus.

Keshawn claimed to have most in common with Latinos who spoke English, and his five best friends were Latino, although his parents also pointed out he had many other friends, especially Black friends, such as on his sports teams. He was very active in extracurricular sports such as baseball, football, and basketball.

Family E (The Lópezes)

The López family was a two-parent family, mother and father, with four daughters and a son. Natalia, who participated in the study, was 11 years old and in sixth grade, and her 9-year-old sister and 6-year-old brother were all students at the Language Institute as well (in third grade and kindergarten, respectively). The two other siblings in the family, two sisters aged 25 and 24, did not live in the home. The mother worked outside of the home; the father was on disability. While the mother was of African

American and Mexican descent, the father was of Mexican descent. The children grew up speaking English in the home. Although the father spoke some Spanish, according to the mother, his use of Spanish was somewhat limited, as he grew up around the time that students were punished for using Spanish in school. Although his mother spoke Spanish to him, he responded in English. Natalia's maternal grandmother was African American, and her maternal grandfather was Mexican. Natalia's mother stated that her own father did not speak to her in Spanish because he did not want to isolate her linguistically, but he later regretted his decision. Natalia's mother did not want the same thing to happen with her own children and, therefore, thought that by being enrolled in the Language Institute, they could maintain a part of their heritage.

Natalia entered the program in kindergarten and struggled when she moved into English reading. In fact, the mother considered pulling her out of the program around third grade but decided not to as she was reminded of all of the information passed on from the school about testing and expectations of the students at different grade levels, namely that Natalia's struggles were a normal part of the process and that her English would "come around." During third and fourth grade, truancy issues may have played a role in Natalia's academic difficulties. She received extensive after school interventions and tutoring during fourth grade, when she was also recommended for retention. However, her mother opted not to retain her. Her mother stated that reading was still a challenge for Natalia. Not until recently did her mother realize she needed glasses, which she received just in the last year; her mother was concerned that her vision issues may have been a primary reason she struggled in the earlier years, particularly with reading. Natalia's most recent report card had her receiving a 2.5 overall GPA, with a "C-" in

English language arts and a “B-” in Spanish language arts; she especially struggled in math. She performed at basic level in the annual standardized achievement tests in English in language arts and science and below basic in math.

Her mother claimed to not hear her use much Spanish other than at school. Natalia preferred English but used both English and Spanish in school. She also read books, watched movies, and listened to music in both languages. One of the highlights of her learning Spanish, according to her mother, was the fact that she could use Spanish when she and her family went on mission trips to Mexico. This gave both her and her family great satisfaction. Natalia’s teachers commented on the fact that she sometimes got frustrated when she wanted to say something during Spanish time and could not find the words in Spanish. Even if the teacher offered to help, she often gave up instead of trying to say what she wanted to in Spanish. In addition, she sometimes made comments in English during Spanish time. According to her and her mother, she tended to use English with her friends and some Spanish. With family, she generally used English. Her mother claimed to not know much about Ebonics and doubted that Natalia did either. Natalia stated that she sometimes uses a phrase here and there of Ebonics with some of her cousins, but in general, she used academic English. Teachers also denied ever hearing her use Ebonics in the classroom. Observations suggested the same.

Culturally, Natalia was very open to and interested in discussing her mixed background. She was bothered by the fact that some people had said she “didn’t look Mexican” because it gave the impression they thought she was not. When asked about whether having African American roots might have impacted her experience at the school, her mother said she did not have the physical appearance of being African

American and, therefore, thought it had not. During some cultural discussions, Natalia was also offended that some kids said she was not Black, only Mexican and that her mom was Puerto Rican. Natalia really liked Black History Month activities and said she would like to study more about Africans and African Americans, as she would like to learn more about her culture. She expressed excitement about learning about other cultures and expressed a desire to include more elements of other cultures at the school, such as the merging of cultures in the Afro-Brazilian dance, Capoeira, as well as a more diverse body of instructors. Her closest friends include Mexicans, Whites, and biracial students.

Natalia really enjoyed theater, sports, and dance, especially what was offered in the afterschool programs. She particularly enjoyed “Carnival,” an activity in which her parents were very active: they annually donated jump houses, cotton candy machines, and other equipment for this special family event at the end of the year put on by the school.

Natalia was very articulate about how she considered the school a big family where everyone helped each other out. She was very positive about the school community, and it appeared that she really valued the relationships she had developed over the years. Her mother also echoed time and time again the caring, nurturing staff, the respect that they conveyed, and the regular communication that took place between the school and the home. Her mother’s only frustration was the issues brought on by shared facilities with the neighboring school, such as school lunches. She would like the school to have its own facility.

Family F (The Jones-Hernándezes)

The Jones-Hernández family was a two-parent family, mother and father, with two daughters: seventh-grade Elena, who was 13 and participated in the study, and her 7-

year-old sister. Both were students at the Language Institute at the time of the study. The mother was a Latina who was bilingual in Spanish and English and was a special education teacher at the school. The father was African American and was also bilingual, having learned Spanish as a second language as an adult. The family had been involved in the school since its inception. In fact, they were advocates in getting the charter approved and were very familiar with and invested in the history and trajectory of the school. They were also extremely pleased with the small community feel and referred to the school as an extended family. They both praised the teachers for being so caring and respectful and for looking at students individually.

The mother was an advocate for the merging of bilingualism and special education services. She was a bilingual teacher and recently returned to school to study special education because options for special education support services at the Language Institute were available through the local district in English only. The father was a firefighter and in past years could be found on campus sharing the fire engine or supporting on campus in other ways with the building and facilities. The father's experience traveling to other countries and studying languages undoubtedly influenced his decision to have his daughters in the bilingual program, as well as the fact that Spanish was an important part of their heritage, which was the main reason the mother wanted her children enrolled.

Elena started kindergarten a year late, and teachers noticed right away that she needed to be evaluated for her communication skills. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting was scheduled in January of her first year, and as result, she began receiving speech and language services and support in afterschool interventions. During a

meeting to evaluate her progress in sixth grade, it was recommended that she have modified tests and that the speech therapist communicate with the teacher for strategies. Recently, she began receiving occupational therapy for gross and fine motor skills. Her mother expressed that Elena struggled academically and needed consistent modifications. She predicted she was probably reading at about a third grade level; writing and oral communication were also very challenging for Elena. The most current report card showed that she received a “C-” in English language arts (in which her tests are modified per her IEP), a “C-” in Spanish language arts, and a “C” in pre-algebra (in which her tests are modified per her IEP). Her overall GPA was 2.29. Her standardized test scores in English were below basic in both English language arts and math.

In Elena’s younger years, her parents spoke to her in Spanish only. Elena was, therefore, dominant in Spanish up to around second grade. However, around this time, she seemed to begin to prefer English, which became the language that was utilized with her at home because, according to her mother, doing so would support her more completely in her struggles with communication. English had definitely become Elena’s language of preference. She used Spanish and English at school and Spanish with her mother’s side of the family and in some social situations, but in general, she was more comfortable in English. Neither one of her parents thought that she used Ebonics more than a few words or phrases here or there that she may have picked up from her cousins. Her teachers also echoed that they did not hear her use Ebonics in class.

Culturally speaking, both parents thought that Elena was not really tuned into her mixed background. She claimed she was Latina. Her mother shared that, during the process of the research, she discovered that Elena was under the impression that she had

to choose one race or ethnicity over the other, that she could not be both Latina and African American. This discovery initiated a very good conversation about her biracial heritage. Elena claimed that her closest friends were Latina. Her parents seemed to suggest that she was more open to other cultures as a result of being at the Language Institute. Elena was very good natured and kind and was particularly interested in theater and the performing arts. She really enjoyed being with friends, especially spending time outside with them.

Family G (The Wilsons)

Family G was comprised of several members in two separate households. In the first household lived the mother, who was African American, and five children, aged 18, 17, 14, 13, and 5. In the second household lived the father, also African American, of William, 14, and Michelle, 13, both eighth graders who participated in the study. Although William and Michelle principally lived with their mother, they spent a significant amount of time at their father's home. The mother worked outside of the home, and the father was, at the time, having health problems; therefore, his work status was not disclosed. One of the older boys, the children's half brother, had attended the Language Institute, and the youngest half-sister was signed up to attend in the upcoming fall. The older brother even received an award and appeared on television for being the best minority foreign language learner. Both mother and father agreed that they wanted Michelle and William to become bilingual; therefore, they enrolled them both in the program.

William entered the program in first grade, the same time that Michelle entered kindergarten. He began to struggle, and at the beginning of the second grade, a Student Study Team (SST) meeting was held to assess his progress. Small group instruction was

provided during this time. In both first, second, and fourth grades, truancy issues may have impacted his progress. At the end of second grade, he was struggling with reading comprehension and math. At that point, he was recommended for retention. He was retained in second grade, and from that point on, he and his sister Michelle remained at the same grade level for the duration of their schooling experience at the Language Institute.

William generally struggled both academically and behaviorally throughout his time at the Language Institute. William had severe behavioral problems in third grade and fourth grade: he was suspended three times in a 6-month period for fighting and once for bringing a weapon to school. At various points throughout his academic career, he received support services. In regard to work habits, his school records indicated a consistent pattern of lack of focus, self-control, and organization, especially as of second grade. Teachers also noted that he got frustrated easily with difficulties in reading or writing in either language.

William's grades declined significantly during the most recent reporting period. His report card stated he had struggled with his Spanish level, unsatisfactory work habits, and lack of effort and organization. Apparently, other life events may have also come into play. His teachers cited that his lack of effort was the main problem but also emphasized an unstable home life had made life extremely difficult for him and for Michelle at times. For example, during this reporting period, he and Michelle were between houses and unsure what the future would hold in terms of their relocating potentially to another city 6 hours south. Also, his father, who provided a good amount of support to him in his schooling, became ill and needed medical treatment. Additionally, he and his friend were

disciplined for an unknown matter, but apparently, it was enough to dissuade them from participating in Black History Month as they did the previous year, when they both led an assembly. When asked what he liked most about the school, he could not come up with an answer. William received a “D” in English language arts and an “F” in Spanish language arts and Algebra. His overall GPA was .67. His most recent standardized test scores in English were below basic in both language arts and math.

William claimed that he used English, Spanish, and Ebonics, and said he preferred English and Ebonics. He stated that he generally used Spanish at school, with friends, and, from time to time, when he might go to a restaurant where he could order in Spanish. He also purported to read in Spanish and English. However, his teachers stated that he used little or no Spanish with peers and that, during subjects that are carried out in Spanish, he addressed the teacher in English, which was completely contrary to what he knew was acceptable at the Language Institute. One teacher even claimed his Spanish appeared better in fifth grade because he was practicing it a lot more back then and was still making an effort. Teachers also stated that he used Ebonics verbally and in writing. His English language arts teacher stated that effort had been made to correct his use of Ebonics to Standard English, but they had been ineffective. She stated that his use of Ebonics definitely interfered with his use of Standard English. William stated he got frustrated when he could not understand something in Spanish and that sometimes Spanish was out of his comfort level. He also said that he was at the Institute because his parents wanted him there. If it were his choice, he said he would go to another school with a bilingual program that also had sports like football and basketball. His father said he had checked to see if William wanted to change schools but claimed William said he

decided to “stick it out.”

William’s father stated how much William enjoyed studying Black history. In fact, last year, William and a friend did a presentation to the student body on Black History Month to, as William stated, “teach Mexicans about African Americans.” He considered that he could be fully himself as an African American because, as he said, “I’m me.” When asked if he thought being African American affected his experience at school, he stated that one of his teachers claimed that he had changed his friends and was now a “bad boy” by his attitude and dress. He considered that he had most in common with everybody, not any particular racial or ethnic group. His five closest friends included four Mexicans and one Black student, whom he referred to, along with himself, as the “Seis hermanos” (“Six brothers”). He stated that if there were more African Americans at the school, he would be playing more sports and having fun at lunch time.

Despite William’s struggles in school, he aspired to attend high school and then go on to a university out of state. He was aware of the benefits of bilingualism for future job possibilities. He would have liked to have what he considered “better electives,” such as business or poetry.

Michelle was enrolled as a kindergartner. Her experience was somewhat different from William’s. While she also struggled with Spanish; encountered the same truancy issues in first, second, and fourth grades; and participated in after school interventions and other support services, she did not have the same behavioral issues that William did. She also seemed to be somewhat more successful and enjoy school more than William. Teachers thought that this was because Michelle had a goal in mind: she wanted to be a nurse and, therefore, was more focused. Michelle said if it were up to her, she would stay

in the program because of the teachers, friends, and Spanish, which she liked.

However, her current grades also reflected a downward trend this semester. In English language arts, she received a “D+” because she had difficulty taking tests, according to her report card; in Spanish language arts, she received a “D” due to her difficulty with the Spanish level and comprehension tests. In math, she received a “C,” giving her an overall GPA of 1.76. Her most recent standardized test scores in English were below basic in both English language arts and math.

Michelle claimed to use English, Spanish, and Ebonics. She was aware of her use of Ebonics and termed it “ghetto language.” With family, she said she used English and Ebonics, and at school, she used “proper” English and Spanish. With friends, she used Ebonics and Spanish. She tended to read books and watch TV in English and listen to the radio in English or Ebonics. She noted that it is uncommon for African Americans to learn Spanish, so she liked the fact that she got to learn two different languages.

Michelle self-identified as African American but said she considered herself a little “Cuban” since Cubans spoke Spanish too. She also said she felt a little Mexican. She said that she and her friends had discussed how they were all the same: all Mexican and all Black. She also mentioned that she could truly be herself as an African American at the school because she and her friends had all grown up together and learned how to be with each other all the time. She thought that Black History Month was a great opportunity for Mexicans to hear about her culture like African Americans hear about Mexican culture at the school. In fact, Michelle’s mother said she was working on a project with a friend who was Mexican, and the friend knew more about the topic in Black history than she did. Michelle considered that she had the most in common

culturally with other African Americans, Whites, and Mexicans. Of her closest friends, two were Mexican, and three were African American.

Michelle seemed engaged in most of her classes, although she struggled somewhat with the Spanish level. She stated she most enjoyed getting good grades and participating in spirit weeks. Despite the fact that her teachers said she could sometimes have an “attitude,” she gave the impression she was kind and thoughtful and had a very down to earth human element to her; however, she also seemed pretty street smart and knew how to survive the elements to which she and her family, unfortunately, appeared to sometimes be exposed.

Summary

Although the linguistic and cultural backgrounds, academic status, use of language, and perspectives of culture were very different across families, the students and parents shared the common goal of bilingualism. Each family, according to its unique situation, was attempting to carry out this goal as best it could in its own individual contexts and circumstances.

Generative Themes

The researcher organized the findings that emerged from the dialogues and other sources of data into generative themes. Each dialogue focused on questions that guided them. The responses to the questions, as well as information from student records, observations, and teacher comments, were joined together to form the findings for the four research questions. Depending on the research question, the generative themes were divided up into categories: those which emerged from the students and those which

emerged from the parents. Themes emerged for three of the research questions that were discussed with students and for the two of the research questions that were discussed with parents.

Qualitative Themes of the Students

The 9 student participants varied in age from 9 to 14 years old and were in grades 4 through 8. Two students at each grade level participated, except for seventh grade, from which only one student participated. Six girls and three boys participated. The students varied in their academic achievement, socioeconomic status, exposure to Spanish outside of school, family backgrounds, languages used, and personal interests; however, they shared many of the same values, perspectives, and opinions about their overall experiences at the Language Institute.

Research Question 1: What factors have contributed to upper elementary and middle school African American student continued participation in a Two-Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program?

All the participants, regardless of grade level, age, sex, or achievement level, discussed similar reasons for their continued participation in the program. The themes which emerged as a result of discussions about their perceptions of the program were (a) contentment with bilingualism, (b) positive relationships, and (c) the future promise of bilingualism.

Contentment with Bilingualism

Students expressed a sincere enjoyment of being in a bilingual program. When asked what they liked most about the school, what made the school special, or why they have remained in the program, every student mentioned learning two languages at least

once. Devon, a sixth grader, when asked what he liked most about the school, said, “Our school has two languages” (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008).

Michelle, an eighth grader, expressed her pride in being in a bilingual program: “I believe [what] I like most being in a bilingual program is that I get to learn two different languages . . . and it’s not very common for African Americans to learn Spanish” (M. Wilson, personal communication, March 13, 2008).

When questioned whether they would continue in the program if they were given the choice, students overwhelmingly said yes. The first reason Keshawn mentioned about wanting to stay in the program was “because it’s a bilingual school” (K. Thomas, personal communication, February 27, 2008). Lakeisha, a fourth grade student, when asked why she had stayed in the program, commented, “Because I like it a lot. Every grade I learn new stuff. I enjoy speaking two languages” (L. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008). Even students struggling somewhat academically stated their desire to remain in the program for the bilingual aspect. William, an eighth grade student, struggling academically and particularly in Spanish, stated that if given the choice, he would have done Two-Way Immersion at the middle school level but at another school that had the sports he liked. His eighth grade sister used herself and William as examples, stating the following when asked why she thought others stayed in the program: “I think . . . like me and William, I think we stayed in the program because of Spanish, and we want to learn different languages instead of just knowing one” (M. Wilson, personal communication, March 13, 2008). Clearly, students appreciated the opportunity to become bilingual, which was a major determining factor for their continuation in the program.

Positive Relationships

Students also unmistakably communicated their appreciation for their friends and teachers. Whereas many suggested changes to facilities or class activities, there was a sense that students were very content with the relationships they had with both their friends and campus personnel. Keshawn was very clear that he thought the school was special or unique because he had been there a long time and because he valued the relationships he had developed during that time: “I’ve been there for a long time, and I know most of the teachers, and my friends are there.” He reiterated this later in the dialogue when he stated what made him want to stay: “Because it’s a bilingual school, and I like the teachers there, and all my friends are there since kindergarten” (K. Thomas, personal communication, February 27, 2008). Janée stated that it was her friends that made her want to stay, especially when she felt bad, and might have wanted to leave: “. . . people make fun of me, and I feel like I wanna leave, but most of the time, my friend makes me feel better . . . sometimes my friends make me feel better by telling me jokes or something like that” (J. Foster, personal communication, January 22, 2008). Many students said they would not want to go to a different school because it would mean leaving their friends.

Students also mentioned teachers as an important factor in wanting to stay at the Language Institute. William, an eighth grader who had difficulty finding an example of something he really liked about the school, stated that he considered it special that he had had the same teachers the last 4 years. (The current middle school teachers moved up with the students as the program expanded for the first time to the middle grades.)

Students expressed unequivocally that the relationships with students and teachers were a factor in their desire to remain in the program.

The Future Promise of Bilingualism

There was no doubt that all students were aware of the practicality of being bilingual as it related to their future. When asked how they thought two languages would help them in the future, they either mentioned that they would be able to communicate with those who did not speak English or that they would have increased career opportunities and ultimately monetary rewards. Even students in fourth and fifth grades were clear on the potential benefits: “It can help me get a good career when I grow up, and the better career you get, the more money you make” (J. Foster, personal communication, January 22, 2008). Alyssa mentioned, “They can help me in the future with my applications, jobs, get paid more . . .” (A. Martin, personal communication, January 23, 2008). Keshawn, another fifth grader, stated, “It’s gonna be easier to get a job” (K. Thomas, personal communication, February 27, 2008). Devon, a sixth grader, stated that he thought being bilingual would help him in his future schooling: “Being able to apply for high school and colleges; having a step ahead” (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008). Michelle stated the overall benefit of knowing two languages: “because the Spanish will help you get into like a higher, a higher level, or like a job.” She went on to state how it would apply in her particular circumstance, as she wanted to become a doctor or nurse:

[It will] help me in the future because you get hired easy, like for a job. And then you know Spanish and then you can help people, like if you wanted to work in the hospital. And there, a person that comes in there that doesn’t know English, and you could help that person. (M. Wilson, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

Students were clear on the potential that being bilingual had for their futures. It was this

knowledge that also contributed to their continuation in the program.

Research Question 2: What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two-Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to language?

The student participants shared their experiences and perspectives in regard to their language experiences, offering extremely rich and varied experiences and perspectives. The themes which emerged as a result of discussions about these experiences and perspectives, as well as data from observations and school records, were (a) support interventions, (b) progress in the goal of bilingualism, and (c) linguistic diversity.

Support Interventions

Every student in the study received additional support from the school for at least one semester, in one form or another, during their academic experience. Most commonly, this came in the form of what was entitled, “Afterschool Interventions”. Alyssa, now a fifth grader, had been participating in the Intervention program for several years.

MAE: . . . And has she ever had to get any extra help in Spanish?

SM: Uh, yeah. Not any, not any. . . I’m not sure. Because when she’s done intervention, it’s either, it’s been mainly in English.

MAE: OK.

SM: Um, I don’t know too much of . . . No, it was actually all in English.

MAE: OK. All the interventions she had is in English. Do you know what grade she started interventions?

SM: Um . . . Kinder.

MAE: OK.

SM: She’s been in terms in interventions every since.

MAE: Pretty much every year?

SM: Mm hmm (S. Martin, personal communication, March 27, 2008)

A few other students received support in the past at some point, but were no longer receiving it at the time of the study. For example, Natalia’s mother stated the following:

MAE: And, has she ever needed to get any extra help in Spanish or English?
 ML: Yes she has, and that's been through the Immersion, I mean the, what do you call them? After school programs. Just the added help in the reading.
 MAE: Uh, intervention?
 ML: Interventions.
 MAE: Mm hmm.
 ML: Yeah, so . . . She doesn't do them now, she did for several years though. I would say from first grade all the way up to third—fourth oh, maybe she still does . . . (Natalia clarifies) No? Third? You stopped at third? Oh, it stopped at third grade. So (M. López, personal communication, February 25, 2008)

Michelle and William's mother indicated they had participated the year before last.

MAE: And did they ever need to get extra help in Spanish or English?
 TW: Mmmm. We got them actually a tutor in Spanish or because it's not their regular language so
 MAE: Mm hmm.
 TW: . . . to be sure they knew what they were doin', we did get them a tutor in Spanish
 MAE: Yeah.
 TW: . . . to help them. We got 'em a Spanish dictionary to help so
 MAE: When was the, um, tutoring? Do you remember? What year?
 TW: Year before last.
 MAE: OK. OK. And do they, how did that like was that part of the school?
 TW: It was fine. It was here at school. It went fine.
 MAE: Did they have a after . . . like a after . . . Did they receive like any, um, extra support like at the afterschool program ever?
 TW: Mm hmm. That's what it was. It was like the afterschool program.
 MAE: Oh, it was the afterschool program. Oh, OK. OK, great. 'Cause I know they have like Afterschool Intervention kinda program here once in a while, right?
 TW: Mm hmm. They stay with their teachers late so they can get better understanding. (T. Wilson, personal communication, March 25, 2008)

Keshawn's parents stated that he had participated in the program for three years, up to now.

RT: I knew he was strugglin', the teacher knew he was strugglin', so we kinda, you know, let's put him in this afterschool program.
 MAE: Mm hmm.
 RT: And you know, do more at home.
 MAE: And what grade was that?
 RT: He was in, I would say he went to intervention, mmm maybe three years, huh? In a row.
 JT: Yeah.
 RT: I wanna say, because I mean he really struggled for a minute, but now he didn't go to it this year, so

JT: But the way they have it set up, it's not like it's somethin' that is bad.

MAE: Yeah.

RT: No. no, no. It's

JT: The way they have it set up is good, 'cause a lot of the kids are in it. (R. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Data from student records also indicated that the most common forms of formalized support were summer school and the After School Intervention program. The After School Intervention program was offered to students scoring within a certain range on testing in reading/language arts and math; therefore, the school received funding for it, as well as for students who needed extra support in reading or math as a preventative measure. The After School Intervention program was only offered in English due to funding restrictions until this year, when an additional grant supporting foreign language acquisition allowed for extra support in Spanish.

Another type of formal support was the SST, which consisted of the teacher and other support staff and included a parent to assess student progress and to formulate a plan for student success. The SST produced goals and objectives for students as well as interventions and strategies for teachers, parents, and extra support staff. Several students went through the formal process of an SST, and some were evaluated for whether retention was an option for them if progress had not been made. As a result of SSTs, two students were retained, very likely because they had started the program late and were not able to catch up to grade level. Two more students were recommended for retention, but their parents were not in agreement with the recommendation. At the time of the study, both of those students struggled at grade level but were functioning adequately enough to remain in their current grade levels.

The SST also could trigger an IEP. For one student, this resulted in services such as speech/language and occupational therapy. The mother, a special education instructor,

claimed her daughter had never been formally evaluated due to her own reluctance with the labeling of special education students. Therefore, her daughter's situation was being addressed through modifications with teachers, apart from formalized special education interventions.

Many semi-formal interventions were also documented, such as small group work during class time, tutoring, and the like. Many other informal interventions were undoubtedly utilized to support student learning, but they were not officially documented in the cumulative file. All students, regardless of age, grade, or level of achievement, at one time or another in their experience received additional formal support apart from the regular school curriculum to support them academically.

Progress in the Goal of Bilingualism

All students participating in the study had made progress in their goal of bilingualism and biliteracy. According to the most recent report cards, students at the fourth and fifth grade levels were either on or approaching grade level in both English and Spanish language arts, math, and acquisition of a second language. Standardized testing suggested that these students were scoring at a basic level in math in Spanish; in English in general, they were scoring between the below basic and basic levels. Students at the sixth through eighth grade levels fell in the report card categories of average or higher (sixth to seventh grade) and at least a basic level in Spanish math. On English tests, they were, in general, averaging at a basic level. At the eighth grade level, students were between a basic or proficient level in Spanish math or below average to average. According to their report cards, eighth graders fell below average due to the effort and level of Spanish required at that level. In English tests, the eighth graders were averaging

at a below basic level.

Although test scores in isolation cannot articulate the achievement level of students, but on these tests as a whole, they were achieving in Spanish math. Spanish reading and language arts appeared to be areas in which students needed to improve. Spanish scores on the Aprenda were not available until the very end of the research, making a complete analysis impossible. Scores were converted to percentiles for internal purposes, and most are low except in math. This would be consistent with the findings on report cards. At the same time, at each successive grade level, they were also becoming better at English.

In addition to test scores and report cards, students also demonstrated their progress through alternative measures (See Appendix I). For example, on the reading fluency and comprehension test entitled “Results,” students performed well in both English and Spanish. On the writing alternative assessments, students were also performing at or around grade level. Most students also demonstrated their progress bilingually in oral communication on the FLOSEM.

Linguistic Diversity

Students experienced different linguistic environments depending on their family situations and their individual personalities, interests, and linguistic comfort zones, which undoubtedly had an impact on their language perspectives and use of language. Some had no exposure to Spanish other than school. Others had the opportunity to communicate in Spanish either with extended family members or as a result of other social connections. Some seemed to interpret their use of Spanish as a way to understand or merge into the Spanish-speaking culture, whereas others seemed to see it mainly as their ticket to the

future.

Generally, English was the language used in the home. It was definitely the language in which students felt most competent in all four skill areas; however, most stated they were comfortable using both languages. Only one student mentioned English when asked if they thought any language was superior to other languages. Students were often found to use English during class interactions, even during the time of day when Spanish was supposed to be utilized, but usually observed proper language protocol established during Spanish time, particularly during teacher-directed whole group activities. Teachers commented that for most of the students who slipped into English during Spanish time, it was not a struggle for them to switch back into Spanish when reminded.

Some teachers speculated that students' use of English was due in part to the independence and resistance to authority that pre-adolescence involved. However, for some students it was due to their ability in the language, and teachers stated that students' inability to express themselves completely in Spanish as they could in English sometimes decreased their oral participation. For example, when the teacher would elicit responses from the whole group, the student might begin to respond but, not able to express himself or herself in the way he or she so desired, would either not participate or give up mid-sentence. This happened even though teachers would offer support in the student's effort to express himself or herself.

Devon, a mature sixth grader, expressed how, from time to time, he would use English, even though he knew he was supposed to use Spanish in class:

DB: In middle school you're supposed to focus on one language in classes. I feel if it's a requirement I should be doing it. I should be obedient. I have to get hard

on myself. Some students use English just to get on the teachers nerves. They say, "I don't like the teacher." I don't do that. Like today I remembered, but I was in a rush, trying to figure out something. I should have been using Spanish. Some of the kids with Latino background are really good at that, they are perfectly fluent in both.

MAE: Why do you think they are better at that?

DB: They're perfectly fluent. I think they learned Spanish as their first language and probably since English is spoken all around it's easier than for me since Spanish is [not]. (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008)

When speaking about his abilities in Spanish, he brought up the topic again regarding using English during Spanish time:

MAE: Tell me what you can do in Spanish (reading, writing, speaking, listening).

DB: I can translate things for people who only speak Spanish. I'm still working on speaking it like I should.

M: Can you explain that a little bit more? Do you mean the WAY you speak it or how you use it in class?

DB: Knowing all the correct words to say. When you're in small groups it's a little harder to speak Spanish, like when I'm in a rush. Like today, we were basically in a frenzy and things come out much faster in English.

Later in the conversation he explained a little more:

DB: Sometimes in class if I get stuck, it makes me feel anxious and it's a word frenzy in my head.

MAE: Is that when you use English?

DB: Yes. If I'm truly expressing myself I prefer using English. (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008)

So even for a student working above grade level in most subjects, and according to his teachers very capable of using Spanish at all times, he would use English from time to time during groups during Spanish time because he felt anxious that he could not express himself the way he wanted to.

Before the interviews, students were originally thought to be speakers of Ebonics. However, it was discovered that students varied greatly in their exposure to, understanding of, and use of Ebonics. Whereas some students had minimal exposure, others heard it often at home, with classmates, or with others in the extracurricular or

social activities in which they participated. In most cases, it was clear that speaking about the topic of language was not common practice, especially in regard to the use of vernacular. Only about half the students seemed aware of the existence of the vernacular, whether or not they used it. In fact, some did not recognize that they used it, even though there were clear examples that they did. For example, Alyssa seemed totally unaware that she used the vernacular but could be heard speaking in this way in certain interactions with her mother, who used the vernacular regularly. In a dialogue with the researcher, Alyssa explained a situation in which she had experienced a race-based discriminatory comment from another student at the school. She changed the tone of her voice and style of communication and stated the following:

MAE: OK. And, um . . . Do you feel like you know how to handle this kind of situation when it happens?

AM: Yeah, just let it go, 'cause why make up a big deal about it?

MAE: Mm hmmm.

AM: Now, if they make some-um [something] up about my momma, then it's go-in [going to] be another big deal about it . . . so . . . (Laughs . . .). (A. Martin, personal communication, February 21, 2008)

Keshawn was another student who did not seem to be aware that he used the vernacular when he was first asked about it, but when his mother insisted that he reflect on how he and his cousins spoke, he understood what was meant and named the people with whom he usually communicated in that manner. Observations by his parents, teacher, and the researcher confirmed this, as did his dialogues with the researcher. For example, in an dialogue with the researcher, he described a situation in which he used Spanish to ask a gentleman how to find a restaurant: "We was tryin' to go find something to eat and there was a man that worked there, but he only speak Spanish, so I had to aks [ask] him something like, '¿Dónde está la comida?'" Keshawn went on further to explain how he and his cousins interacted, for example, when they teased each other: "When I be mad, I

just be sayin', like, '¡Cállense!' [Shut up!]" (K. Thomas, personal communication, February 27, 2008).

Whereas these are examples of verbal communication, for a couple of students, Ebonics played a significant role in their schooling experiences in terms of writing. For William, Ebonics came through in his writing as well as his speaking. A portion of a poem about him and his friends utilizes Ebonics: "Alan he the funny person he like 'mercusio of Romeo and Juliet' . . . Joey all he think was girls . . ." William's cultural experience also stood out in his writing:

Ode to what I wear
 Blue jeans goes with a White t/ and that's hyphy
 Nikes js on my feet keep It moving no bapes there fake
 Grey hoodie with no stunas

["Hyphy" (2005): crazy; "Bapes" (2006): a Japanese shoe; "Stunnas" (2005): glasses]. (W. Wilson, personal communication, March 27, 2008)

Michelle, William's sister, was characterized by her teachers as not using Ebonics in writing. However, in the following writing sample by Michelle, it is evident that the African American culture and forms of expression are very richly entwined:

Some peoples' outfits look a hot mess! Don't you think so? Well I do! Some people just need to learn how to make fashion look cute and fly . . . For the boys, don't just walk out the door with some White shoes and the uniform t-shirt. The gentlemen at LISL need to look fresh and clean. It could be tight to have some designer jeans and a nice belt and have a nice sweat shirt that would look fly.

["Hot mess" (2005): Someone that is dressed poorly or who's hair is not done; "Fresh" (2002): cool, in style; "Fly" (2002): cool, in style]. (M. Wilson, personal communication, March 13, 2008)

It remained to be seen if the teachers were aware of the significance of this reality for the African American students in their classrooms. Whereas teachers could generally identify

if students utilized Ebonics or not, Ebonics as a whole appeared to be essentially overlooked, apart from a few select activities or times of year (such as during Black History month).

Students varied significantly in their use and understanding of Spanish, English, and Ebonics. No students shared the exact same linguistic profile; however, they shared similar characteristics about their comfort levels in English and Spanish and their use of English primarily in the home. It also was evident that students were not accustomed to discussing language, such as the use of the vernacular. Lastly, much of what surfaced from the data in regard to language involved culture, making it clear how the two are inseparable.

Research Question 3: What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two-Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to culture?

All the participants, regardless of grade level, age, sex, or achievement levels, discussed similar perceptions and experiences regarding culture. The themes which emerged as a result of discussions about their perceptions of the program were (a) cultural identity, (b) intercultural compatibility, (c) positive cross-cultural relationships, and (d) a desire for more cultural inclusivity.

Cultural Identity

In regards to race or ethnicity, several students identified themselves differently from what was indicated on their student records. Janée, a fourth grader, described herself as a “young, vibrant, intelligent, Panamanian girl,” despite the fact that African American was indicated in her records (She was half Panamanian and half African American.).

Keshawn, a fifth grader, who was three-quarters Black and one-quarter Filipino, described himself as “mixed,” whereas his records indicated he was also African American; his parents were clear that, although he was mixed, he knew he was Black. Alyssa, a fifth grader, was African American as indicated in student records; however, she also described herself as African American at first in the dialogue and then went on further to say, “It’s just fun to be two different cultures” (A. Martin, personal communication, February 21, 2008). When questioned about what she meant by this statement, she explained she was referring to her biracial Mexican and African American background. The mother indicated that Alyssa would sometimes refer to herself as Latina and sometimes as African American. When she would only refer to herself as Latina, her mother would tell her she could take out her birth certificate and show her what it said: African American. Elena, a seventh grader whose records indicated she was African American and Latina, described herself as Latina, and in fact, it was later disclosed that as a result of the this research project, she had had a discussion with her mother regarding the fact that she thought she had to choose between one or the other but could not be both.

It became very clear in discussions with students that although they were originally thought to have identified strictly with their African American descent, they ended up defining themselves as much more culturally diverse. Student responses made it very clear that self-definition and perception go much further than the categories from which parents were asked to choose on the official school forms.

Intercultural Compatibility

Students communicated that they felt very comfortable culturally in the school

environment, despite the fact that African Americans made up a very small percentage of the population at the school. They overwhelmingly stated that they felt they could truly be themselves as students of African American descent at the school of 89% Latino, 5% African American, 2% Chinese, 2% Filipino, and 1% White. Also, they were clear that speaking Spanish had not changed the way they saw themselves as African Americans. As Devon, a sixth grader, stated, “I can be myself anywhere” (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008). Michelle seemed to notice a merging of two cultures when she stated that although speaking Spanish had not affected her way of seeing herself as African American, she felt “a little bit more Spanish, like Mexican kinda. Because all my friends, just, we always talk about how we’re all just like the same, all Mexican and all Black . . . like we’re all equal and stuff” (M. Wilson, personal communication, March 17, 2008).

When asked if they thought that being African American affected their experience at school, most stated that it did not; however, a few students mentioned they thought that having more African Americans at the school would make the school different. For example, Janée, a fourth grader, stated, “. . . I would have a lot more friends to understand what things goin’ on at the school, or like, what they can learn about, but mostly there’s a lot of Mexican and Latino” (J. Foster, personal communication, January 22, 2008). Alyssa thought it would mean she would feel less lonely.

MAE: How do you think it would be different if there were more African Americans at the school?

AM: It wouldn’t feel . . . It would feel less lonely.

MAE: It’d feel less lonely?

AM: Mmm hmmm.

MAE: Mmm hmm.

AM: ‘Cause we don’t really have any new students . . .

MAE: Mmm hmm.

AM: . . . and plus if a new student comes, it's usually Mexican, or African Am—well, not African American, but different color, somethin'

MAE: Mmm hmmm.

AM: Somethin'.

MAE: So for you that would be a positive thing if there were more African Americans at the school?

AM: (Signals yes). (A. Martin, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Several students noted an instance of name calling or discriminatory comments at some point in their school experience but pointed out that they either ignored the comment or reported it to school personnel. Whereas no child should have to experience this kind of discriminatory situation, the students did not seem concerned about or bothered by the potential of a pattern of this kind of behavior at the school. Students interpreted these to be isolated incidences, and no students claimed they had experienced or been witness to any particular pattern of race-based discrimination.

Positive Cross Cultural Relationships

One salient feature for all students was the mixture of friends that they had. Whether through answers to the question about their five closest friends or in other comments about friendships, it was very obvious that the students were comfortable with friends from other backgrounds, particularly Latino. They all touched upon how they valued friendships within the school, and many discussed the diversity in their friendships outside of school. When asked with whom they had the most in common culturally, every student included Latino (or “everyone” or “a mixture,” which would presumably include Latino) as one (if not the only one) on their list. In fact, many students named friends at school as the reason they have continued in the program. Students also shared that they thought they had learned about other cultures being at the school, which they mainly responded to by saying it was Mexican or Latino, and seemed to focus more on holiday celebrations as representation of their understanding of

“culture.”

A Desire for More Cultural Inclusivity

When asked if they had learned more about other cultures from being in the program, it was clearly evident that this was the case. Most named the Mexican or Latino culture, although some mentioned, for example, the Native American or Chinese cultures. Students communicated that the Latino culture (particularly Mexican) was clearly the dominant culture in terms of the focus for activities, celebrations, and discussions and suggested it was somewhat imbalanced. Devon, a sixth grader, referred to the fact that dances at school were mainly Latino, as opposed to African American: “It’s just the tiny things that shows that this school is mostly dominated by Latino [culture]” (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008). Natalia, a sixth grader, expressed how she thought there was an imbalance in the activities and staffing:

The only culture that we had at school—that was Aztecas and Capoeira. And mostly all of it—the rest of it’s Mexican. They would have painting—the teacher’s Mexican; dance—teacher is a Mexican, and most of it would be about Mexican. Aztecas is close. It’s . . . It is Mexican. It’s close, very, very close. (N. López, personal communication, February 25, 2008)

When students were asked to name any school activities they were aware of that centered around African Americans, they all mentioned Black History Month. Most activities regarding African Americans tended to take place around this time of year, although some students mentioned that, from time to time, there were activities at other times of the year. When students were asked what they thought about Black History Month, the activities surrounding it, and other activities focusing on African American history, their responses were overwhelmingly positive. The students articulated that these activities were affirming, enjoyable, thought-provoking, and informative. Devon, a sixth grader, in reference to Black History Month, stated, “I was very excited about that

because I felt more noticed and things weren't all around Latinos but around other cultures as well" (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008). In regard to Black History Month activities, Alyssa, a fifth grader, exclaimed, "They're fun! . . . Because you know about your history and you figure out what history came from" (A. Martin, personal communication, February 13, 2008). Lakeisha explained that she learned things and so did her classmates when they studied about African Americans in her class: "I like it because it's cool being able to learn about other African Americans, and how other people get to learn about them too" (L. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008). Many students mentioned that they thought other students understood African American culture better after participating in Black History Month. Alyssa said she knew this was so because other students enjoyed participating in Black History Month. She also mentioned that having Black History Month made her feel less lonely. Several students shared how Black History Month encouraged dialogue within their families. Natalia, a sixth grader, stated, "I would come home, tell my mom what movie we watched, and my mom would tell me, 'Oh, oh that movie! You know the civil rights was this and that. They had revolutions!'" (N. López, personal communication, February 25, 2008).

Students gave the impression that they would like to have more activities centering around African Americans. Many students expressed satisfaction with dance and cultural activities, such as Capoeira, with its Afro-Brazilian roots. They also expressed a desire to have dance more typical of the African American community, such as hip-hop. Elena, a seventh grader, even stated, "We need to learn African languages" (E. Jones-Hernández, personal communication, February 22, 2008). Music and dance

were universally enjoyed by the participating students, as was theater. Even the students who struggled the most academically seemed to enjoy their participation in theater and requested more of it. Many were recognized as having a special talent in it. Although theater was not named in conjunction with their request for more African centered activities, since it is consistent with the oral tradition of the African American culture, more theater opportunities would certainly be consistent with this request.

Students not only wanted to be more inclusive of African Americans but also other cultures. They seemed to have a clear understanding of the importance of including other cultures in the curriculum, the activities, and the celebrations that are done around school: “The mission of the school is multiculturalism . . . It’s more multicultural to talk about other cultures than the majority culture in the school” (D. Brown, January 29, 2008).

Students were more diverse in their own self-perceived identities than originally thought. They also expressed what activities centered around African Americans meant to them personally and how such activities requested more of them. However, they also demonstrated a more inclusive view of other cultures as well. As a whole, students essentially expressed that their ideal would be a more inclusive school environment.

Summary

The primary purpose for this participatory research was to discover the reasons that African American students in grades 4 through 8 participating in a Two-Way Immersion school continued to participate in the program and to discover their perspectives and opinions about the program, in addition to their linguistic and cultural experiences. In this section, students provided their perspectives about what they liked or

did not like about the program, why they had continued participating, and what their linguistic and cultural experiences were. Data were gathered from other sources, such as student records, work samples, observations, and teacher comments to provide the themes.

The findings from all the data sources showed that the students had remained in the program because they were content with participating in a bilingual program, appreciated positive relationships, and were interested in the present and future rewards of bilingualism. Secondly, the linguistic experiences and perspectives of the students reflected extra support for students in the program, development in the ongoing process of bilingualism, and very diverse linguistic backgrounds and perspectives. Finally, students indicated they felt comfortable culturally, despite the fact that they were a small population of African Americans in a school community that was 90% Latino. The cross-cultural relationships built among the students were so strong that some opted to stay in the program to avoid severing those relationships. Very importantly, students shared their desire for a more culturally inclusive campus: one that included more of the African American experience but also other underrepresented groups on campus and other cultures in general.

Qualitative Themes of the Parents

Research Question 1: What factors have contributed to upper elementary and middle school African American student continued participation in a Two-Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program?

All the parent participants discussed similar reasons for their child's continued participation in the program. The themes which emerged as a result of discussions about

their reasons were (a) the value of bilingualism, (b) positive school climate, (c) school community communication regarding the TWI model, and (d) parent commitment.

The Value of Bilingualism

The most important reason given by parents for their children to have remained in the program up to now was the value of bilingualism. Parents expressed in very simple and eloquent ways their heart's desire for their children to become bilingual. Some parents shared how they made the decision before they even had children that they wanted them to be bilingual. For example, Mr. Brown's foreign travels impacted his decision to do whatever was necessary for his children to become bilingual:

DB: It was a rude awakening to see, looking at the children and kinda interacting with them, wherever I was at. I was kinda travelin' all over. Um, how they, how they knew three and four languages.

MAE: Mmmm.

DB: And they knew 'em without knowin' they knew 'em, kind of a thing.

MAE: (Laughs.)

DB: Just that they were exposed to it, so that became a battle cry for me to a, you know when we had kids, when we got married and had kids that they'd be trilingual. And so . . . And I had already had, I already had a goal in mind to uh, to, you know to make sure they were literate in Spanish. (D. Brown, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

The vast majority used the term "one up" to describe the advantage their children would have in becoming bilingual in terms of job opportunities and so on. Mr. Jones described the advantages his daughter will experience as a result of the program:

Well, yeah, I mean, it definitely, it'll definitely have doors open. I think, and if anything else, I think it would even help her, you know, to have those basics down already, you know, those kind of practices down already. It would ready her if she needed to study another language, it would be a lot easier for her. But um, uh, I mean, so many job opportunities now, you know, they're abundant, and so, uh, you know, that has to be a plus. Um. Yeah, I just think, you know, it makes anyone a more rounded person to have more than one language background. (R. Jones, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Ms. Wilson stated the following regarding bilingualism: "Bein' bilingual is like a big

thing today, you know, you get better jobs if you're bilingual. Um, you just have a better chance if you're bilingual. So, just for the job opportunity alone it's special and unique" (T. Wilson, personal communication, March 25, 2008). When asked why her kids remained in the program, she responded,

Um, actually once they started, they might as well complete it, so that that way they, I mean it's not like, I wanted them to complete it because they started here, so I wanted them to complete it so again they're ahead, so again they know more, so again, they have two languages on their side. To me, it's helpful to have two languages. (T. Wilson, personal communication, March 25, 2008)

Some parents shared how their decision to keep their child in the program has not been without its doubts; however, the desire for their children to be bilingual has prevailed.

JT: You know, I'm gonna be honest with you, I was a couple times, I was like, take him out, let's go . . . You know what I mean? I want my . . . I was worried about, I am worried about social skills.

MAE: Mm hmmm.

JT: You know I mean, because it is a predominantly Mexican school. You know, I'm like, well how's he gonna deal, and then she's [Rayanne's] like well he's Black every other time, his football team is Black, his baseball team is Black, you know . . . you know he, when he was in third grade, I was kind of worried about him a little bit. Still to this day I don't know, I mean, should he be in the regular school system with the other kids that are White, Black, Chinese, Latino? Or . . . 'cause it's such a restricted little small community, you know . . . And once he gets into the big pond in high school, is it going to be overwhelming . . . That's the only thing I question, is whether it'll be overwhelming because of the size of the school, basically, and the multi—multicultures and everything that's gonna come with goin' to high school afterwards . . .

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

JT: You know, where a lot of kids, like the kids that go to, you know, the regular public schools, they're already familiar with the kids there . . . they're just moving along in grades, they're already familiar with a big dynamic of a big school, you know . . .

MAE: Mm hmm

JT: We'll see, but he'll have one thing for him...He'll be bilingual. That'll be the big benefit . . . (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Positive School Climate

Parents consistently communicated how they valued a smaller, more personalized school community. Many stated that the school has the feel of a family:

MAE: (Laughs.) And what do you most like about the school?

KB: I like that it is family oriented and um, that it provides the children with a—a strong background in, um, in Spanish and the Latino culture and it's gonna allow them to do a lot of things because they'll be able to speak two different languages. (K. Brown, personal communication, February 26, 2008)

Ms. Hernández echoed this sentiment regarding how the school feels like a family:

I think that this school in a lot of ways is very special because it is a small school, it is K-8, ummm. It is almost like a . . . no, I shouldn't say it's almost like, it IS . . . part of another extended family. Every person that works here and has children, their children are here

MAE: Mm hmm.

MH: Every single person

MAE: Good sign!

MH: It is . . . and it goes to show how important this program is to us and our school is to us because we put our money where . . . I mean our kids are here . . . If we have our kids here, that's the belief . . . I mean . . . I . . . there's no stronger message. (M. Hernández, personal communication, February 1, 2008)

Others commented on how the school has the feel of a private school where students receive all the attention they needed. This may have been especially significant for parents because the dialogues revealed that several had attended private schools themselves. Mr. Thomas claimed, "I just like it 'cause it's smaller, it's not like some other schools where the class sizes are so big. There are so many kids. Everybody knows Keshawn. I mean lots in the school, all the teachers know him" (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008). Mr. Jones talked about how his experience at the Language Institute reminded him of his own private school experience:

I mean, I went to private schools. I don't know. I can only speak from experience with my going through private schools, and the friends that I had goin' to public schools and what the differences that we shared. And I'm glad I went through that experience, you know. And here my children are in public schools, but again, we have a campus here, where it is so tight knit, and, uh, it's almost like bein' a private school. (R. Jones, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Ms. Wilson also corroborated with the idea that LILS is like a private school when she stated,

I like that the classes are smaller, so they get more attention from the teachers. Um, I like that um, I mean I've been with these teachers since kindergarten. So I like that that I've been . . . it's to me it's like this, almost like a private school because you're circular with the teachers, you know, it's somethin' like a private school. (T. Wilson, personal communication, March 25, 2008)

Ms. Thomas also shared the same opinion:

Charter schools, like I said, I like that one on one. I know that, you know what I mean, he can always go to his teacher, and he needs that extra time, and needs extra freedom. They have the after school programs or the intervention (R. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

School Community Communication Regarding the TWI Model

As part of kindergarten enrollment, all parents are required to attend an orientation meeting where they learn about the Two-Way Immersion model and are asked to make a 6-year commitment to stay at the school, considering this amount of time is required for one to become bilingual. Also, during the course of a child's schooling experience, parents are expected to attend meetings surrounding state testing results to inform them of the appropriate progress and of expectations of their child. Parents stated that one of the reasons for staying in the program was that it was not an option to move their children because they were informed when they enrolled their children that they needed to commit to being at the school for 6 years in order for the process of becoming bilingual to run its course. Throughout the course of their children's academic experiences, the information offered to parents by teachers, administration, and other parents in regard to what should be expected according to the TWI model encouraged them to continue with the program.

DB: Well, sixth grade, the first benchmark is sixth grade. They're there, they're committed from kindergarten to sixth grade, period.

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: And there's nothing leaving beforehand, otherwise we are usurping the school's authority, so to speak, in their original curriculum.

MAE: Sure.

DB: We wouldn't pull 'em out. (D. Brown, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

Mrs. López shared that she had considered changing Natalia to another program but that the commitment she made at the beginning and the information she received at that time and along the course of Natalia's academic experiences were very significant in encouraging her to stay.

MAE: OK and you kind of mentioned, um, moments where you thought about changing her to another school or program.

ML: Mm hmm. Yeah, there was always times that I thought I would want to change her, but then I think back to when they told me—in order for it to be a success and the overall statistics show that children in these types of programs, in order for it to be fully successful, at least till sixth grade, you know and I kept saying, "I'm gonna give it a chance, I'm gonna give it a chance till sixth grade," and umm, so she's in sixth grade now, and I do see a lot of improvement in both languages.

MAE: Is there anything else that made you during those difficult times, anything else, like were there other people or information from other sources that made you go ahead and keep her [there], besides remembering back on that?

ML: Umm. Just the, the statistical information that the school keeps providing us, and keeps us informed with, and Ms. Quiroga is very good about doing the reports and when the STARS testing, and coming in and explaining to us what's the overall, and just kinda, just keep encouraging us through the years as we go through these programs and just saying, you know, "hang in there" and "I know you may see some, you're not happy with the results, but just—this is the statistics, this is what is going on in the world in these types of programs. Here's our statistics and what's going on in—now, and you know, we're right there with them, so just hang in there," so yeah . . . (M. López, personal communication, February 25, 2008)

Along with this commitment came doubts, however. Many parents expressed that they had their doubts along the way, even as they reflected on the importance of remaining in the program. Keshawn's mom stated that she had a lot of self doubts in the early years.

RT: It, that was a real struggle for me, those first couple of years, because just learning, he's just, he's just trying to learn in English, and when, what really scared me was when he started, he read in Spanish and didn't know how to read in English. And I totally, that's why, I 'm like, OK, I didn't know if I was doin' the right thing. I was scared. I was like . . . OK . . .

JT: And he mixed up his words . . .

RT: He would write in, try to write in Spanish and English, but now I see, I just, you know, and they said, “Rayanne,” what, “third–fourth grade he’ll start to decipher the two”

MAE: Mmm hmmm.

RT: Now, that I see he has, he’s doing really, really well . . . but, he now deciphers, OK, I’m writin’ in Spanish and then I’m writin’ in English. (R. Thomas, February 13, 2008)

Natalia’s mom also had doubts, particularly when test results came out:

But . . . just the doubt always came every year when it was those score tests, the STAR testings come out, and I just doubt myself that I made the right decision, but I have to look at the overall picture of—school’s just gonna be school, it’s not gonna be their lifetime career. Their lifetime career is gonna be where I’m at, or what I’m doing, and having to do language, how it is going to be an important part of their life (M. López, personal communication, February 25, 2008)

Mr. Jones discussed how his worry went away when he began to see some development in English:

But I was kinda concerned, but I had to step back, and even in steppin’ back, you know, I was hearin’ different meetings with the parents and teachers that, um, you know, there was this curve that would happen with kids as they grew along that, in their English, their English would kind of drop off, and you’d see that curve, but then it comes back. And it’s like, OK, and then them explaining that, it’s like, OK that makes me feel a little bit better, but I’m waitin’ to see the curve come back (Laughs.). You know, and so, and then when it does, it’s like, OK, there’s the relief. OK. There’s the relief. There is. OK. You know. I mean, and it is relief, because um, you know any parent, they want, you know, they want their kid to have the best, you know, so (R. Jones, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

According to Mr. Jones’ response, teacher-to-parent outreach is provided at meetings. Parents discussed how teachers were very available to provide explanations and support in regards to what should be expected from their children at certain points in the program.

MAE: Now, he’s made it to fifth grade in the program, can you tell me why you both or Keshawn made the decision to stay with the program?

JT: The teachers.

RT: The teachers. Honest, I mean, even when I got scared like that second grade year, when he wasn’t . . . to me I didn’t see him advancin’ in English, and that’s what would speak, so, the teachers, knowing that they’re . . . and the parents . . .

not even just the teachers, the teachers are there to help you, they're, I mean they're there to talk to you, if you want to meet after school, and knowin' the other parents went through it . . . So knowin' you have that feedback from them. . . . (R. Thomas, February 13, 2008)

As Ms. Thomas indicated, other parents were also a key factor. This parent-to-parent contact was a helpful tool that encouraged parents to continue in the program. Ms. Thomas mentioned she had contact with another African American parent in the upper grades. She stated that having that person with whom to speak when she had doubts was critical and really encouraged her to stay in the program.

MAE: I know you were mentioning that that, there was a person who you used

RT: That I, yeah, that kinda helped me when he was strugglin' to . . . when she showed me, you know her daughter went through it and I was normal. And you just kinda have to take your time, you know and be patient and all—that he'll get it.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: So, that totally . . . it helped me, and not . . . I . . . I . . . yeah, it was because she was African American. I needed to know that someone else sat through this and went through this. And it was OK. Rather than just [unintelligible] as Hispanic or when I . . . I

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: He didn't have the advantage of everyone else had goin' home and so speaking it in . . . so.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: I kinda felt that I didn't want to leave him behind. But yeah, that helped me a lot to talk to her. (R. Thomas, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Parent Commitment

Parents concurred on the commitment that was required on their parts for their children to be successful in the program. They spoke about the importance of supporting their children in the early years and the difficulty that this involved in most cases since they did not know the language. Some stated that this program was not right for every family, as they needed to be willing to provide extra support that would not be necessary in a traditional program. They spoke about the extra time commitment that was involved

and the communication that was required between home and school. Mrs. Brown gave some background in how she was involved in her child's learning:

KB: Well, in the beginning, um, like in kindergarten and first grade, we got their homework in both Spanish and English, so I was still able to help them. And then after that, someone told me about, um, a program called "Translator" where you can type in the Spanish version and it will tell you what it is in English, so I would help them that way, and then, um . . . a lot of times

MAE: Like on the computer?

KB: On the computer, and then a lotta times, if, um, you know, if I just don't understand it, I can easily get in touch with the teachers and they'll let me know what to do, and so

MAE: Mm hmm.

KB: We've been You have to be proactive, though, you know (laughs) and basically, um, when they get to, um, second grade, they explain the homework to them, so that by the time they get home they should know how to do it. (K. Brown, personal communication, February 26, 2008)

She went on later to explain a bit more in detail how she helped her daughter, now in fourth grade, by providing extra assistance outside of school.

KB: I had Lakeisha get some extra help, just because I knew how the program is set up, that they don't learn English until they get to third grade. So I had Lakeisha get a little bit of tutoring. And then, right, even now I, um, do like supplemental . . . I have supplemental papers that I've gotten from the teachers and some stuff that I've gotten online and some stuff that I got, that I bought, you know, just supplemental . . . You could buy all kinda stuff, elementary stuff for English and Spanish, and so I've been having them do a little of this and a little of that. (Laughs.)

MAE: So for Lakeisha it was like, support in English, you said?

KB: Mm hmm.

MAE: Uh-huh. As of what grade did you kinda start that?

KB: Well, I just did proactive . . . it was the summer before the third grade, the little proactive, but . . . and then, and when she got to fourth grade; I talked to the teacher and just got some supplementary work from them. So I would say fourth grade. Third grade? No . . . Like fourth, fourth grade

MAE: Mm hmm. To generally provide extra support in English because you knew that the program

KB: No, just because she needed it . . . (Laughs.).

MAE: Oh.

KB: Because I think, you know, supposedly, if the comprehension is good in either Spanish or English, it'll be good in both, so . . . I can't help her in Spanish (Laughs.) so I have to get the supplementary stuff in English. (K. Brown, personal communication, February 26, 2008)

Her husband explained further the reasons why they decided to supplement.

DB: I mean, that's one of the things that we do. I refer to the boss, Kathy, um, you know with her bein' home, she, she does an excellent job and because we knew that, when we went to this curriculum, that we didn't want to drop the ball because you know you have to learn the king's English here in America, so we knew that we would pretty much go an extra mile to reinforce the English side so they're not lacking for whatever reason. Um, so, the summer time, put 'em in Sylvan or one of the, you know, extracurricular academic learning programs. Um, at the same time, or do a home study.

MAE: Mm hmm.

DB: And, and Kathy's been very instrumental in applying those.

M: Mm hmm.

DB: Their academia, so that, that, they, nothing is lost there. Like even for Mariah right now. She's gonna be in kindergarten next year. Well, of course she's working with her and her reading right now. Even though she didn't, say preschool two times, Tuesday, three, Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

MAE: Sure.

DB: And you know, a pretty nice one, but uh, but she's definitely workin' with her to make sure that, uh, she has that strong foundation goin' in.

MAE: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

DB: But we usually work hard to reinforce the English simply because we don't want to be . . . and, and there was, there has been a lull where there, it might be second, third grade, where you know, they're a little behind on the English side

MAE: Mmmm.

DB: You know as it relates to other kids and being only you know, scribbles and what not.

MAE: Mm hmm.

DB: But you know it's made up, it's made up. It's just that we don't take it for granted. We really work, go the extra mile, to make sure it's in place. (D. Brown, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

Mr. Thomas strongly emphasized the role that the parents need to have if their children are to succeed:

JT: Bottom line it takes the parent.

RT: Mm hmm.

JT: Especially bein' African American, it's different for uh . . . the Mexican kids that are there, because they'll go home and more than likely than not somebody speaks Spanish in the house. Keshawn comes home—don't nobody speak Spanish around here, you know, so it's a totally different thing for him than it is for any other kid. And you know, an African American kid is really gonna have to have a lot of parent participation, and that's where's it's gonna come down to because those first, second and third grade years are gonna be hard.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: 'Cause you're not gonna understand the homework.

RT: (Laughs.)

JT: Even the math homework's in Spanish, so you know, then you think you're gonna understand it. You're not gonna understand it. (Laughs.)

MAE: (Laughs.)

RT: How do you feel when you can't correct your 1-year-old's homework?

JT: Yeah! (Laughs.)

RT: You're like, oh, gosh, what do I do? (Laughs.)

JT: You can't correct the time tables or anything, so you're like (J. Thomas, personal communication, February, 13, 2008)

Similarly, Ms. Martin recognized the role of the parent in the education of her daughter, stating that perhaps one of the reasons there were fewer African Americans at the school was due to the amount of effort required on the part of the parent to provide support in Spanish.

SM: . . . Maybe there's not too many in the program, because they don't want to go through the whole concept of trying to, help the kid in Spanish. You know, to take the time out, because it's a lot of work. It's not like, you just cannot put it off on her.

MAE: Mm hmmm.

SM: You know, to expect, so you know at the same time, you got the dictionary, you got all that you can do to help him (S. Martin, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

In general, parents were committed to the value and benefits of bilingualism, appreciated the school climate and were also supported in their decision to stay as a result of the school community's communication regarding the TWI schooling model. They also concurred that it took a great deal of parent commitment to remain in the program.

Research Question 4: What are the perspectives of the parents of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two-Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to their children's language and cultural experiences?

The participants shared their perspectives about their children's language and cultural experiences. The themes which emerged as a result of discussions about their

perceptions of their children's language and cultural experiences were (a) overall satisfaction, (b) a desire for a more culturally inclusive campus, and (c) diversity in perspectives on Ebonics.

Overall Satisfaction

Parents expressed overall satisfaction with the program. They were happy that their children were thriving and learning a second language. They complimented the school on how it was proactive, how it was providing opportunities to become bilingual and biliterate and have cross cultural experiences, how its teachers reached out to students, and how the students had great friendships. It's important to note that every single parent said he or she would recommend the program to others, and in fact, most said they actively did so. They all also answered that they had recommended it to other African American families.

MAE: Mm hmmm. So what do you most like about your child being in a bilingual program?

MH: Obviously she is able to communicate in two languages, understand two languages, that she's proud of the fact that she can do that and not everyone can . . . Ummm . . . the value that it gives to the cultures that speak that language. The access to that . . . ummm . . . I would say (M. Hernández, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Parents also commented on how their children simply enjoyed going to school every morning. They shared how their children enjoyed activities such as afterschool programs, monthly family activities, special events such as the science fairs, carnival, and so forth. Many commented on the fact that they had never heard their children speak about wanting to leave the school, so it would never have occurred to them to take them out.

Parents liked the fact that the school did what they could to carry out preventative measures for students.

RT: I knew he was strugglin', the teacher knew he was strugglin', so we kinda, you know, let's put him in this afterschool program.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: And you know, do more at home.

MAE: And what grade was that?

RT: He was in, I would say he went to intervention, mmm maybe three years, huh? In a row.

JT: Yeah.

RT: I wanna say, because I mean he really struggled for a minute, but now he didn't go to it this year, so

JT: But the way they have it set up, it's not like it's somethin' that is bad.

MAE: Yeah.

RT: No. no, no. It's

JT: The way they have it set up is good, 'cause a lot of the kids are in it.

MAE: Sure.

JT: You know I mean

MAE: Uh huh.

JT: You know . . . the ones that probably don't even need to be in it are in it.

MAE: Yeah.

RT: And I think it's just kinda with even with bein' in—not even just in a bilingual school, but every school. You need that afterschool time to you know, let me go refresh what I learned, to you know recap everything, and

MAE: Yeah.

RT: And just to you know

MAE: Yeah. It's not

RT: Kinda like a afterschool program.

MAE: Yeah, exactly, not so much remedial but enrichment.

RT: Exactly!

JT: Yeah.

RT: But you're not just goin' to folk art, where you're playin' all day.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: You're goin' to somethin' where you know, havin'

MAE: We can all use that kinda help!

RT: Exactly. (Laughs.)

JT: Yeah! Exactly. (Laughs.)

RT: Like we all need that! (Laughs.)

JT: The way the school did, they catch it early.

MAE: Yeah.

JT: That's what I liked about it, it was early. It wasn't like, OK, it's the end of the semester, you already gave him bad grades, and, uh, now he's doin' bad . . . no.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: What . . . it 's not like that. They catch it early, and then they fix the problem before

MAE: Sounds like they're pretty proactive, really.

RT: Oh, they were.

MAE: . . . preventative

RT: Right. Very much so

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: That's what I liked about it 'cause it was just like . . .

MAE: Mm hmm, beforehand

JT: Early

RT: Right.

JT: Before, yeah, before he got too far behind, you know?

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

JT: And like it seems like public schools, they'll let you get behind unless you fail or whatever, and then they wanna talk about it later.

MAE: Mm hmm. Yeah it sounds like it did the trick too!

JT: Yeah, that's what it did!

RT: It did! No, it did! It did!

JT: Exactly what it is, intervention came right in there, you know

RT: Cause and effect! (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Another student's parents echoed this sentiment regarding the school's proactive efforts to meet the students individual needs.

MF: The Language Institute is proactive.

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: And they wanna get that—help you and make sure you have everything that you need, and that's what is really the main reason why I like this school. I wish it was goin' to high school.

MAE: Yeah.

MF: So um, but um

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: Yeah, they are really and truly a blessing.

MAE: Mm.

MF: Um, especially seeing that she started out late.

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: And so, she has come a long way, um, but it was definitely because the school had stepped in and said, you know, this is what we can do, um,

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: What we need from you . . . and that's what I like to hear—what I can do to help.

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: And then also seeing, seeing them stepping in and actually doin' it instead of just saying "This is what we're gonna do" but it never gets done.

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

MF: So

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

MF: Yeah, they've done a great job. (M. Foster, personal communication, January 16, 2008)

Parents also shared how pleased they were with opportunities for cross cultural experiences.

MAE: . . . what do you like most about your child being in a bilingual program?

JT: The diversity

RT: Mm hmmm.

JT: The cultural diversity that he's learnin', 'cause he goes through times, where, like, I'll be honest with you, this football team, it's all Black kids, so he's there, so why do you go to school, it's all Spanish kids. So, the neighborhood we live in, it's Spanish and Black kids, so he learns how to relate to both by going to both different things. So he's going to be a really diverse individual when he grows up, 'cause if you ask me . . . kids, especially when they're young, they're not racist, they learn, they learn the behavior. So, and, you can see that.

MAE: Mm hmmm.

JT: And just by him being able to go and adapt, you know, we see these kids that he probably would have never been friends with ever in life that he goes and kicks it at their house and plays with 'em, and we'll pick 'em up after school, we'll go get them from his parent's house, and it's something that he wouldn't have had before and he benefits from being there . . . and a lot of times people aren't prejudiced or racist because , because that's what they want to be, it's because they're scared of the other culture.

RT: Mm hmm.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: And by introducing the kids early, they're not scared . . . like Keshawn's not, he's not, he doesn't have those lines, those boundary lines within himself, you know, about walkin' up to the stand at uh, Food Co. where they're outside

RT: (Laughs.)

JT: . . . servin' corn on a stick, he'll walk right up and get his; you know what I mean, where other kids would be like . . . "I don't know . . ." It's just taught him to be such an open individual, just diverse in his—in what he eats, to what he watches on TV, you know, or to what he reads, he's just open. It makes him open. (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Another factor contributing to parent satisfaction were the teachers. Ms. Wilson stated that what she most liked about the school were the teachers.

I like that the classes are smaller, so they get more attention from the teachers. Um, I like that um, I mean I've been with these teachers since kindergarten . . . so I like it that the teachers are well kept, you know with the kids. And the classes are smaller than the average classroom, which means they do get more attention. And . . . partly is that I have a good communication with all the teachers 'cause they've [my children have] been here so long. (T. Wilson, personal communication, March 25, 2008)

Keshawn's parents were also particularly pleased with the teachers.

. . . I mean he loves all his teachers, but this year he really comes home every day talking about how he loves his teacher! And I'm like, I mean, that to me means a lot that a kid you know what I mean, likes his teacher, and it does, it shows me that you know what I mean, he's there, he's willing, but he's enjoying it, so, and he's getting a different language, so that's a plus too (Laughs.). (R. Thomas, personal communication, January 13, 2008)

Parents also expressed contentment about friendships at the school.

JT: I think it's really his friends. He really likes his friends [unintelligible]. It's so culturally diverse for him. You know, he's probably—I don't know how many Black kids are in his class . . . maybe . . .

RT: Mmm, couple, I think, a couple . . .

JT: A couple . . .

RT: But . . .

JT: And it seems like, you would naturally think he'd go hang out with the Black kids, but he doesn't . . . he's, I don't know, he really loves his friends, and they love him, and they're—all his friends are really true.

RT: Mhmm . . . And just the diversity there, I think that's going to take him a lot further in life knowing . . . (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Overall, parents were extremely satisfied with the education that their children were receiving at the Language Institute. From the language component, to the cultural exposure to the hardworking teachers, to their close friends, parents are pleased overall with the program.

Parents made some suggestions in regard to the program. One such suggestion was language classes for parents. Parents saw this as an opportunity to improve themselves and help their children. Ms. Foster suggested that if she had had the bilingual program, she could be more actively involved and not missing out in terms of understanding and supporting her daughter: “I . . . wish that I would have had it [the bilingual program] when I was going to school because I would have, um, really been fluent and now not looking to take a Spanish class. (Laughs.) I could be in the loop” (M. Foster, personal communication, January 16, 2008)! In a later dialogue she clarified that

she was looking for a Spanish class.

MF: That's one of the things I was wanting to get done. It was just a matter of me finding the time and making sure

MAE: The schedule.

MF: . . . the scheduling is correct so that I can still do what I have to do. (M. Foster, personal communication, January 22, 2008)

Ms. Martin expressed the same desire so as to be of more assistance to her daughter.

MAE: . . . So can you think of a recommendation you might have to improve the program?

SM: Let's see . . . Like I said, Spanish classes for those English learner [dominant] parents . . . The materials that we can, you know.

MAE: Mm hmmm.

SM: Like tools you know, that we can use to be more helpful

MAE: Mm hmm.

SM: I mean . . . I know some Spanish, and I remember the "tú," what's the other?

MAE: The Ud?

SM: But the thing is I still forget . . .

MAE: Sure.

SM: . . . when you can use them.

MAE: Sure! Sure, sure, sure sure . . . and then when they get up in the other grade levels, you know it's easier when they're in the, you know, kindergarten, first grade, but once they get into . . .

SM: Yeah, and I remember . . .

MAE: . . . the complicated stuff . . .

SM: I remember . . . I remember . . . "Can you think of a time?"—You won't write it like that! . . . You have to bring the back to the front, and this front to the back.

MAE: (Laughs.)

SM: See, I still remember

MAE: There you go! (Laughs.)

SM: You know what I'm sayin'?

MAE: Mmm hmmm, so it would help to have a little refresher class.

SM: Yeah (laughs).

MAE: Or kinda, class in general

SM: But uh

MAE: Mm hmm.

SM: That's just a difficult, but you know, mainly Alyssa, she's old enough to, uh, . . . be responsible to be on her

MAE: Mm hmm.

SM: Responsibility, I'd say that's K through . . . It was easy! Well, K . . . because the teacher used to give the homework, ours being English, and theirs being Spanish. You know

MAE: They were doing double the work at the time.

SM: Yeah.

MAE: But now as they get older . . .

SM: Yeah.

MAE: It doesn't happen so much

SM: Mm hmmm. I guess if ya, I never request it to, so maybe that's another thing, too.

MAE: Mm hmmm.

SM: See? How would I know if it would help me?

MAE: Mm hmmm.

SM: But, you know, it depends (S. Martin, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Other suggestions parents had were regarding increased facilities. Since the school is still on the same campus as Coral Ridge, the playgrounds, multipurpose room and cafeteria are all shared and parents expressed the desire to be autonomous. Several parents expressed the desire to see the school expand, to have more programs and their own campus, with more students. At the same time, parents were cognizant of the struggle that a school has in the start-up stages; that funding is an issue, and expansion is a question of time.

Desire for a More Culturally Inclusive Campus

Parent after parent discussed their desire for a more culturally inclusive campus, stating that the main focus was on the Mexican or Latino culture. For example, when Alyssa's mother was asked if she knew of any activities focused on African Americans, she replied,

SM: Well, I don't think it's really a focus on umm, African American, I just think it's a focus on the Spanish inherit—you the Spanish, you know the allowing the, it's basically more for Hispanics than they are for anybody. Cause you know, I don't see Black history over there . . . (Laughs.). (S. Martin, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

Parents were quick to say they understood the "double duty" that being in a bilingual school entailed and did not give the impression that they were complaining. In fact they recognized that other schools did not address African American culture either

and, therefore, did not want to “pick on” LILS for not doing so. However, if there was the option, they would like to see more elements of the African American culture, as well as other cultures, on campus.

DB: I mean when you’re in an Immersion school, you’ve got, you’ve got, you’ve got double duty. You’ve got to learn the national origin history, the cultural history and origins, and now we’re talking about you know, African Americans, which is a part of American history, but yet at the same, um, you already had a double duty.

MAE: Yeah.

DB: I know it’s a challenge . . . But um, being able to take note and shed light on the African Americans experience is definitely important for ALL students.

(D. Brown, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

They gave examples in particular of more inclusion of African Americans in the form of activities and personnel. One of the important aspects that came out of their discussion about more inclusion of African American elements was that the parents would generally like to keep a positive spin on the information, as opposed to it being information about the past that only depicts African Americans in the role of slaves. This information emerged with several parents:

MAE: Mm hmm. And do you have an opinion about activities that focus on African Americans?

ML: No, as long as it’s positive communication. I mean, as long as it’s positive. I mean, they, well, no, let me back up. There has to be some negative, because they have to understand the world, the culture, they have to understand everything, so it can’t always be positive, but if they approach it in a positive manner . . . say, hey, this is where they started, this is how they started, and, but there is this particular people who have stood up for that right and turned it around to the good, and kind of look at it that way. I think, you know, I have no problem with it as long as they, you know, communicate it right. (M. López, personal communication, March 3, 2008)

Ms. Thomas discussed the same desire to have a positive effect on her child:

RT: Well, you do because you want your kid to have that positive effect. Or have that, positive, you know, something positive to look at. Rather . . . there’s nothing wrong with knowing your history.

JT: Uh-huh.

RT: We all need to know our history,

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

RT: Where we came from. But know that, you know what I mean, that something was achieved through all this, through all the struggles, through everything they were put through, you know, they overcame it (R. Thomas, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Mr. Thomas echoed this sentiment and emphasized the importance of telling the whole story as opposed to just part of it.

JT: I would like ‘em to focus more on achievements, African American achievements than slavery.

MAE: Mm.

RT: Mm hmm.

JT: You know? And the slave trade, and all things like that because, I mean

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: That’s a rough thing to introduce to a kid at that age. You know what I mean? And, it’s, I think a little better for them to be positive, to introduce positive things

RT: Right.

JT: Of achievements, like Jesse Owens, Martin Luther King, people like that, instead of startin’ it from right there, you know?

MAE: Mm hmm mm hmm.

JT: But that’s the only way the school district has been all throughout the years,

MAE: Mm hmm.

Mr. Thomas went on to say that Black history should not be taught “half way.”

JT: ‘Cause the, in school they only taught part of the story. That’s the whole thing. It’s only part of the story.

RT: Mm hmm.

JT: The part of the story you tell, you can’t just tell that part, because then the kids don’t get the full story.

RT: Right.

MAE: Right.

RT: You know what I mean? It’s a lesson learned through the whole

JT: I realized as a young man after, after high school, after high school I had to go find out for myself.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: I had to go take classes at city college to find out the real stories and you know, well, they said this was a two-day thing at school, and it’s a whole three months of a semester of college.

RT: Right . . . Right . . . Like I’m still studying this?

JT: Yeah, so I mean

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: If they're gonna teach it, they should teach it, if they're not, then they should you know, not just teach the certain parts.

MAE: Sure.

JT: And they should be more detailed in it, and if not, then you know, focus on the achievements . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: . . . that came out of it. (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Parents were very open about and seemed genuinely interested in emphasizing not only the African American experience on campus but also including other cultures and backgrounds.

MAE: And you mentioned Black History Month.

KB: Yes, I think they had a assembly, and they um had some people come out and speak.

MAE: Mm hmm.

KB: Um . . . um . . . I wasn't there.

MAE: Mm hmm. Sure. Sure.

KB: But . . . yeah, but yeah, not, not too much, yeah.

MAE: Mm hmm.

KB: Not, not too much. The focus is not on, a lot on African American. It's mostly Latino, Um . . . they, we . . . I guess that's OK . . . but they're gonna incorporate that in, more into the school year round, and not have it be just a certain month.

MAE: That, that's a . . . Are you saying that that's a plan right now?

KB: Yeah. Yeah.

MAE: Oh, OK. That, is that somethin' that's

KB: All cultures, not just, you know, just so we can be culturally sound. 'Cause that's the focus of our school is to be able to um, relate to all cultures. (K. Brown, personal communication, February 26, 2008)

Ms. Martin mentioned it made her feel better as an African American parent to have her child in the program, but that she would liked to have other cultures too.

SM: Well, it's good 'cause as an African American parent, and her learning a different language, it, you know, makes you feel a little bit better. As, whereas, you know, I just kinda wish, some—more parents in different cultures, you know,

MAE: Mm hmm.

SM: try, you know

MAE: Mm hmm.

SM: But, I guess it's a small school, and you can only accept so many (S. Martin, February 13, 2008)

Parents mentioned there should be much more recruiting of African American families and others as well as students from other backgrounds so as to have more of a balance at the school. Parents also shared, however, they thought that much of the reason why African American families did not participate in the program was that they were not aware of it. One parent, originally from the neighborhood where the school was located, ventured to say that he highly doubted that folks living in the neighborhood were even aware of the school. He thought that reaching out to this population could mean more students would attend from the geographical area instead of coming from outside the area. He thought it would be helpful to find out how many African Americans at the school are from the area versus outside the area.

DB: As it relates to the African American community, I just, I doubt very seriously that they're, that they're probably aware that that school even exists. And then, when I share the same experience with you know African Americans that I deal with, or you know residential auditors, I mean . . . they don't have a clue. They don't have a clue. And, and that's not to say that they don't have the idea to expand their children's education in bilingual settings. Um, you know I'm sure it's limited too, because you're, you're dealing the hand that you're dealt.
MAE: Mm hmm.

DB: But I just think there is not an overall awareness that, um, you know, that is out there. I mean, I know it's tough, but it's just . . . but from a community based . . . there may be um . . . I mean I think there some community things that the school does. I mean I know they have a garden, you know there's other outreach things that they may have done, um, but you know, I would just personally like to see more of an awareness because it's pulling from that area and that location . . .
MAE: Mm hmm.

DB: . . . um, and spark an awareness. (D. Brown, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

Diversity in Perspectives on Ebonics

Engaging in dialogues regarding student use of Ebonics required an unforeseen intermediate step—engaging in dialogue with parents regarding their definitions and opinions of the topic. These dialogues exposed both the very sensitive nature of the topic,

as well as the variation in parent interpretation/definition. Parents demonstrated completely different perspectives when asked to explain their understanding of Ebonics and also when asked to answer whether their child utilized it. There was neither consistent terminology (although most utilized the term “Ebonics”), nor a consistent definition utilized for Ebonics. Therefore, discussing the children’s use of what was consequently defined and interpreted inconsistently was challenging.

Elena’s dad provided an explanation of Ebonics from his perspective.

MAE: Let’s talk a little bit, just about, um, sort of English, sort of informal English that is spoken, uh, it’s kinda identified more in the Black community. Do you, is there a particular name that you call it?

RJ: No, no.

MAE: No, it’s just sort of that’s just you understand that you . . .

RJ: Yeah.

MAE: . . . speak a certain way and . . .

RJ: I’ll . . . yeah; I’ll call it colloquialism if you want to call it that.

MAE: Uh-huh.

RJ: You know, I don’t call it Ebonics, I don’t call it . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . anything, you know.

MAE: Mm hmm.

Later in the conversation, he explained further:

RJ: . . . it’s a little somethin’ a little heavier than colloquialism. I mean, it’s it’s it’s a language, and it’s um . . . I mean it’s a, I mean, it’s it’s it’s a language that uh, folks, you know, developed and were able to get by on, I mean, you know and were understood. So, you know, it’s a definite language, although folks would—might debate that. But, you know, there’s definitely . . .

MAE: Mmm hmm.

RJ: . . . transformation of words and they have their meanings, you know, so . . . I would say that, you know, what they have, what they share more is not necessarily Ebonics, but more colloquialism.

MAE: Mm hmm, mmhmm, mmhmm. And so for you, according to this definition, then you . . . would you say it has a positive, a neutral or sorta negative connotation for you personally? Ebonics.

RJ: Um . . . nah . . . Not negative, I mean, it definitely has, um . . . uh, I think it has its place. (R. Jones, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Keshawn's dad shared a more philosophical perspective, in that Ebonics cannot and should not be defined, and it had the potential of being positive or negative depending on how it was used.

RT: For me it's kinda like a form of slang. Not slang, but . . . yeah, I mean, slang in its own type of way.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: But . . .

JT: It's just, that's it's just slang—it, it changes every day, so you can't really put, put a title on it or anything.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: That's why it . . . it's kinda funny that they wanna put a title on it.

MAE: Yeah.

JT: So you know, 'cause you really can't be, you can't really try to come up with a dictionary about it . . .

MAE: (Laughs.)

RT: (Laughs.)

JT: . . . and, and the words, one word to the month before can mean one thing and the next month it can mean somethin' else.

RT: (Laughs.)

MAE: Yeah.

JT: And I mean. It wasn't . . . it's not meant for anybody else to understand. I mean . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: Just goes to show you need to watch what you say. (Laughs.)

JT: Yeah. And I mean it was never intended for . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: . . . the mass public to know what it means anyway. Point blank, to be honest with you, it was never intended for kids to use or for anybody else to even know what you're talkin' about.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: It was a form of communication in the street, and that's what it still is, and it'll change every day.

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

JT: And that's basically what it is.

MAE: And so, um, do you, uh, have an opinion, like for you does it have a positive, a negative, positive connotation, negative connotation or neutral?

JT: It was a positive thing for me, 'cause it kinda somethin' that I don't know if you wanna say that Black people own.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: You know, and being, being that they teach you in school that the first thing you hear about that you were a slave, you know, it's good to own somethin' . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: So, you know, and that's the way it is. I mean, they've developed a whole industry of music behind it, a whole culture behind it, and it's somethin' that Black people own.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: I'd say it can have both effects. It can have a positive effect, but it also can have a negative if you're usin' it in that manner.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RT: It all depends.

MAE: Mm hmm. The way it's used?

RT: Yes. (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Devon and Lakeisha's mom shared an alternative view of Ebonics, by stating she considered it slang.

MAE: Ok, now, in terms of sort of the informal variety of um, uh, language or English that some, um, not only African Americans, but there are other students sometimes use it, I think you had referred to as cool speak, or...

KB: Slang.

MAE: Slang. Would you say that he uses that . . . language sometimes?

KB: Um, he doesn't use it when he speaks to me,

MAE: Mm hmm.

KB: But he probably uses it with his friends at school.

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

KB: Yeah.

MAE: And, um, and so, and what you would call it, then, is, you generally tend to call it . . .

KB: . . . slang.

MAE: Slang, ok.

KB: Like the popular slang . . .

MAE: Sure.

KB: . . . popular words that kids are speaking these days. (K. Brown, personal communication, February 26, 2008)

Alyssa's mom also shared the same view.

MAE: And, does she speak English any differently, as far as you know at home than she does at school?

SM: No, she's fine. She speaks regular English.

MAE: And what about um, like sort of the English that's used a lot in the African American community that some people might call like Ebonics or Black English or . . .

SM: No, she don't use all that. She don't do slang.

MAE: Ok.

SM: None of that. She speaks in English. (S. Martin, personal communication, March 27, 2008)

A couple of parents shared that they used Ebonics themselves. These parents were bidialectal. For example, Janée's mom stated she and her daughter used the language as their connection to one another.

MAE: Would you say from time to time that she might use this [Ebonics]?

MF: Yes.

MAE: OK.

MF: Yes, 'cause she hears me use it! (Laughs.)

MAE: Oh, OK! (Laughs.) Yeah, yeah, right.

MF: Yeah, she likes to—to copy me sometimes.

MAE: That's right. (Laughs.) Is there any . . . do you call it anything in particular?

MF: No.

MAE: OK.

MF: No.

MAE: It's just . . .

MF: Just, just our . . .

MAE: . . . Somethin' you understand . . .

MF: . . . Just us.

MAE: . . . between you . . .

MF: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

She clarified a bit more that she and Janée used Ebonics when they communicated with one another in a relaxed manner.

MF: . . . I guess it's kind of because it's just us and we just . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: . . . that's how we talk . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

MF: . . . and communicate and, you know, even though I am pretty proper at times, but we use, you know, it's relaxed . . .

MAE: Yeah.

MF: . . . the relaxed mode for us. (M. Foster, personal communication, January 22, 2008)

Others gave the impression that they could use it or had used it in their own experiences and that there was a place for it. However, most generally did not use it. Elena's dad shared that he did not usually use it, although he definitely could. He had an affinity for it and shared somewhat about the inappropriate negative perceptions that non-Ebonics speakers have of Ebonics speakers.

MAE: Mm hmm, mmhmm, mmhmm. And so for you, according to this definition, then you . . . would you say it has a positive, a neutral or sorta negative connotation for you personally? Ebonics.

RJ: Um . . . nah . . . Not negative, I mean, it definitely has, um . . . uh, I think it has its place, you know, it's kind of uh, 'cause from time to time, like you might, well I will hear it at work and most of the folks that I work with are White folks and so . . . you know, what they are understanding and what I am understanding are two different things (Laughs.), you know? And uh, and so, you know, ever once in a while somebody might say something, and I says, "Well, you know, if you don't know what you're talkin' about, you better ask somebody" or "You better 'aks" somebody" (Laughs.) you know? And, so, and, uh, you know, but other than that, it's like um, yeah, I . . . it . . . Yeah, I—I kinda, I kinda like um, going to that spot where you know, suddenly you're—you're, you're immersed in it . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . you know, and so and you're listenin' to a conversation where you're on the scene of an accident or somebody's sick and they're, they're givin' ya information and so forth and so . . . and somethin' is said, and I, and I can see, "Excuse me?" (Laughs.) You know, that kind of a thing, you know. Or, or, or maybe somebody afterwards might say somethin', they might repeat what they heard, you know, and it's like, you know, and it's like, yeah, you know, and they might even ask me, you know, you know, "Where, where do you get that from?" and I just say, it's not like you go someplace and pick it up, it's what, you know, you had to use at the time.

MAE: So for you, do you feel like you can move pretty freely, er, uh, comfortably in and out, as you need to and, depending on the context whether, you know . . . 'Cause like the way we're speaking right now . . .

RJ: Right. Right.

MAE: . . . in general, versus the way you would speak how you're describin', and you know, in that what you could, for you it's a comfortable thing to move in and out of that . . .

RJ: And even to say that it's comfortable, you know, it's like, um, uh . . . well, I—I had a, a, a buddy that worked on the fire department, and he's, he's retired now and um, uh, his uh, his mode of speakin' or trends, uh, communicating was, uh . . . I loved it because he only had one way of speakin'. And a lot of folks were like . . . you know.

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm. And what's that, what was that?

RJ: Oh, it was just heavy, it was just heavy you know, whether it be slang, whether it be Ebonics . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . whether it be, you know . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . colloquialisms, just you know . . .

MAE: Mm hmm. That was the way he did it.

RJ: . . . just throwin' it out there . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . and um, you know, and finally one guy, you know, he said to me, he was the captain. He was the captain and he says to me, he goes, he goes, “You don’t, you don’t buy all that crap do you?” and I said, and so I’m laughin’ to myself . . .

MAE: (Laughs.)

RJ: . . . ‘cause I’m drivin’ along, you know, and he’s sittin’ alongside me and he goes, and he, and I said, “Buy into crap?” and he says, “Well you know all that stuff he says, you know, you’re not buyin’ that,” he says. And I says, you know, I says, “I know a lot of this stuff doesn’t, you know, you’re not gettin’ it at all, and, and, a lot of it is goin’ by. You’re just, figurin’ he’s just—he’s loud and, he’s just . . .” I says, “But,” I says, “unless you actually know what he’s saying,” I said, “The man, what the man is sayin’ is dead on. I says—so you need to decipher what’s bein’ thrown at you and how to receive it.” I says, “But,” I says, yeah. It’s so, it’s almost like back in the old *Sanford and Son* shows you know, where you had the Black cop and the White cop (Laughs.) . . .

MAE: (Laughs.)

RJ: . . . and the guy, and you know, when you had the Black cop, he had to translate for the White cop, you know. You know, so here I was, I was translatin’ for him, what, you know what he was talkin’ about, you know. And this was on our own time, you know, where the two of us are I the cab and we’re drivin’ some place and he’s askin’ me, and I’m like, “Oh, no” I says, um, yeah because what he’s hearing, he’s not hearing what’s being said He’s hearing a lot of loudness, and to him, this is like, and it sounds like an uneducated Black person speakin’. And I’m like, “Oh no.” I say, “You gotta be careful.” I says, “To you that’s what that sounds like.” This man is tellin’ you everything, and it’s right on the money. I says, as a matter of fact, this man here has a pulse on this fire department. He has the pulse. He knows what’s goin’ around everywhere. And what you need to do is just be quiet and listen to what he’s saying. You know? And um, but, it was it was, and, and this guy was the type of guy where if you said somethin’ crazy if you said somethin’ foul, you know, you were gonna hear about it . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . and he’d be right up in your face lettin’ you know, and so a lot of folks didn’t like him so much.

MAE: Mmm. The chief? Which guy?

RJ: The friend of mine.

MAE: Oh, the friend, OK, yeah.

RJ: The friend of mine, yeah.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: You know, if you said somethin’ off the wall, he was gonna let you know, and he’d be right up in your face about it. And that intimidated a lot of folks, and uh, and so, uh, a lot of folks were kinda stand-offish to him.

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

RJ: You know . . . I loved that about him you know. He was, you know, uh

MAE: (Laughs.)

RJ: You know, he had to get somethin’ correct, you know, he’d go up to some per . . . he’d go up to some person and he’d get right in their face and he’d say it nice

and low so just the two of ‘em could hear it, no one else, and he got his message across. (Laughs.)

MAE: (Laughs.) It sounds like you were tryin’ to communicate to the chief that this style of speaking is not . . . it’s not just what’s being said, but it’s communication style in general.

RJ: Right, right, right.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: It’s definitely, you know, if you’re not from . . . there . . . you know, chances are you may not get it.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: And you may have to ask for translation (Laughs.).

MAE: (Laughs.)

RJ: You know, but, um, yeah, but, it’s a . . . a . . . I mean it’s another language.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: So, um

MAE: OK. Mm hmm.

RJ: Yeah, it’d be kind of crazy if I hear by daughters comin’ home speakin’ Ebonics. (Laughs.) I’m like, “Where’d you get that?”

MAE: (Laughs.)

RJ: You know. Every once in a while they’ll say somethin’ kinda goofy, and I’m like, “What?” and they’ll start laughing and uh

MAE: So, uh, within the family it’s not something you would necessarily use with, with the girls per se

RJ: No.

MAE: Mm hmm.

B: No. As a matter of fact, if I am speakin’ with someone who is usin’ it, I wouldn’t even, I wouldn’t even use it. You know. Not that I . . . I . . . I . . . It . . . I . . . because I DON’T, you know, you know, I HAVE in the past. You know, I remember, I can remember back when I was like, “Man” And I can remember even thinkin’, you know, “What did that mean?” you know I mean, there were some things that were just bein’ said, you know, and it was like, uh, uh, I mean even now, I remember back you know, when I was in high school and, you know, my first couple years in college, you know, and, and we were at some gathering, whether it be a party

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . or whether it be a game or whatever and we were standin’ around and we were talkin’, and a lot of things were being said and I think back—what were we sayin’? What do these things mean? You know, it was like, ’cause there was no really break down word for word, but at the time we understood each other’s conversation (Laughs.) You know

MAE: (Laughs.)

RJ: Now that I’m older, now that I’m older, I’m thinkin’ what were we sayin’?

MAE: (Laughs.) So now, you’re just in . . . is it that you’re in contexts now, where it’s not somethin’ that you . . . I mean, was that a conscious decision on your part to decide or not decide to

RJ: Nah, nah, not really, not really, I mean, it's where your world takes you, you know. It's like, there was a point where, you know, where I started travelin', and that was, that was you know, big for me. I just love goin' other places and love, you know hearin' other languages, I mean. I got to Germany, and I got to France and then went down to the Virgin Islands, and then to Mexico, and it's like, uh . . . I like, I like to get around, and I like to be where the people are,

MAE: Mm.

RJ: You know. Whether I understand them or not, I just want to be where the people are. And, and if it turns up when we're stuck doin', we're doin' sign language, then we're, you know, just doin' sign language, you know.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: But . . . 'cause it's just the communication. So I—I think I probably just—I—I moved to, you know, another place, and so . . . you know.

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: The buddies I used to hang around with, everybody got serious, startin' doin', (Laughs.) gettin' jobs and stuff, and started goin' places, you know. We just dispersed . . .

MAE: Mm hmm.

RJ: . . . disbanded, you know. Folks goin' away to college and what have you . . .

MAE: Sure.

RJ: You know, you got wrapped up into life.

MAE: Mm hmm. (R. Jones, personal communication, February 28, 2008)

Parents in general did not deny the existence of Ebonics, but really stressed the importance of their children's ability to use academic English. Several parents interpreted Ebonics as slang, or something heard in rap songs. Some of the parents had very strong opinions about Ebonics. These parents were extremely opposed to their children using it, and gave the researcher the impression it was a street language to be avoided. One of the parents invited to participate in the study even refused to do so because his son thought that the research assumed that the participants spoke Ebonics and didn't use academic English, despite efforts on the part of the researcher to explain that this was not the case. Devon's dad agreed there was a time and a place for African Americans in general to use Ebonics, but didn't want his children using it at all.

MAE: OK. And would you say that, um, either of them speak English any differently at home than at school?

DB: No, not particularly.

MAE: OK, and um, we're um, in particular, in regards to, um, what some parents call English or style that um, African American students and other students sometimes use and refer to as coolspeak, or some people refer to it as the vernacular or Black English, uh . . .

DB: Mm hmm.

MAE: You know, different names are given to it. Um . . . would you say that either Lakeisha or Devon use that style of speaking?

DB: Well, yeah, like slang, basically?

MAE: Yeah, I guess, I guess it would, um, I guess it depends on how you define it. It's sort of the . . . the question is around whether, you know, I guess, I guess if that's what, you know, you would term it, then that's fine. So, for you, what does actually slang mean? What definition would you give it?

DB: Uh, my definition would be, um, kind of a, jovial, you know like a hip type of English. No, but goin' back to your original question, uh, no, we, we as parents don't allow just, you know, supposedly jive talk to, to kind of take precedence or place . . .

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: . . . in the home setting. We're quick to reprim . . . we're quick to reprimand that.

MAE: OK. And then, and so, any other kind of situation, like, uh, outside the home, you know, other contexts, you think that would be something they might use?

DB: That they might use?

MAE: Yeah.

DB: Amongst their peers they may, but at the same time, uh, they know what's acceptable and what's not acceptable

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: And you know, bein' that we're quick to correct them, you know, if they're speaking like that, primarily Devon, and if they're speaking like that . . .

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: That's not acceptable. You know we won't tolerate it.

MAE: OK. So then would it be fair to say that um, like for, for, uh, as parents, then, that would have a kind of a negative connotation, the use of the sort of the vernacular, or coolspeak, or whatever it's c . . . slang.

DB: Yeah, I mean, in the sense that we're just quick to make sure that a distinction is made that that type of English is, is not going to be used um, loosely or take the place of proper English where proper English needs to be spoken.

MAE: Gotcha.

DB: Because, I mean, you know, plain and simple, some kids don't know, you know, the limits.

MAE: Sure. Sure.

DB: Let me put it to you this way . . . As an African . . . As an African American, yes, there's two, two languages, I mean you hear Ebonics all the time.

MAE: Mm hmm.

DB: Um, and then, of course proper English, um, and as a culture, yes, we have our own so called slang, you know communication that, amongst ourselves we can communicate in such a way that is, uh, acceptable.

MAE: Sure.

DB: I'm speaking like peers, or like where I was comin' up or whatever. However, does that translate into the workplace, does that translate into a professional environment? No it does not.

MAE: Mm hmm.

DB: And make sure that those distinctions, a distinction is made so that the kids don't feel that that's their, you know, what they're saying or what they're trying to articulate is the proper way to do it. No. That . . . we, we, as parents will correct them, admonish them to make sure that they are speaking properly, and you know as they become more of a young adult and that kind of thing, um, they'll know, and they do know,

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: What's acceptable, what's not acceptable. But, as a matter of fact, it's no, we're not gonna practice that, 'cause that lowers the guard, that lowers the standard, and that's not acceptable in our household.

MAE: Mm hmm, and so it sounds like for you, it's a, sounds like it's a question of context, that, in the household, um, you know it's somethin' not somethin' that you would, you would use or accept or whatever, but like, perhaps in other contexts with other African Americans, um, that it might be, depending on the context . . .

DB: Not for...

MAE: . . . it be acceptable.

DB: Not for them, because it's almost, it's a double standard. Oh, you can talk that way with, you know, uh, Steve, and he's African American, and it's OK, when you're, you know, just outside playin' basketball or somethin', versus takin' a test or in the school yard and what not, but no, it's a double standard, so, we, we, we just don't tolerate it. I mean it exists and they know it exists because they hear it amongst their peers all the time.

MAE: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm. OK.

DB: No secret, no secret whatsoever there. They, they they know it . . .

MAE: OK.

DB: . . . but again, we're just quick to bring distinction and, you know, where did you hear that, that that type of language, and, and, you know, that's not how we speak.

MAE: OK. OK, so, in terms of the language that Devon and Lakeisha prefer to use, um, what would you say they prefer to use, for example with their friends?

DB: With their friends amongst each other?

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: Amongst each other, um, well, you know for Devon, I'm, I'm, I'm sure that he probably pushes the envelope with his friends, just to, and it might be a situation of acceptance . . .

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: . . . but he clearly knows it's not acceptable you know, for the parents that are in our surrounding. Although he does slip, and when he does, he knows, so if he's gonna do it, and be disrespectful and do it anyway, outside of our presence, obviously you know that'll catch up with him but . . .

MAE: Uh-huh.

DB: . . . and there will be consequences, but, uh, but I, at the same time, you know, there's, there's a, there's a level of, you know, again with his peers and what not, but I'm sure the standards that we hold true and dear are not the same as others.

MAE: Sure. So, in terms of um, like if I were to ask you for different situations like with their friends, at school, you know reading books, etcetera . . . so for Devon and for Lakeisha, in general with friends, they probably use sort of . . . what, I guess you could say, academic English, Spanish, and slang, or Ebonics, you can you know . . .

DB: Yeah, I think Lakeisha is a little bit more structured . . .

MAE: OK.

DB: . . . and um, you know, again, I mean, and you know, it, we stress that our kids be leaders and not followers.

MAE: Sure.

DB: And uh, tryin' to bein' a follower is tryin' to blend in and say things that other people are saying, but that doesn't make it right, you know..

MAE: OK.

DB: So, we're a little bit more apt with Devon to make sure that that's the case. (D. Brown, personal communication, March 17, 2008)

The researcher observed that a few parents actually utilized primarily what is considered the linguistic definition of Ebonics in their dialogues or every day interactions and at the same time clearly stated their opposition to their children's use of Ebonics, as they defined it. For example, Alyssa's mom stated that this wasn't acceptable in her household, although the researcher observed her to use it in regular conversation.

MAE: And, does she speak English any differently, as far as you know at home than she does at school?

SM: No, she's fine. She speaks regular English.

MAE: And what about um, like sort of the English that's used a lot in the African American community that some people might call like Ebonics or Black English or...

SM: No, she don't use all that. She don't do slang.

MAE: Ok.

SM: None of that. She speaks in English. (S. Martin, personal communication, March 27, 2008)

Later in the conversation she explains her opinion about the use of Ebonics, as she had defined it.

MAE: How about in your family?

SM: Uh, she use the English, no one speak Spanish in our family.

MAE: mm hmm. And any other family members would, any family members use sort of the different version of um, slang or Ebonics or anything like that in your family?

SM: No. We were raised not, we were raised not to use those words.

MAE: mm hmm

SM: (Laughs.)

MAE: So for you, the, when you say those words, do you mean like...

SM: Well, slang.

MAE: Oh, ok.

SM: We're not, you, we were not brought up to use all slang, Ebonic. (S. Martin, personal communication, March 27, 2008)

She went on to explain further:

MAE: Ok. And any variety . . . you said she doesn't use much of the, or she doesn't use any or at all?

SM: None at all. No slang at all.

MAE: And so.

SM: If she does use it, she doesn't use it around me.

MAE: So you definitely have a perspective about it.

SM: Right.

MAE: For you it has a negative connotation then?

SM: Well, it's not a negative, it's just the thing is, I don't use slang, so why should she use slang?

MAE: mm hmm

SM: and I don't know slang, so why would she talk to me in slang? (S. Martin, personal communication, March 27, 2008)

William and Michelle's dad utilized Ebonics with the researcher and was identified by teachers as an Ebonics speaker; however, he stated he did not agree with his children's use of Ebonics. When asked if and when his children used it, he stated, "With their brothers and sisters and at their mom's house. I don't allow them to use slang. I want them to use proper English. Different households do different things . . . I don't like them using it" (S. Wilson, personal communication, March 15, 2008).

Keshawn's parents openly recognized his use of Ebonics when asked, even stating they utilized it also. They seemed to find amusement in how other children used it too.

JT: Oh, definitely!

MAE: Uh-huh.

JT: All the time! She has a very big family. And he has about...How many cousins does he have?

RT: I don't know—a lot

JT: And you could have a combination of maybe three to about eleven at that house down the street from the school at any given day.

RT: Everybody goes to grandma's house. (Laughs.)

JT: Everybody goes to grandma's house. And when he's there, I mean, he's, he's that.

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: You know, they speak, and then when he's with his football team, and when he's with his other friends, and...

MAE: Mm hmm.

JT: Yeah, he does use it. We, everybody uses it

MAE: So you, you'd refer to it as Ebonics, I mean maybe you don't even say...

RT: Right.

MAE: But if you were talking about my question to you, then you would say Ebonics?

RT: Ebonics.

JT: Ebonics.

MAE: So what language does Keshawn prefer to use with his friends?

JT: It depends on what set of friends it is... (Laughs.).

RT: But . . .

JT: Even when they're . . .

RT: Even when they're here, you know what I'm sayin'...

JT: They speak English.

RT: They speak English.

JT: They'll speak a Spanish word every now and then.

RT: Yeah, yeah, we'll notice and yeah, I'm l—laughin'—what'd they say?

JT: They speak English all the time.

RT: But, yeah, I see English more . . .

JT: 'Cause some of his Mexican friends speak the Ebonics also, so . . . (Laughs.). Like Joel.

RT: Joel (Laughs.).

JT: Joel, Joel, on the corner . . . he speaks three languages—

MAE: Mm hmmm.

JT: He speaks English, Spanish, and African American Ebonics . . .

MAE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JT: . . . so you gotta check the Spanish kids too, 'cause they can go on it too . . . it's funny!! (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

However, when asked to explain about their own use of Ebonics, Keshawn's dad seemed to contradict what he stated in the first exchange about everyone using Ebonics when he said neither he nor Keshawn's mother used it. They did, however, express the importance of understanding Ebonics as a way to stay in touch with one's culture.

MAE: And so do you have an opin—it sounds like you definitely had an att—I mean an opinion about sort of using Standard English and Ebonics.

JT: Yeah, I mean, that's fine if they want to go off by themselves...

RT: I mean . . . there's a time for it . . .

JT: . . . with friends, you know . . .

RT: It's ok to know it, there's a time for it, but the, that's not your language, that's not how you . . .

JT: . . . speak... . . .

RT: . . . speak, that's not how you get a job, that's not how you talk to your teacher, or . . .

JT: . . . or anybody that's older than you, you know your elders, your aunts, your uncles, nobody. But if you and your cousins, your friends, go off, and you guys, you know you speak more . . .

RT: . . . but keep it at a respectable level also.

JT: . . . keep it very respectable level and don't address us that way . . . you know . . .

MAE: Mm-hmm. And you said between you, err err as a family.

RT: . . . family . . .

MAE: You didn't really use Ebonics . . .

RT: No.

JT: No.

MAE: But like between you, would you ever use it?

RT: No, we don't . . .

JT: Between us two?

RT: We don't, I'm all...do we?

JT: I went to Catholic school, and she went to Catholic school, so it's not really in us to do it. I graduated from Saint Peters, and she went to . . . where was it?

RT: I went to private school for seven, kindergarten to seventh grade, and then went to high school, so . . .

JT: And I went to Catholic school from third to graduation.

RT: So that just wasn't an option for us, you know, you . . . I don't know, it just wasn't an option . . .

MAE: So when you are with family, would you find yourselves using it?

RT: I mean, you know what I 'm saying . . .

JT: Not with like your mom . . .

RT: No.

JT: . . . or your dad . . .

RT: I don't sit here and hold a conversation. If my cousin younger address . . . says somethin' to me, I know what she's talkin' about,

MAE: Yeah.

RT: I know how to relate to it.

MAE: Sure, sure, sure . . .

RT: You know, so . . . I mean I may address it, but I'm not gonna sit here and just, we're not gonna have a conversation . . .

MAE: Uh-huh.

JT: Me and her sit here and talk; we don't speak that way to each other. It's somethin' you want to be aware about. There are things you want to know about. There are certain danger signals you would not be able to decipher if you didn't know what people were talkin' about.

RT: Right.

JT: And that's the one thing you don't want to lose is touch with your culture. Because your culture is still part of you, and the culture is gonna determine who you are, and sometimes to be around that culture you better know certain things about it. You know, and it's just . . . I don't know . . .

MAE: Mm hmm mm hmmm mm hmm.

JT: Common sense things.

RT: Right. I mean, good to know . . . (J. Thomas, personal communication, February 13, 2008)

One parent shared her opinion about the validity of Ebonics, although her daughter didn't really utilize it per se. She was a teacher with training in bilingual education and, therefore, her opinion reflected sensitivity toward different varieties of language.

MAE: And do you have a particular attitude towards . . . uh . . . Standard English or other varieties of English, such as Black English?

MH: My attitude is I hope that she has a very strong belief that they are all valuable, and they all have um . . . they're all equally respected. I—I think that in certain settings one language would probably be the optimal one to use, and I think that just being aware that that is the case, that there is more than one form, and it doesn't mean that one form is better than the other. And even the same goes for Spanish we know there's lots of different levels, there's the Spanglish, the Spanish that I use growing up, conjugating, you know, adding the ing to words, in Spanish, you know, just . . .

MAE: Right.

MH: . . . creating that . . . because you know you're surviving in that language and you're adapting to . . .

MAE: Right.

MH: . . . whatever that is. And if I were to ever speak another form of Spanish with the people I grew up with, they'd look at me like . . . you know . . . that wouldn't have been valued in that setting.

MAE: Sure.

MH: So, I think it's important to know that where you are and what you can use and to be able to move in and out of those settings and...yeah.

MAE: Mm hmm, mhmm.

MH: . . . because each one is just as important...

MAE: Mm hmm, mmm hmm.

MH: So (M. Hernández, personal communication, February 25, 2008)

Variety in perspectives summarizes parent comments regarding Ebonics. Parents shared neither a consistent terminology nor a definition of Ebonics nor a single opinion about its use. However, they consistently expressed the importance of first and foremost having a command of academic English. Some parents had very strong opinions against their children's use of it, particularly those who were primarily or solely Ebonics speakers themselves. Those who were bidialectal generally expressed the importance of context and stated that it could be used in both positive and negative ways. There was little evidence that they identified a relationship between their children's language learning experiences in Spanish and English at school with their children's use or understanding of Ebonics.

Parents shared their perspectives about the presence and inclusion of African Americans on campus, and it was clear that many shared the same perspective that the campus emphasis was on one culture: the Latino culture. They expressed a desire to have more recruiting of African Americans and students of other cultures. They also agreed about the importance of ensuring that education about African Americans was done in a positive manner, although they were clear that they understood how the school was limited in terms of what it could do, considering that two languages have to be taught. They had a clear vision of the importance of the inclusion of other cultures and experiences, and in terms of Ebonics, had very different perspectives except for how they agreed on the importance of mastering academic English.

Parent Summary

The primary purpose for this participatory research was to discover the reasons that parents of African American students in grades 4 through 8 participating in a Two-Way Immersion school continued to participate in the program, to discover their perspectives and opinions about the program, and to discover their perceptions of their children's linguistic and cultural experiences. Parents provided their perspectives about what they liked or did not like about the program, why they had continued participating, and what their perceptions were regarding their child's linguistic and cultural experiences.

The findings show that the parents kept their children in the program because they were content with participating in a bilingual program, appreciated the school's positive social climate, and were interested in the present and future rewards of bilingualism. Secondly, the parent perspective regarding the linguistic experiences and perspectives of the students reflected overall satisfaction (with a few suggestions) as well as a desire for a more culturally inclusive campus and varying perspectives about Ebonics and its use.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The last chapter of this dissertation restates the problem, reviews the theoretical rationale for this study, summarizes the results of the study, and offers discussion and conclusions about the findings as well as recommendations for further research. The purpose for this study was to hear the voices of African American students and their parents about their perceptions of and experiences in the Two-Way Spanish Immersion program, as well as their reasons for remaining in the program up to now. The aim of the research was to identify perceptions, experiences, and reasons that could aid the school in discovering what would be most helpful in facilitating success for African American students participating in the program. The findings of the study were closely related to the statement of the problem because the students were in grades 4 through 8, were identified as being of African descent, were exposed to Ebonics, and were participating in a TWI program with 94% of its population composed of Latino and African American students in an urban area.

The review of the literature showed that, despite the rich intellectual background of African Americans, this group has been marginalized historically and denied equal educational opportunities, resulting in poor academic achievement. It also demonstrated that African Americans are, in general, underrepresented in foreign language programs. The review demonstrated a paucity in the research available regarding African American students in TWI programs; such research is even more meager for parents of these students (Parchia, 2000). For the handful of studies that do exist addressing African

American students in TWI programs, the research is inconsistent regarding outcomes for these students (Howard et al., 2003). Some research has suggested that students are achieving, whereas other research, particularly involving students who speak Ebonics, has suggested that this factor may have adversely impacted student outcomes and retention in the program. Furthermore, research involving speakers of Ebonics participating in foreign language study in general is extremely limited. The literature review also presented successful models of schooling for African American students—what best facilitates success for them. Pedagogy that is culturally responsive and that takes into account the individual cultural, linguistic, and identity issues of each student was found to have the best potential for fostering academic success among African American students.

The theoretical rationale which helped to guide the research included, first of all, the tenets of TWI education: performing at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages; developing high levels of bilingual proficiency; creating positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors; and fostering high levels of self-esteem in all students (Christian, 1994, Goals and Rationale section, para. 2). These tenets provide guidance in the construction of TWI programs and benchmarks upon which these programs can be analyzed and evaluated. The second theoretical rationale was culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000), a teaching style that takes into account the social and cultural dimensions of teaching and learning (Moll, n.d.). The TWI tenets set up the benchmarks for achievement, whereas culturally responsive pedagogy is the vehicle through which these benchmarks can most effectively be reached. Thirdly, African-centered pedagogy, which triangulates teacher practice with activities as well as outcomes of students, draws

on the cultural and intellectual heritage of African Americans.

Based on the findings of the study, students of African descent in grades 4 through 8 who are participating in a TWI program demonstrated that they remained in the program because they were content with bilingualism, they had positive relationships with both teachers and friends at the school, and they were invested in the future advantages that bilingualism could offer. In regard to their linguistic experiences and perspectives in the program, participants in the study had received additional support services beyond the regular school program, were making progress toward the goal of bilingualism, and demonstrated a significant amount of linguistic diversity. Culturally speaking, the students participating in the study demonstrated the diversity of student identity: they were comfortable with their own self-identity as African Americans in the program; they identified positive cross-cultural relationships; and they communicated a sincere desire for more cultural inclusivity.

Parents participating in the study demonstrated that the value of bilingualism, the positive school climate, and parent commitment, coupled with school community communication in regards to the TWI model, were the reasons they kept their students in the program. In regard to parents' perceptions and opinions about their children's experiences in the program, they were satisfied overall with the program with a few exceptions, and they had a desire for a more culturally inclusive environment. Lastly, they demonstrated very different views on Ebonics.

Discussion

Using participatory research, the researcher dialogued with seven families about

their reasons for continuing in the program at that point in time, as well as their perceptions and experiences as participants in the TWI program. The findings of the study suggested that students had similar reasons for continuing in the program. Whereas their linguistic and cultural experiences were unique, their perceptions of the program were similar. Likewise, parents had similar reasons for their children's continued participation in the program, as well as similar perceptions and opinions about their child's participation in the program.

Research Question 1: What factors have contributed to upper elementary and middle school African American student continued participation in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program?

In this section, the student perspectives regarding continued participation in the TWI program are presented first, followed by the parent perspectives. The findings of the study revealed that students continued in the program because they enjoyed the bilingual aspect of the program, they valued relationships, and they were convinced of that being bilingual could provide them certain advantages in the future. These findings are consistent with the literature regarding positive attitudes toward bilingualism and relationships with other students in similar programs (Cazabon et al., 1993, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). The findings also corroborated with the literature in that African Americans studied a foreign language largely due to instrumental motivation—because of the benefits that bilingualism offers (Cazabon, 2000; Davis & Markham, 1991)—and that students were clearly aware of these benefits.

Although the sample size was small, the findings were significant due to the fact that the students dialogued separately with the researcher and varied in age from grades

4-8 but had similar perceptions of the program and reasons for continuing in it. The study demonstrated the powerful experience of becoming bilingual and the important role that teacher and peer relationships play in the program. It also demonstrated that instrumental motivation is an important factor for African American families.

Parent opinion regarding student continuation in the program was distinct from that of parents in Parchia's (2000) study. In Parchia's study, parents were not as interested in the bilingual component of the program as they were that the students were getting an enriched education. At the Language Institute, however, parents were extremely dedicated to the bilingual component of the program. In fact, the bilingual component primarily attracted them to the school in the first place. These parents had a true vision for bilingualism for their children, despite the fact that many did not have a command of a foreign language themselves.

Secondly, a positive school climate corroborates the literature on effective schooling for African American students. Small classrooms and personalized attention from the teacher were very important factors (Hale, 2001) contributing to student continuation in the program.

Furthermore, school community communication regarding the TWI model is considered "best practices" for creating a successful TWI program. One of the important factors is the school's effort to communicate to the community the program model philosophy as well as to provide support when parents feel as though their children are not achieving at acceptable levels. This responsibility begins primarily with staff, most notably the principal. According to Lindholm-Leary (2005b),

. . . the principal understands the language education model, truly supports the vision and goals and the program's implementation at the school site, and

understands the program well enough to explain it to others. The principal also devotes attention and resources to promoting acceptance of the program within the central administration, the community, among other school staff, and the parents. As a part of this support, the principal can explain that successful results require patience and can show how school results compare with findings obtained in other studies (and if they are not as good, what the school is doing to improve their results). (p. 42)

Parents appear to have found this at the Language Institute, as several mentioned that the communication from the principal and staff enlightened and encouraged them during their child's schooling experiences.

Howard and Sugarman (2007) stated that parents can also support one another:

. . . parents can also demonstrate peer leadership by responding to the needs of other parents in the program and reassuring them when they feel concerned about their child's language development, particularly when the parents do not speak the second language of the program. (p. 115)

They went on further to give an example of a parent in a TWI program who shared her experience with this kind of peer leadership:

There's enough of a . . . friendship system, if you want to call it that, people who've been through it before, almost like mentoring . . . I got a call from someone who's going to have a student going into their grade next year, [and I was able to help because] I've been there, I know what it's going to be like. It's parents holding each others' hands. (p. 115)

This is consistent with what Bostick-Mason and Olsen (2007) presented regarding the importance of parents of native English speakers being advocates to recruit other parents of native English speakers to the program. A few parents in the present study, however, seemed to point out that not only contact with other parents but especially contact with other African American parents as a support network made a difference to them or could make a difference in the future.

The concerns expressed by parents over their child's academic achievement in the early grades are consistent with the literature in regard to what Lindholm-Leary (2001)

referred to as the “second grade panic”:

Since children do not begin formal English reading until third grade, parents see their children reading in Spanish but not in English, and become concerned that they children will fall behind. This is a typical outcome observed in 90:10 programs among parents, particularly English-speaking parents. In fact, this phenomenon is typically referred to as the “Second-Grade Panic.” When children begin English reading instruction in third grade and become competent readers in English by fifth grade there is less concern. By grades 6-8, parents are not at all concerned; they know their children can do all their academic work in English. (p. 167)

Parent commitment was also documented as important for program success.

Parents commented on the challenge of supporting their students, first, because of time constraints; secondly, because the material was in Spanish; and thirdly, because they sometimes doubted themselves. The fact that school material was in Spanish, considering they did not speak Spanish, particularly took a lot of dedication and persistence on their behalf. They stated that, at first, kindergarten was doable because the instructions for homework were sent in both languages, but then helping with homework became more and more difficult. Some expressed a desire for language classes so that they could support their children more fully as they progressed through the program.

It is important to note that, when asked about involvement in their child’s education and the school, all the parents spoke about their support at home, such as in homework. They were able to provide numerous examples around building literacy that were unseen by teachers. Their perception of “parent involvement” seemed to be completely the opposite of the staff perception of African American families in general: that there was little African American parent involvement because they often did not generally attend parent and/or family events. This finding corroborates with the literature that teachers measure African American parent involvement though a very limited

paradigm (Hale, 2001; Thompson, 2004). Literature regarding African American parent participation would suggest that parent participation is not defined the same way for all communities. Often, a lack of time, due to both parents working or single parents trying to provide for their children, was the reason these families did not participate in school events, not because they were not interested in them. Foster's (2007) study of African American students and their families emphasized that just sending home a flyer of events is not effective for African American families in the same way that it might be effective for others. Foster noted that it is the school's responsibility to attempt different strategies that will work with African American families.

Research Question 2: What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to language?

The findings of the study revealed that students had additional support at one point or another as they participated in the school. Lindholm-Leary (2001) pointed out that some administrators fear TWI programs for African American students who speak Ebonics, but she demonstrated that these students can perform at or close to grade level in English when they are being instructed in Spanish. She stated that since many of these students were low SES, her findings demonstrated that even African American students from low SES backgrounds can benefit from TWI programs. One important factor was that, given the fact that SES and parent education were strong influences, TWI programs with low income African American students develop tutorial programs to support them academically. She pointed out, however, that TWI programs are not an exceptional case: *any educational program with low-income and culturally diverse populations should*

provide extra support, such as tutorial programs. Perry (2003a) also stated the importance of academic support; Most programs designed to promote high achievement among African Americans included this element.

The findings also suggested that students were making progress on their way to bilingualism. The overall test scores may not have demonstrated that all students met the criteria for what is defined as “proficient”; however, students were demonstrating in alternative ways, such as on their report cards and alternative assessments, that they were meeting this goal. Utilizing standardized testing as the benchmark for achievement has been contended in the research. Although analysis of the school achievement data went beyond the limits of this study and standardized tests are only one measure of achievement, a consistent pattern across the school showed that students needed to improve in the areas of reading and writing.

There was evidence that discussions with parents took place around the results of standardized tests and expectations of students, particularly as they related to the TWI model. There was also evidence of alternative reading and writing assessments that clearly demonstrated progress in both languages in reading and writing. However, it is important to note that the alternative assessments were, for the time being, simply collected from individual teachers and not analyzed at a school level. Therefore, there was no evidence that the assessments were tied to school-wide goals and benchmarks for instruction. One teacher suggested that there was yet to be a culture at LISL where data analysis was used to drive instruction. Whereas it goes beyond the limits of this study, linking the results of these reading and writing assessments to more targeted instruction could very likely impact the achievement levels of students in reading and writing.

Findings also revealed that students had very different linguistic backgrounds, experience, and exposure in their daily lives both at school and outside of school. Some had little or no interaction with Spanish-speaking individuals, whereas others had significant contact with Spanish speakers. Although some preferred English, most were comfortable in English and Spanish. They often would use English during social interaction, even during the time of day when Spanish was supposed to be utilized, prompting the teacher to remind them to use Spanish. However, they tended to use Spanish during teacher-directed whole group activities. It appears that a number of factors could have been influencing these students' decisions to use English during Spanish time, according to both students and their teachers: they were not competent enough to do so; they did not want to express themselves if it meant the teacher needed to help; they were entering adolescence and wanted to demonstrate their resistance to authority; or they could not articulate their ideas as quickly or as efficiently in Spanish as they could in English. Consistent with the research is the fact that the status of English was greater than Spanish, particularly at the middle school level, which influenced students' use of language (Carrigo, 2000; Howard et al., 2003).

Students were originally thought to have similar backgrounds in relationship to their use of Ebonics. However, findings showed this was not the case as students demonstrated very different linguistic experiences and backgrounds. Some students were not even cognizant that Ebonics existed. In addition, parents emphasized the importance of speaking in academic English, which undoubtedly had an impact on student perception of language. When parents were asked about their opinions regarding Ebonics, their definitions, perspectives, and interpretations were extremely varied. It appeared that, for a

few parents, Ebonics was a label for a substandard and often disrespectful way of speaking even by parents who used what is termed by linguists as Ebonics and/or Black styles of communication. Bidialectal parents seemed to stress the importance of context more than avoidance of Ebonics. Also, although some parents may have expressed negative perspectives about Ebonics, their own children still were observed to use it.

The literature suggested that African American students who speak Ebonics may be at an academic disadvantage (Krause, 1999). The results of this study corroborated, to some degree, with the literature regarding speakers of Ebonics but not completely. Whereas the students who struggled the most in Spanish did indeed prefer Ebonics and it was sometimes present in writing and speaking, the presence of Ebonics in a student's linguistic repertoire did not seem to interfere with the learning of Spanish and Standard English or achievement in the program, per se. This study found that several students utilized Spanish, Standard English, and Ebonics and were achieving at high levels academically, in spite of the fact that there was no acknowledgment of Ebonics, neither was there any direct school-based, focused instruction or support in managing the three linguistic systems. But most of these students had other systems in place, such as support network at home, including models of academic English. The few students whose parents tended to use primarily Ebonics or African American styles of communication in their everyday conversations struggled more than other students.

Ebonics may just so happen to be the language utilized by African American students faced with other factors putting him or her at risk. For example, in the case of William, he had been retained, had behavioral issues that interfered with learning, had a challenging home life, and, as an eighth grader (the age of a ninth grader), was just

entering adolescence and was changing his friends, all of which may have influenced his performance in Spanish, academics in general and his self-identity. This is consistent with Delpit's (1995) claim that at about third or fourth grade, students become aware of their group membership and its importance to their well-being; this realization is reflected in their language. It is precisely this type of student who prefers Ebonics, who is struggling in the program, and who can be lost in the crowd and dismissed as the exception due to "external factors" if Ebonics were not taken into account. Whereas other students might have been successful without additional individualized support, for a student fitting this profile, it is critical to consider that without additional support, the ability to offer educational parity through the acquisition of both Standard English and Spanish is not guaranteed.

Consistent with the literature was the fact that Ebonics was essentially ignored in the experiences of the African American students (Delpit, 1992; Taylor, 1987). Whereas it is understandable that a TWI program already takes into account two languages, the Dual Language Toolkit, a resource guide providing guidance for the implementation of successful TWI programs, provides the following advice: programs that have "third language learners" in their population should acknowledge the language and include it in the classroom so that other students are exposed to it (Howard, Sugarman, Perdomo, & Adger, 2005). Even though this advice probably was most likely intended to refer to languages such as Spanish, Chinese, or Korean, the concept remains the same for Standard English learners: recognition and acknowledgement of children's linguistic backgrounds as a basis on which to build other languages is the most effective strategy for linguistically and culturally diverse students.

It is critical to note that even the high achieving students who managed well in academic English and Spanish benefited from the acknowledgment of Ebonics in their schooling experiences. For example, Devon, a very high achieving sixth grader, spoke about how using Ebonics was enjoyable for him and something that he felt validated who he was. He shared about a time that his English language arts teacher, who was White, asked him to help her with poetry utilizing Ebonics (which he terms “slang”), since she was not familiar with it.

DB: My teacher, Ms. Johnson, asked me to read a poem because she said she couldn't understand it (from slang to English) and I could do that.

MAE: Did you feel good about that?

DB: I was able to read it, and not a whole lot of people can

MAE: Explain that a little bit.

DB: When African Americans first came here, that's the language they used, and I'm proud I can use it. It's not good English, but I'm glad I can relate.

MAE: Did you read it aloud?

DB: I was going to, but we didn't have time that day [Friday] . I was wishing I could read it aloud on Monday because it was fun but somebody else got to do it.

He also spoke about another time he did a speech in which he used both Ebonics and Standard English:

DB: Like yesterday in speech and debate I gave a speech about uniforms. I started out using very formal English and then I broke out and just started to express myself in a form that I was using slang. (I got an A.)

MAE: You were able to use “slang” as a tool.

DB: Yes, our speech could be about anything. I remember my friend talked about salsa—that it started the Iraqi war.

MAE: Do other kids ever hear you use slang?

DB: Yes . . . I was the only one who got a standing ovation.

MAE: Why did you get a standing ovation?

DB: I expressed myself, and they hadn't ever done it before, and I heard them laughing. I was trying not to break character.

MAE: You said you like drama. Do you ever get to do that [express yourself and use the different styles of speaking] in drama?

DB: If I were given that kind of freedom, then I'd do it. I'd do it once every 5 or 10 times, not something normal. One time we were watching a theater class. They wanted constructive criticism. My friend used British accent [to give the

criticism], and it was really cool. He sounded really British. (D. Brown, personal communication, January 29, 2008)

Devon's comments corroborate Cazden's (1999) assertion that "qualities of classroom group life assume importance for African American students' discourse development and academic achievement" (p. 37). Just as the recognition of Spanish validates the identity of the Spanish-speaker learning English, it would seem that acknowledgement and inclusion of Ebonics as a resource could serve as a motivating and enriching experience not only for African Americans but also for fellow students participating in the program. Knowing about and understanding language varieties could only enrich a student's language learning experiences.

Whereas the Language Institute's fourth to eighth grade students as a whole did not speak primarily in Ebonics, undoubtedly other programs have a population that does. In such cases, it is even more critical to recognize the validity of the language. Although Standard English and Spanish are the unspoken linguistic goals for these students, overlooking students' linguistic backgrounds is not an option if a program is to offer the best possible opportunity for speakers of Ebonics to succeed. This seemed particularly to be the case for the males in the program. Devon and Keshawn both stated that they mainly used Ebonics when they were "playing around." So perhaps one could say that he or she could be just as successful without acknowledgement and inclusion of Ebonics and/or African American cultural themes. However, for other students, such as William, Ebonics and Black history were central to his cultural and linguistic experience. Neglect of this part of who he was could have been a factor in the difficulties he experienced. Being more inclusive of Ebonics and having a more Afro-centric focus in his educational experience may have supported him in being more successful in Spanish and in other

academic areas, particularly those classes in middle school that required advanced levels of Spanish in order to be successful.

Research Question 3: What are the experiences and perspectives of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to culture?

The findings regarding culture suggested that there was cultural diversity in the program, even within the pre-established category of African American. This was consistent with the literature on the topic of bicultural and multiracial students. There is much confusion around race and ethnicity, and the effort to pigeon-hole people into one category has gone on for centuries in the United States (Nakazawa, 2004). Not until the year 2000 did people have the option of selecting more than one category to identify their racial self-identity. On the 2000 census, roughly 7 million people indicated more than one racial category. California was the state with the largest population (roughly 1 million) indicating more than one race (Jones & Smith, 2001). In addition, in 1990, 1.5 million marriages were mixed, and in 2000, that figure increased to 4 million. This population has been increasing since 1967, when anti-miscegenation laws were abolished in most states. These findings are clearly consistent with statistics showing that the number of students with multiracial or multiethnic backgrounds is increasing. As of the U.S. Census 2000, 1 in 16 children under the age of 18 were multiracial, composing one of the fastest growing segments of the youth population and expected to grow exponentially. This number may be greater because as stated in this same report, members of many interracial couples do not generally report their multiracial children as such unless they are multiracial themselves. Unfortunately, identity theories have characteristically

explored identity development through a monoracial/monoethnic lens, not giving much attention to the developmental identity process of multiracial students (Hughes, Lynaugh, McCartney, & Novitsky, 2004). For these multiracial students, the good news is that TWI programs theoretically offer the best environment within which to develop, as stated by Lindholm-Leary (2005b): “The TWI model represents one of the best teaching practices available to address the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in today’s classrooms” (p. 59).

The findings also suggested that students had positive intercultural relationships. Theoretically speaking, this is one of the tenets of TWI education. Therefore, this corroborated the literature (Carrigo, 2000; Nicoladis et al., 1998). Many students also thought that Latinos learned more about African Americans by being in the program together and by having activities such as Black History Month. At the same time, most students named an incident where they had experienced some kind of race-based discriminatory comment but did not appear concerned that it was a problem on campus. In more than a few cases, they mentioned that this occurred in third grade, which would corroborate what has been stated about the time that children begin teasing one another about different backgrounds (Nakazawa, 2004).

The findings also suggested that students felt secure in their African American identity. The TWI literature suggested that identities were generally affirmed in this kind of program (Cazabon et al., 1993; Lindholm-Leary, 2000; Rolstad, 1997). However, the fact that they felt secure does contrast somewhat with TWI literature regarding African Americans, which suggested that because their culture was not represented, they may not have felt that their identities or experiences were validated in the program. The fact that

students were of differing ages, and perhaps had not yet experienced identity development yet, may have skewed this study's results. But it is important to mention that all the participants had relationships with African Americans outside of school either through church, sports, or family connections; therefore, this component of their identity may have been validated and not threatened by their experience in a primarily Latino school.

Another factor that is closely related to whether students felt affirmed in their identity as African Americans was whether being part of such a small population impacted their experience and if they felt comfortable or isolated. Whereas the literature on African American achievement would seem to suggest that isolation can be traumatic for a student (Lewis, 2004; Tatum 1997), when asked directly about the impact of cultural isolation, students in general did not seem to be bothered by it. In fact, one student's family claimed that he felt he was a "star" at the school. Isolation, in this case, could have provided the opposite impact: by being an outsider, there was intrigue on the part of other students, and the student thereby gained attention that was affirming.

On the other hand, taking into account other comments besides the direct questions about identity, some students gave the impression that isolation may have affected them negatively. For example when asked if she thought there would be a difference if there were more African Americans in the program, Alyssa said that it would be less lonely; Devon stated that it would mean that he would get back to being more of himself; and William stated he would be having a lot more fun. Perhaps it was too threatening for students to say they did not feel like they could be themselves when asked directly, but through more indirect questions, their true feelings emerged.

Lastly, findings suggested that students desired a more culturally inclusive environment, beginning with more elements of African American culture and then of other cultures as well. This finding was consistent with the literature in regard to the need to validate student experiences, particularly experiences of those who have been historically marginalized (Delpit & Kilgour-Dowdy, 2002; Hale, 2001; Nieto, 2004; Tatum, 2007). It is also consistent with the TWI literature, which encourages programs to include elements of the backgrounds of all students in the programs (Howard & Sugarman, 2007; Lindholm-Leary, 2004/2005).

Research Question 4: What are the perspectives of the parents of upper elementary and middle school African American students in a Two Way Bilingual Spanish Immersion program in regards to their children's language and cultural experiences?

This study corroborated findings in Parchia's (2000) study relating to an overall satisfaction as well as Latino cultural focus at the expense of African American or other cultures. School satisfaction, as parents indicated in this study, is consistent with the literature regarding successful schooling models for African American students. Foster (2007) stated that African American parents want to feel that they are welcome and that their needs are addressed; they want teachers to communicate to them that they are valued members of the school community. In addition, she stated that they want educators to challenge their children, be patient with them, and have their best interests at heart. Parents also stated that they would like there to be more inclusion of other cultures at the school. They emphasized their desire to have students from African American as well as other backgrounds recruited into the program and thought that the presence of

more African Americans on campus was important for these reasons.

Lastly, navigating the waters of parent understanding and perspectives of Ebonics proved to be a challenge throughout the dialogues. Definitions of *Ebonics* were varied, as were the accompanying interpretations of whether students used it. Some parents were very opposed to its use, and others were not. However, in both cases, parents very concerned that their children learn the appropriate academic register of English in order to be prepared for the future. These findings were consistent with the literature stating that African Americans do not share the same perspective on Ebonics and that African American parents are very concerned that their children learn academic English (DeBose, 2007).

Conclusions

Several major conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. First, this school has characteristics of effective schooling for African Americans. What made this school attractive for students and parents was the fact that students were learning a language that would give them an advantage in the future; it was small and had the feel of a family; students and parents spoke positively about school activities; and students and parents had good relationships with teachers and peers. Also, it was a challenging environment for learning since students had to rise to the challenge of performing academically in two languages. Considering the school environments that work for African American students, it is not surprising that parents and students were content with this school.

Secondly, whereas students and parents were content with the school overall,

some areas could be improved in order to make this environment even more effective for African American students, such as how the issue of Ebonics and African American culture as well as other cultures are nurtured in students through inclusion in the curriculum and through the presence of staff and other parents. Also, cultural awareness should not be limited to knowing about holidays and celebrations of one another's cultures; rather, should move out of the infant stages into a deeper understanding of one's own identity and facilitate increased understanding of racial issues and identities through courageous conversations around race and equity (Singleton & Linton, 2005). Howard and Sugarman (2007), citing a presentation by Laurie Olsen, stated that TWI programs should seek to

- 1) strengthen their sense of their own cultural and language identity; 2) strengthen their ability to form and sustain friendship across cultures and languages; 3) develop resilience in the face of prejudice and exclusion aimed at them and their own language or ethnic group; 4) develop cross-cultural mediation and conflict resolution skills; and 5) develop awareness of privilege and power dynamics among various language and cultural groups. (pp. 85-86)

Thirdly, there needs to be a strategy for supporting African American students in the program, taking into account linguistic variety and considering the options of extra academic support, such as tutoring, to support high academic achievement across the board when needed. The school should take a proactive and preventative stance, particularly in reading and language arts in Spanish, so that students are competent to manage the linguistic demands required as they move up in grade levels.

Fourthly, emphasizing African American involvement in regards to TWI community communication is critical. Having parents be involved at multiple levels—from educating the community about the program to recruiting potential students to supporting and mentoring other African American families—could only serve to

encourage other families to join the program and to stay there. The parents in this study clearly emphasized the critical nature of second through fourth grades, where many were frustrated and some even considered leaving the program due to the academic challenges and the problem of attempting to support their children without the knowledge of Spanish. Even two-parent families mentioned the amount of time, energy, and effort involved and the struggles that they had during this time. Taking into account how to best support students and their families, particularly single parent families and those with other challenging home environments, during this critical stage is imperative.

Lastly, the staff must consider that “parent participation” may not be interpreted equally for everyone in the community. Considering parents’ schedules and the fact that many homes are single parent homes in the African American community, there should be more ways in which the community can demonstrate its involvement and interest in the program besides the typical “attendance at family events.”

Recommendations for Further Research

This study attempted to gather information from students in a TWI program who spoke Ebonics and who had persevered to the upper grade levels. Because the numbers of African American students were small at the upper grades, it would be ideal to perform a study with larger numbers of African American students and speakers of Ebonics, particularly at the eighth grade level, in order to assess their experiences in the program K-8 and to touch upon identity issues. Utilizing an ethnographic methodology over an extended time period, including not only information gathered from African American parents and students but also from dialogues with staff, other students, as well as teacher

observations and student cross cultural attitudes, would give a more complete picture of the school environment.

Another idea for gaining important insights would be to conduct a mixed methods longitudinal study of students who are identified as Ebonics-speakers in a TWI program and who receive extra support in obtaining academic English through Afro-centric methods, including utilizing Ebonics as a resource. Following these African American students through the program and examining their progress quantitatively as well as their opinions and perspectives qualitatively could provide insight into the effectiveness of bidialectal education in a TWI context.

Children from multiethnic and multicultural backgrounds are an extremely fast growing component of the population and should be addressed in the research. Since TWI is theoretically an excellent venue through which students are given license to explore their own identities, it is important to have the perspective of these students and their families in regards to their own experiences in the program. Gaining insight into their own perspectives, identities, and experiences through qualitative methods could assist TWI programs in better serving this unique and extremely diverse population as it grows.

Recommendations for Professional Practice

There were several implications for professional practice based on the findings and conclusions. First, in regard to the reasons students stayed in the program, one of the primary motivators was the career and job opportunities that would emerge from the experience, also referred to by Gardner (1985) as instrumental motivation. Integrative

motivation, or wanting to interact with or affiliate with another group, has been known to produce relatively higher levels of language proficiency (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

Therefore, it is important for educators to create opportunities to especially assist students who do not have much contact with Spanish speakers aside from the school environment. One such way would be to assign projects or dialogues with people in the school and greater community that would require communication in the second language.

Another reason students remained with the program was the fact that it was a small program. However, for some families, this meant that in the middle school levels, many parents withdrew their children because there was not the level of sports desired or because the parents felt that the school would not adequately prepare their children for the transition into high school. Most parents would like to continue with the TWI program, but not having facilities or programs that would be attractive to the students and that would also prepare them for high school may actually be a deterrent for this group, particularly African American males. Perhaps increasing opportunities to interact—such as articulation with high schools in order to minimize the transition—could be a motivation to remain in the program. In addition, more education in regards to the number of years that it takes to acquire a foreign language is more appropriately estimated at 7 to 9 years (Thomas & Collier, 2002), as opposed to what is estimated for second language learners (such as Spanish dominant Latinos studying English in the United States) at 5 to 7 years.

In regards to children's language experiences, a school-wide effort to look at data, particularly in the area of Spanish reading and language arts, and not only assess and record information in cumulative files, but also let ongoing assessments drive instruction

and decisions about extra support throughout the year. This would more than likely increase achievement in both standardized tests and alternative assessments, creating a greater likelihood that students will have the necessary Spanish skills to manage the middle and upper grade material in Spanish. Preventative measures, such as close monitoring of African American student skill levels and intensive intervention (particularly around key periods such as second and third grade), would provide extra needed support to students and reassurance to parents. Identifying problem areas for each successive grade level and then ensuring that these problem areas are addressed could also aid in facilitating success and minimize recommendations for retention. An extremely strict policy about late entrants into the program, as well as an extremely strong support network and well articulated “catch up plan” for those who have already been allowed into the program late, can also reduce the number of recommendations for retention.

Furthermore, student linguistic comfort zones could be expanded beyond simple reminders or punishments from teachers to include techniques and strategies to keep students using the language. Self-monitoring and peer-monitoring should be essential parts of the language acquisition process. In addition, other strategies, such as circumlocution—teaching students the value of going around a word to describe it without actually having the word in his or her vocabulary—will go a long way in enabling students to communicate. This should take place from early on in the program, particularly as an aid to students who are easily frustrated or having difficulty expressing themselves. They should know that this skill is often just as important as knowing the actual words. Not only is learning the language important, but strategies to learn the

language are also critical and will go a long way in increasing language learning independence.

In addition, the presence of Ebonics in the school can no longer be unaddressed. Smitherman (2002) proposed that bidialectalism should be the goal for these students. She outlined it in her language policy, which has three parts: (a) reinforce the language of wider communication (also referred to as “Standard English”); (b) promote and extend the legitimacy of mother tongue languages and dialects; and (c) promote the acquisition of one or more foreign languages, preferably those spoken in the Third World (p. 176). A TWI program has already addressed the first and the third component and has partially addressed the second component in the way that the status of the second language (e.g., Spanish) is promoted as an important component of the program. For African American students speaking Ebonics, it would be important to address the second component completely.

The first step in reaching this goal would be teacher professional development. As Asa G. Hilliard III (2002) stated, “Teachers must be taught so . . . it’s the general attitude of a teacher that is important. If an African American child is seen as language deficient, we can show the behavior toward that child changes . . .” (p. 101). Workshops such as the Academic English Mastery Program (LeMoine & Hollie, 2007) would go a long way in providing a foundation on which to begin supporting these students toward bidialectalism. Research based, its approaches include the following:

- 1) building teachers knowledge and linguist awareness about non standard learners;
- 2) using second language acquisition methodology to facilitate acquisition of the language of school;
- 3) infusing linguistic information into daily instruction;
- 4) incorporating a balanced approach to literacy, cultural awareness, and infusion;
- 5) building on learning styles and strengths of Standard English learners to support learning;
- and 6) encouraging culturally responsive pedagogy

and the infusion of students' history and culture into the curriculum. (LeMoine & Hollie, pp. 45-46)

However, due to the extremely sensitive nature of the topic of Ebonics, including the different definitions and interpretations in the community, and the politics involved, the definition and purpose of the use of Ebonics as a resource in school should be clearly articulated. Sharing the definition of *Ebonics* as defined by linguists perhaps through a presentation to parents by an African American (such as an education or linguistics professor at the local university) could be a first step in increasing parent understanding towards utilizing Ebonics as a tool. Making it a goal to increase awareness throughout the teacher, parent, and student communities regarding the rich contribution of African American styles of communication and then beginning to use this as a linguistic resource in the academic program would be positive steps toward promoting achievement and increased understanding in the African American and greater school communities.

In regards to children's cultural experiences, the fact that students have different backgrounds and that their needs for identity development are different must be recognized. If the third goal of cross cultural understanding and appreciation is to be met, then efforts need to be made to include different cultural backgrounds in the curriculum and in community events. Parents should be utilized as the resource for educating the community about their cultural backgrounds. For example, Oyster School in Washington, D.C., has a Pan-African committee as well as other committees (e.g., Pan-Asian) representing students at the school. These committees seek to unite all members of the different communities. The Pan-African committee functions as a steering committee composed of parents of African descent that spearheads events to educate others about African and African American culture. Individual committees meet on their own and then

come together for PTA meetings. Some of the activities have included movie/discussion nights addressing issues of the different cultural groups; booths at family events where families can learn more about a culture through food, music, and other elements of culture; and parent-teacher meetings at which the parents provide information about elements that should be included in the curriculum about current and past events in African and African American history. These would take place not only around Black History Month but also year round. Parents are included but also motivated to participate in an area of their own expertise (R. Palmer, personal communication, April 20, 2004). The point would be for students to continue developing their understanding of different cultures through observance of special events but, at the same time, to move out of the infant stages of “heroes and holidays” to prepare them to be global citizens.

Regarding other items that could support students and parents, there needs to be ongoing support for families who do not speak Spanish. Language classes, particularly those that would provide basic communication skills for parents, as well as essential vocabulary that would enable them to better support their children in ensuring that students have academic support is of primary importance. Although homework should be tailored so students can do it independently, linguistic support should be provided so parents have equal access to support their child, especially in the early years. If language classes are not possible, then other linguistic support, such as a glossary of common terms used in homework is a possibility. Every effort should be made so that the outcomes for students are dependent upon the school, not the parents. Whereas the parents are a critical component of every child’s education, a parent’s lack of linguistic or other preparation should not then mean that their child will not have the same access as

another parent who is more prepared.

Parents also must be encouraged to mentor other African American parents in the program. Increased recruitment of African Americans in the community by African Americans, as well as other strategies to reach the parents that are already in the school, is very important. In addition, teachers need to think outside the box and not assume that a lack of attendance at evening parent events proves a lack of parental interest.

To summarize, in order for TWI programs to best serve their African American students, especially those utilizing Ebonics, they must increase the attractive features of their programs; increase strategies and techniques that will best facilitate language learning (so as to promote high levels of academic achievement); consider the cultural elements that will create a more inclusive learning environment and prepare students to be global citizens; and take into account the characteristics and needs of the parents.

Reflections of the Researcher

An African American afterschool coordinator provided insight regarding self-esteem of African Americans. He claimed that it really was not self-esteem that African American students needed. He stated they had self-esteem and often thought *too* highly of themselves. What they needed was self-concept, knowing who they were and where they came from (W. Smith, personal communication, March 15, 2008). The research did not allow for exploration into this topic as originally intended. Whereas the researcher had hoped to address more issues of identity, it was extremely challenging to do so, particularly with a group of students of different age groups. Some of the questions were somewhat premature for the younger students, as these students were just entering the

stage of asking questions about identities. Therefore, the questions might not have provided the same information as they would have if all the students had been in sixth through eighth grade, for example.

Due to time constraints, parents were extremely limited in their availability. As a result, the dialogues weren't as "reflective" as originally intended. There was barely enough time for parents to review transcripts for accuracy, let alone reflect on the content of the interview. The research, therefore, might not have resulted in the same degree of personal transformation and corresponding social action that the researcher had intended. However, the dedication on the part of parents and students to participate in the study, as well as the commitment on the part of the school to listen and respond to student and parent voices will hopefully nonetheless inspire positive change.

This project was challenging to do cross-culturally. From differing styles of communication to understanding one another's positions, as well as having the additional layer of potential inhibitions on the part of the parents, the researcher sometimes noted ambivalence—that students and parents communicated confidence and security in being African American in an environment that could have been considered somewhat isolating and at times threatening.

Whereas the researcher had open dialogues with parents and students, she felt that if she had been African American there may have been differences in answers provided, particularly in regard to questions concerning Ebonics. It was extremely challenging to engage in conversations about the children's use of Ebonics when there was no common definition or terminology used for it by parents. Also, the researcher was hesitant and sometimes nervous about speaking about Ebonics since it was so politically controversial

and did not want to make parents feel uncomfortable. This hesitancy could have come through unconsciously, potentially causing parents to respond differently. The researcher particularly was upset by the refusal by one student and parent to participate due to miscommunication about the purpose of the project. It was clear that the number of interviews and the nervousness associated with discussing the topic had taken its toll, and the researcher was very saddened as a result of this exchange since it was exactly the exact opposite outcome of what she had hoped would emerge with the project. In any case, having conversations about race, ethnicity, and language was a big step for students, teachers, parents, and the researcher.

The researcher felt sometimes as though she were a neutral party and at other times that she represented the school and power, and parents answered according to their interpretation of that power structure. The fact that the school was endorsing the project and communicated that they wanted to know parent and student opinions seemed to both give them freedom to share what they really wanted to and, at the same time, to obligate them to express gratitude rather than any dissatisfaction if they felt generally content with the program. The researcher got the impression that student responses and particularly parent response toward the school were “too perfect” in the sense that there really were only positive comments. Therefore, the researcher wondered if parents were hesitant to complain about the school for some unexplained reason.

Undoubtedly the data analysis would have differed had it come from an African American perspective, especially as a speaker of Ebonics. These commonalities would have resulted in a more accurate interpretation regarding cultural behaviors, communication, observations, interpretations of student records and so forth.

One of the highlights for the researcher was having the opportunity to meet as a group with parents, as well as meet individually with students for group member checking and in both instances getting confirmation that the findings were consistent with their perceptions. The group parent meeting was a very positive step in many ways for the school community. First of all, it was the first time African American parents were invited to a meeting on their own and most likely the first time it was done only in English. It was the first time that they got to come together as a sub-community of the school and discuss what was important to them. The researcher had been informed that African American parents didn't usually participate in evening events and to not be surprised if the turnout was small. However, all families but one were represented at the meeting. Even one of the parents who allegedly had not attended any parent functions in all her years of being at the school with her students (who were in middle school at the time of the study) attended.

Whereas the process of the research and the group meeting seemed unfamiliar to both the parents and the researcher at first (and folks were extremely quiet to begin with) as the meeting went on, it took on a more comfortable feel, where folks were able to share their own thoughts, laugh together about their experiences in the program over the years, and just generally talk and enjoy one another's company while accomplishing something extremely important. It's the researcher's hope that this type of forum could be created for the parents in the African American community at the Language Institute.

As a final reflection, the researcher would like to make reference to Carter G. Woodson (1933), "no man can be thoroughly educated until he learns as much about the Negro as he knows about other people" (p. 136). He also stated that, teachers that think

that waiting to talk about race until students are older are misguided and

ignore the fact that the race question is being brought before black and white children daily in their homes, in the streets, through the press and on the rostrum. How, then, can the school ignore the duty of teaching the truth while these other agencies are playing up falsehood?"(p. 135)

It is incumbent upon TWI programs who desire to address the third goal of multiculturalism/cross-cultural understanding to agree to be committed to confront issues of race, and as a community to come together, inform one another about one another, and address head-on issues of equity in programs curricula, family events and everyday interactions. Only through honesty, information sharing and courageous conversations can we begin to create the world class program that TWI has the potential to offer.

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Appendix A

Language Institute Parent Education Levels

Education Level	Percentage of Parents
	Achieving Education Level
No high school diploma	50
High school graduate	21
Some college	8
College graduate	5
Some graduate school	17

Appendix B

Parental/Caregiver Informed Consent Form (SELF PARTICIPATION)

Purpose and Background

Ms. Michele Anberg-Espinosa, a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on African American students participating in TWI programs. The purpose of this research study is to talk with African American students to get their opinions about the program, how they use language, and how they see themselves as participants.

I am being asked to participate in this project because he/she my child is an African American student in the TWI program who is in the 4th-8th grade and has participated in the program since kindergarten or first grade, and he/she has been observed to use varied speech styles.

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

- I will be asked to prepare for two individual interviews with the researcher, which will include reading over the questions beforehand). I will also meet as a group with the other parent participants after the individual interviews are complete.
- I will meet with to answer the research questions by dialoguing about them twice with the researcher and once with the other parent participants for a maximum of three times (twice individually and once as a group) for a maximum total of four and a half hours. Preparing for the interviews will require approximately one hour.
- The purpose of these meetings will be for me to dialogue with the researcher about my child's experiences in the San Luis Language Institute Two-Way Immersion program.
- The interviews will be done in English.
- The researcher will provide me with a set of questions to be answered, to guide the dialogue but I do not have to limit my discussion to only these questions.
- The dialogues will be audiotaped and then transcribed so I can read over and verify what I said. The audiotapes will be destroyed upon completion of the transcripts.
- I will review the transcription and notify the researcher of any additions, changes and deletions to be made. (If I prefer, I can review the audiotape instead of the transcription.) This should take approximately one hour and a half.
- The researcher will keep notes on email and telephone communications regarding the study and will provide me a copy of these documents upon request.
- No portion of my conversation with the researcher will be included in the study without my child's approval.

Risks and Discomfort

- Some of the research questions may be personal regarding my child, and members of the San Luis Language Institute community.
- I may become bored during the questioning and review of transcripts.
- Some of the questions in the dialogue with the researcher may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
- I understand that I may request to respond to the transcript by telephone if I feel it is necessary. This will be permissible in the study.

Benefits

- The opportunity for teachers and administrators to have information that can facilitate improvement of the program for my child based on the information gathered in the interviews.
- Knowledge that the research will potentially have a larger social impact than immediately recognizable
- Gaining a perspective on the past and present that allows my child to understand herself/himself better and his/her contribution to society
- I will be able to read and correct my own reflections and insights on the work and read those of fellow participants involved in the study.
- I will be a co-researcher helping to discover information about myself and my child and other African American students, which will give me more confidence in myself and may help others.
- Empowerment to use information gathered in research to communicate to the school community and beyond, what I feel is important.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me or my child as a result of taking part in this study; however, participation in the study will require a maximum of three meetings and five hours of my time, in addition to the time necessary to review the transcripts (approximately one hour) and prepare for interviews (approximately one hour), totaling approximately seven hours.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for participation in this study.

Other

My identity and that of the institution will be protected by using pseudonyms rather than real names. While I may be quoted directly from interviews, documents and observations, protecting confidentiality will always be of utmost importance.

Questions

Should I have any questions, comments or concerns, I may call Ms. Michele Anberg-Espinosa at XXX-XXXX (home) or (XXX) XXX-XXXX (cell) or email her at manbergespinosa@hotmail.com at any time.

I have spoken to Michele Anberg-Espinosa, as well as read additional information provided by her about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have any further questions, I may call her at XXX-XXXX (home) or (XXX) XXX-XXXX (cell) or send her an email at manbergespinosa@hotmail.com. I may also contact Dr. Bettye Taylor at the University of San Francisco at (415) 422-6041 or taylorb@usfca.edu.

If I have any questions or comments about my participation in this study, I should first speak with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to talk with the researcher, I may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message; by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu; or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Bldg., University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the “Research Subject’s Bill of Rights” and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to say I don’t want to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on the researcher’s present or future status as a student at USF. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject’s Parent/Guardian

Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date of Signature

Contact Information:

Parent’s/Guardian’s Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): Home _____ Cell _____ Other _____

E-mail: _____

Child’s Name(s): _____

Best way to contact you? _____

Preferred days/dates/time of day for meeting with you? _____

Preferred location for meeting with you? _____

Occupation? _____

Race/Ethnicity _____

Age (Circle one) 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81-90

Appendix C

Assent for Dialogue Participation Form (Student)

Purpose and Background

Ms. Michele Anberg-Espinosa, a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on African American students participating in Two-Way Immersion programs. The purpose of this research study is to talk with African American students to get their opinions about the program, how they use language, and how they see themselves as participants.

I am being asked to participate in this project because I am an African American student who is in the 4th-8th grade and have participated in the San Luis Language Institute since kinder or first grade and I use Spanish and different styles of English in the school setting. I have permission from my parents or caregivers to participate in the study.

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

- I will be asked to meet with the researcher and we will discuss the study and I will receive the questions for the first interview.
- I will be asked to prepare for my interviews with the researcher by reading some questions and preparing my answers.
- I will meet to answer the research questions by dialoguing about them with the researcher a maximum of three times for three hours.
- I will review the written transcript (our listen to the audio) (approximately one hour) and prepare for the interviews (approximately one hour). This brings my total participation time to approximately five hours.
- The researcher will provide me with a set of questions to be answered, and to guide our dialogue in advance of our individual and group meetings, but I do not have to limit my discussion to only these questions.
- The interviews will be done in English.
- The dialogues that I participate in with the researcher will be audiotaped.
- I will receive a written transcript from the researcher and I will review the transcript (or I can just review the audio). I will inform the researcher if I'd like to change, add to, or edit the interview in any way. The audiotapes will be destroyed upon completion of the transcripts.
- The researcher will come observe in my classroom, playground and lunchroom, and look at my work samples, permanent files in the office and talk with my parents/caregivers about me and my work.
- The researcher will talk with my parents or caregivers about me and my experience at the San Luis Language Institute.
- The researcher will keep notes on any telephone communications regarding the study and I can get a copy of these documents if I ask for them.

- No part of the interviews with the researcher will be included in the study without my permission.

Risks and Discomfort

- Some of the research questions may be personal regarding myself and members of the San Luis Language Institute community.
- I may become bored during the questioning and debriefing of transcriptions.
- Some of the questions in the dialogue with the researcher may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to refuse to answer any questions I do not wish to answer and/or I can stop participation at any time.
- I understand that I can ask to respond to the transcription by telephone if I feels it necessary. This will be permissible in the study.

Benefits

- Teachers and administrators will have a chance to hear my opinion about the program, and this information may be used to make my school program better.
- I will learn about research projects.
- I will be able to read and correct my own reflections and insights on the work and read those of fellow participants involved in the study.
- A possible increase in self-esteem because I will be the focus of the research.
- Knowledge that I am a co-researcher helping to discover information about myself and other African American students, which gives me more confidence in myself and may help others.
- Empowerment to use information gathered in research to communicate to the school community and beyond, what I feel is important.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study; however, participation in the study will require a maximum of three meetings and three hours. It will also take another hour to review the transcripts, and an hour to prepare for the interviews. This means my total participation will be approximately five hours.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for participation in this study. However, I may keep the tape recorder when the research is completed.

Questions

Should I have any questions, comments or concerns, I may call Ms. Michele Anberg-Espinosa at XXX-XXXX or email her at manbergespinoza@hotmail.com any time.

I have spoken to Michele Anberg-Espinosa, as well as read additional information provided by her about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have any further questions, I may call her at XXX-XXXX or send her an email at manbergespinoza@hotmail.com I may also contact Dr. Bettye Taylor at the University of San Francisco at (415) 422-6041 or taylorb@usfca.edu.

If I have any questions or comments about my participation in this study, I should first speak with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to talk with the researcher, my parents/caregivers have the information in order that they may contact the researcher's school.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this assent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to say I don't want to be in this study, or I can stop participating in it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will not affect the researcher's present or future status as a student at USF. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's Signature Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date of Signature

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell _____ Other _____

Age: _____

Grade: _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name(s): _____

Appendix D

Parental/Caregiver Consent Form

Purpose and Background

Ms. Michele Anberg-Espinosa, a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on African American students participating in TWI programs. The purpose of this research study is to talk with African American students and their parents/caregivers to get their opinions about the program, how students use language, and how they see themselves as participants.

My child is being asked to participate in this project because he/she is an African American student in the TWI program who is in the 4th-8th grade and has participated in the program since kindergarten or first grade, and he/she has been observed to use varied speech styles. He/she has permission from me to participate in the study.

Procedures

If I agree to allow my child to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

- My child will be asked to participate in three interviews with the researcher. This will include reading over the questions beforehand.
- My child will meet with to answer the research questions by dialoguing about them with the researcher for a maximum of three times for a maximum of three hours. The first two times will be to dialogue and the third time will be to present the information gathered from all the students, and obtain my child's perception about the results.
- The purpose of these meetings will be for my child to dialogue with the researcher about his/her experiences in the San Luis Language Institute Two-Way Immersion program.
- The interviews will be done in English.
- The researcher will provide my child with a set of questions to be answered, to guide the dialogue in advance of my child's meetings, but my child does not have to limit his/her discussion to only these questions. I can review the questions he/she will be answering.
- The dialogues that my child will participate in with the researcher will be audiotaped and transcribed into written form for purposes of documentation and verification. The audiotapes will be destroyed immediately upon completion of each transcription.
- My child will review the written transcript (or audiotape on a tape recorder provided by the researcher), and my child can change, add to, or edit the transcript in any way.
- The researcher will come observe in my child's classroom, look at my child's work samples, as well as permanent cumulative files and other information available (such as test scores) regarding my child's experience at the Sacramento Language Institute; The researcher will also talk with me about my child's work, language use, program participation and identity.

- The researcher will keep notes on email and telephone communications regarding the study and will provide my child a copy of these documents upon request.
- No portion of my child's conversation with the researcher will be included in the study without my child's approval.

Risks and Discomfort

- Some of the research questions may be personal regarding my child, and members of the San Luis Language Institute community.
- My child may become bored during the questioning and debriefing of audiotapes.
- Some of the questions in the dialogue with the researcher may make my child feel uncomfortable, but my child is free to decline to answer any questions he/she does not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
- I understand that my child may request to respond to the transcript by telephone if he/she feels it necessary. This will be permissible in the study.

Benefits

- The opportunity for teachers and administrators to have information that can facilitate improvement of the program for my child based on the information gathered in the interviews.
- My child will learn about research projects.
- Upon completion of the study, my child will be able to read and correct his/her own reflections and insights on the work and read those of fellow participants involved in the study.
- A possible increase in self-esteem because he/she will be the focal point of the research.
- Knowledge that the research will potentially have a larger social impact than immediately recognizable
- Gaining a perspective on the past and present that allows my child to understand herself/himself better, including his/her participation in school
- He/she will be able to read and correct his/her own reflections and insights on the work and be informed of those of fellow participants involved in the study.
- My child will be a co-researcher helping to discover information about him/herself and other African American students, which may give him/her more confidence in him/herself and may improve the school program for my child.
- Empowerment to use information gathered in research to communicate to the school community and beyond, what my child feels is important.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me or my child as a result of taking part in this study; however, participation in the study will require a maximum of three meetings and three hours of his/her time, in addition to the time necessary to review the transcripts or audio (approximately one and a half hours) and prepare for interviews (approximately one hour), totaling approximately five hours.

Payment/Reimbursement

My child will not be reimbursed for participation in this study; however, my child can keep the tape recorder used to record the interviews.

Other

My child's identity and that of the institution will be protected by using pseudonyms rather than real names. While my child may be quoted directly from interviews, documents and observations, protecting confidentiality will always be of utmost importance.

Questions

Should I have any questions, comments or concerns, I may call Ms. Michele Anberg-Espinosa at XXX-XXXX (home) or (XXX) XXX-XXXX (cell) or email her at manbergespinosa@hotmail.com at any time.

I have spoken to Michele Anberg-Espinosa, as well as read additional information provided by her about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have any further questions, I may call her at XXX-XXXX (home) or (XXX) XXX-XXXX (cell) or send her an email at manbergespinosa@hotmail.com. I may also contact Dr. Bettye Taylor at the University of San Francisco at (415) 422-6041 or taylorb@usfca.edu.

If I have any questions or comments about my participation in this study, I should first speak with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to talk with the researcher, I may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message; by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu; or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Bldg., University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to say I don't want my child to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to allow my child to participate in this study will have no influence on the researcher's present or future status as a student at USF. My signature below indicates that I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject's Parent/Guardian

Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date of Signature

Contact Information:

Parent's/Guardian's Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): Home _____ Cell _____ Other _____

Name of Emergency Contact Person: _____ Phone _____

E-mail: _____

Child's Name(s): _____

Age(s): _____

Grade(s): _____

Best way to contact you? _____

Preferred days/dates/time of day for meeting with your child? _____

Preferred location for meeting with your child? _____

Appendix E
Student Academic Data

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
Student A (Janée Foster)	2	READING: ENGLISH: On grade level SPANISH: On grade level WRITING: ENGLISH: Approaching grade level SPANISH: Approaching grade level MATH: Approaching grade level ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE: List./Spkg: On Grade Level Reading: On Grade Level: Word analysis, Approaching grade level: comprehension Fluency/Vocab. And Lit. Response and Analysis Writing: Approaching grade level: Strategies and conventions Effort: Satisfactory	Spring 2007 English Test: CST ELA- Below Basic CST Math-Below Basic 2007 Spanish Test: Aprenda: Not given to 3rd graders	Grade 2 Student Service Team to set up calendar to catch up to grade level performance Grade 3 Afterschool Intervention program Reading Comp. in Spanish	In past: Very good Currently: Distracted easily when working independently; could work better with peers	Recommended retention in 2nd grade. Retained in 3rd grade

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services	Behavior and	Other
	Entered Two-Way Program			Provided by the School	Work Habits	
Student B (Lakeisha Brown)	K	READING: ENGLISH: On grade level SPANISH: On grade level WRITING: ENGLISH: On grade level SPANISH: On grade level MATH: On grade level ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE: List./Spkg: On Grade Level Reading: On Grade Level: Word analysis, comprehension Approaching grade level: Fluency/Vocab. and Lit. Response and Analysis Writing: On grade level: Conventions Approaching grade level: Strategies Effort: Satisfactory	Spring 2007 English Test: CST ELA- Basic CST Math- Basic 2007 Spanish Test: Aprenda: Not given to 3 rd graders	n/a	Satisfactory	

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
	Entered Two-Way Program					
Student C (Alyssa Martin)	K	READING: ENGLISH: On grade level SPANISH: Approaching grade level WRITING: ENGLISH: Approaching grade level level SPANISH: Approaching grade level MATH: Approaching grade level ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE: List./Spkg: Approaching Grade Level Reading: Approaching Grade Level Writing: Approaching grade level Effort: Satisfactory	Spring 2007 English Test: CST ELA- Below Basic CST Math- Below Basic 2007 Spanish Test: Aprenda: Rdg: 21% Language: 16% Math: 44%	K/1: received tutoring Summer school recommended Student Study Team: plan of action After school intervention: Reading comprehension Scheduled to receive 3rd grade math during 4th grade Scheduled to receive extra support in Spanish Language Arts 4th grade. 5th grade Afterschool interventions in English	Currently, satisfactory work habits and behavior. History of impulsive behavior; Difficulty focusing; Struggle with behavior and Spanish skills has inhibited ability to learn; Effort needs improvement	Recommended retention 3rd grade during SST; Verbal; good at expressing personal needs; Takes risks in Spanish; Has many friends, likes fine arts, instruments, guitar, bone-percussion, dancing, singing

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized	Support Services Provided	Behavior and	Other
	Entered Two-Way Program		Tests	by the School	Work Habits	
Student D	K	READING: ENGLISH: On grade level	Spring 2007	Grade 3: After school	Satisfactory;	1st and 3rd
(Keshawn		SPANISH: On grade level	English Test:	Interventions;	Excellent: "Class	grades: Truancy
Thomas)		WRITING: ENGLISH: On grade level	CST ELA-	Recommended summer	participation" and	Issues:
		SPANISH: Approaching grade level	Basic	school end of grade 3	"Completes and	Excessive
		MATH: On grade level:	CST Math-	Grade 4: After school	returns	tardies and
		Number sense and Mathematical Reasoning;	Basic	Interventions in English;	homework"	absences
		Approaching grade level: Algebra, Measurement and	2007 Spanish			2nd grade
		Geometry, Statistics, Data analysis and Probability;	Test:			noteworthy
		ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE:	Aprendizaje:			effort in L2
		List./Spkg: Approaching Grade Level	Rdg: 25%			
		Reading: Approaching Grade Level	Language: 6%			
		Writing: Approaching grade level:	Math: 48%			
		Effort: Satisfactory				

Student	Grade Entered Two-Way Program	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
Student E (Natalia López)	K	ELA- C- Satisfactory work habits SLA- B- Satisfactory work habits Math- D- Unsatisfactory work habits Marisella is struggling with math concepts. Overall GPA: 2.5	Spring 2007 English Test: Spring 2007 CST ELA- Basic CST Math- Below Basic CST Science- Basic 2007 Spanish Test: Aprenda: Rdg: 40% Language: 57% Math: 34%	4th grade: Afterschool Interventions; small group work 4 days/week; Tutoring for Math Recommended summer school end of grade 4	Satisfactory (except Math this trimester)	3rd and 4th grade: Truancy Issues: Excessive Tardies 4th grade: recommended for retention 3rd grade vision/hearing screening; needed glasses

Student	Grade Entered Two-Way Program	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
Student B2 (Devon Brown)	Middle of first grade (January)	ELA- B (working at 7th grade level) Satisfactory work habits SLA- A-(working at 7th grade level) Satisfactory work habits Math-Pre-Algebra B Satisfactory work habits Overall GPA: 3.76	Spring 2007 English Test: Spring 2007 CST ELA- Advanced CST Math- Advanced CST Science: Proficient Spanish Test: Aprendizaje: *	2nd grade: Afterschool Interventions; in Spanish grammar	Satisfactory	GATE identified; enthused in acting/plays

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
	Entered Two-Way Program					
Student F (Elena Jones- Hernández)	K Entered K late— birthday 11/94; Entered K 8/00.	ELA- C- Satisfactory work habits Tests are modified per IEP SLA- C- Satisfactory work habits Struggles with literature analysis/responses Math-Pre-Algebra C Satisfactory work habits Tests are modified per IEP Overall GPA: 2.29	Spring 2007 English Test: Spring 2007 CST ELA- Below Basic CST Math- Below Basic CST Science: n/a 2007 Spanish Test: Aprendá: Rdg. 18 Language: 38 Math: 55	IE—1/26/01 Speech and Language 2x per week for 20-30 minutes; Occupational Therapy for gross and fine motor skills; Grades 3 and 5: Afterschool Intervention: Reading and Writing 6th grade SST— Recommended: modified tests, Speech therapist to communicate with teacher for strategies	Satisfactory	6th grade theatre-A; Currently in theatre: Artistic co-director of costumes

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
	Entered Two-Way Program					
Student	1st grade	ELA-D	Spring 2007	2nd grade-10/01 SST	History of lack of	Asthma
G1		Unsatisfactory work habits	English Test:	small group instruction	focus, effort, self	Truancy Issues:
(William		SLA-F	Spring 2007	4th –Support and Intervention	control and	Kinder,2nd, 4th
Wilson		Unsatisfactory work habits	CST ELA-	strategies for those at risk for	organization;	grades
		Has difficulty with Spanish level. Has struggled	Below Basic	retention: START program,	2nd grade:	2nd-Reading
		with comprehension tests.	CST Math- Below	CSUS Student teachers, small	Tardies one day a	comprehension
		Math-Algebra-F	Basic	grp instructions, cross age	week and	problems, math
		Unsatisfactory work habits	CST Science:	tutoring, cooperative grouping,	homework not	fact problems.
			n/a	Sylvan End of 4th grade	submitted	Retained in 2nd
		William’s lack of effort and organization affects	2007 Spanish Test:	Recommended summer school	Suspension	grade
		his learning.	Aprenda:	6th grade After school	3/03, brought	
		Overall GPA: .67	Rdg. 9	Intervention English Reading	weapon;	
			Language: 1	and Writing		
			Math: 61			

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
Student	Entered				Suspension	3rd grade-
G1	Two-Way				6/03, 9/03 for fighting	Participates well
(William	Program				6th-Easily frustrated	in theatrical
Wilson)					with difficulties in	plays
					Reading or Writing in	6th- small
					either language.	groups with
					8th-	teacher works
					Has difficulty with	well
					organization and tests;	
					Recommended	
					behavior review 4/03;	

Student	Grade	Grade Level Performance	Standardized Tests	Support Services Provided by the School	Behavior and Work Habits	Other
	Entered Two-Way Program					
Student G2 (Michelle Wilson)	K	ELA- D+ Satisfactory work habits Has difficulty taking tests SLA- D Satisfactory work habits Has difficulty with Spanish level. Has struggled with comprehension tests. Math- Algebra C Satisfactory work habits Overall GPA: 1.76	Spring 2007 English Test: Spring 2007 CST ELA- Below Basic CST Math- Below Basic CST Science: n/a 2007 Spanish Test: Aprenda: Rdg. 13 Language: 10 Math: 53	End of 1st grade- Recommended summer school 4th –Support and Intervention strategies for those at risk for retention: START program, CSUS Student teachers, small grp instructions, cross age tutoring, cooperative grouping, Sylvan 6th grade After school Intervention English Reading and Writing	6th- Work habits and positive behavior yield higher academic achievement; works better alone; distracts self and others.	Truancy Issues: 1st,2nd, 4th grades End of 3rd grade reading at 1st grade level in Spanish. 7th grade- Active participant in Technology A-

*Data not available

Appendix G

Letter of Permission from School

Appendix H

IRBPHS Approval Email

IRB Application # 07-046 - In Review

De: **irbphs** (irbphs@usfca.edu)

Enviado: lunes, 21 de mayo de 2007 10: 31: 10 a.m.

Para: manbergespinosa@hotmail.com

CC: taylorb@usfca.edu

May 21, 2007

Dear Anberg-Espinosa:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #07-046). Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal application.
2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.
3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP

Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

IRBPHS University of San Francisco

Counseling Psychology Department

Education Building - 017

2130 Fulton Street

San Francisco, CA 94117-1080

(415) 422-6091 (Message)

(415) 422-5528 (Fax)

irbphs@usfca.edu

<http://www.usfca.edu/humansubjects/>

Appendix I

Student Alternative Assessment Data (Spring 2007)

Student	Grade	Spanish Rdg. “Results”	English Rdg. “Results”	Spanish Writing	English Writing	Spanish FLOSEM	English FLOSEM
Student A (Janée Foster)	4th	Data not available for 4 th graders	Fluency-51% Accuracy 96% Comprehension 100%	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Student B1 (Lakeisha Brown)	4th	Fluency-98% Accuracy 97% Comprehension 80%	Fluency-94% Accuracy 96% Comprehension 90%	Data not available	Data not available	20/30	30/30

Student	Grade	Spanish Rdg. “Results”	English Rdg. “Results”	Spanish Writing	English Writing	Spanish FLOSEM	English FLOSEM
Student C (Alyssa Martin)	5th	Fluency-55 Accuracy 98% Comprehension 100%	Data not available	Writing Genre: Literature Review Average 2.33/4	Data not available	12/30	30/30
Student D (Keshawn Thomas)	5th	Fluency-101 Accuracy 98% Comprehension 90%	Data not available	Writing Genre: Literature Review Average 2.66/4	Data not available	14/30	29/30

Student	Grade	Spanish Rdg. “Results”	English Rdg. “Results”	Spanish Writing	English Writing	Spanish FLOSEM	English FLOSEM
Student E (Natalia López)	6th	Fluency-91 Accuracy 100% Comprehension 70%	Data not available	Data not available	Writing Genre: Persuasive Letter (English) Average 3.2/4	16/30	30/30
Student B2 (Devon Brown) Note: Student was assessed on 7th grade tests	6th	Fluency-137 Accuracy 98% Comprehension 90%	Fluency-192 Accuracy 100% Comprehension 100%	Writing Genre: Persuasive Essay (Spanish) Average 4.2/5	Data not available	29/30	30/30

Student	Grade	Spanish Rdg. “Results”	English Rdg. “Results”	Spanish Writing	English Writing	Spanish FLOSEM	English FLOSEM
Student F (Elena Jones- Hernández)	7th	Fluency-70 Accuracy 99% Comprehension 60%	Did not complete	Persuasive Essay (Spanish) Average 2.2/5	Data not available	26/30	25/30
Student G1 (William Wilson)	8th	Fluency-145 Accuracy 99% Comprehension 70%	Comprehension 78%	Writing Genre: Response to Literature (Spanish) Average 2.3/4	Data not available	12/30	30/30

Student	Grade	Spanish Rdg. “Results”	English Rdg. “Results”	Spanish Writing	English Writing	Spanish FLOSEM	English FLOSEM
Student G2 (Michelle Wilson)	8th	Fluency-94 Accuracy 99% Comprehension (too difficult; therefore, was tested on 6 th grade passage—80%	Comprehension 75%	Writing Genre: Response to Literature (Spanish) Average 1.7/4	Data not available	12/30	30/30