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### **The Role of Community Building in Second Language Acquisition in the Mainstream Classroom**

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The University of San Francisco

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY BUILDING IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION  
IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

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

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

By  
Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas  
San Francisco  
May 10, 2021

## ABSTRACT

The world is currently suffering from population displacement due to climate change, war, and economic instability which force many people to migrate in search of a better life, and many of these immigrants include school-age children. This mixed-methods research study sought to establish the association between community building, emotion, and second language acquisition by administering a survey to second language learners in the Napa Valley north of San Francisco in the spring of 2020. The participants were fourteen sixth grade students who had been enrolled in the same English and Spanish dual language immersion program since kindergarten.

The theoretical framework for this study was Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory that language learning is a social activity and Merrill Swain's output hypothesis, which proposes that students learn a second language most efficiently when they are involved in collaborative dialogue. The participants self-reported a slight improvement in their second language proficiency, mainly in their academic language and less so in their conversational language. Although the participants reported significant experience with community circles, their responses revealed that they did not value relationships with peers and some shared the experience of feeling unsafe, indicating that community building did not work. The results also reaffirmed Vygotsky and Swain's assertion that emotion is intertwined with learning. This research is significant because it shines light on the importance of emotion for second language acquisition and the complexity of successful community building in the classroom.

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.

Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas, Candidate                      May 10, 2021

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M. Sedique Popal, Ed.D., Chairperson                                      May 10, 2021

Patricia Mitchell, Ph.D., Committee Member                                      May 10, 2021

Michael W. Duffy, Ph.D., Committee Member                                      May 10, 2021

## DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to Pachamama, the Universe, las Abuelitas,

Abuelita Felicita, Abuelita MamaDona, Tia Estela,

a toda mi familia, a Mamita Linda,

as well as to all of my ancestors and descendants,

and to every teacher and student I have ever met.

Mamita Linda, you taught me how to reason and how to love when you told me that I

was a prince and it was my duty to help the world.

In love and light.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Statement of the Problem

There is a large displacement of people occurring throughout the world. Many of these migrants are school-age children who need to be integrated into the school system. The schools are therefore faced with the challenge of facilitating these students' assimilation to a new culture, language, and educational system. According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees report, *UNHCR: The Environment, and Climate Change (2015)*, worldwide immigration is now facilitated because of globalization and the accessibility it has created, which has eased the access of communication, trade, and transportation and accounts for a large number of people migrating; however, most people who migrate do so out of necessity, because of unsafe living conditions and the lack of basic necessities for survival.

The world is going through climate change which has increased droughts, rain, hurricanes, and other natural disasters, causing internal displacement as well as sending many migrants away from their homes. Also, the United States has been continuously at war since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2003, resulting in an increase in political and economic refugees (UNHCR, 2015). In California, this influx of newly-arrived immigrants has caused schools to become even more crowded and depleted already scarce educational resources for second language learners (Madrid, 2011). This influx also includes school-age children who often do not know the English language, are behind academically, or have never had formal schooling.

The National Conference of State Legislatures reported that, in 2016, 13% of the population of the United States was foreign born (<http://www.ncsl.org>), which means that, as H.D. Brown (1994) points out, in order for these people to successfully transition into American society, acculturation must take place. The attitudes toward recent immigrants and cultural groups must always be positive in order to lower their affective filter (Brown, 2014). The children of immigrant families often enter the school system not knowing English, where they become English language learners (ELL), or English learners (EL) (Brown, 2014). The California Department of Education (2016) reports that, during the 2015-2016 school year, 6,226,737 English learners were enrolled in California schools, making up 22.1% of the total student population (<http://www.cde.ca.gov>).

As the Washington Post argued, since the passage of President George W. Bush's educational reform act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, K-12 education in the United States has become a high-stakes, high-stress procedure, from which immigrant students have suffered, as most if not all of the instructional time has become focused on preparing students for the test, which usually means rote learning and memorization instead of understanding (Strauss & Ramey, 2014). As a result, these students continue to struggle. Diane Ravitch (2011), a former proponent of school reform and high-stakes testing, stresses that the pressure that is placed on the students will be a method of training and not educating because most students view the current methods as drudgery. To a second language learner, this drudgery can be even more harmful because it can affect the intrinsic motivation that is needed to succeed (Madrid, 2011).

Furthermore, the National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that, in 2015, 35% of all fourth grade students had reached proficiency in reading, while 46% of white fourth graders had reached proficiency; the number of Hispanic students scoring proficient that same year was 21%, or 14% fewer than the overall average and 24% fewer than their white peers (Camera, 2016). In addition, in many school districts, Hispanic students are, on average, one and a half grade levels behind their peers (Rabinovitz, 2016).

Besides high-stakes testing, most of these ELLs are suffering from a lack of reading relevant literature, and as a result they often feel a sense of disempowerment and urgency (Calderon, 2007) and are at risk (Evers & Schneider, 2009). When these new arrivals feel oppressed, it often leads to ethnic distinction, which is a form of racism (Darder & Torres, 2004) and adds to a culture of poverty, as the creation of a separate socio-economic and, at times, ethnic culture. This can lead to generational poverty as well as the creation of a separate culture (Lewis, 1966) and student defiance (hooks, 1994). At times, these second language learners are also erroneously placed in special education classes because of scant resources (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010).

Once students are properly identified as ELL, they are placed in an English Language Development program (ELD). Brown (2014) describes ELD as a specialized instructional program specifically designed to promote listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of English language learners (ELL). All students, especially those who are learning a second language, have three basic needs that must be met in order to optimize learning. These are the interpersonal, expressive, and sociolinguistic needs that are associated with building community, which include establishing trust in order for



relationships to develop. While these needs are natural, there is nothing natural about learning a second language in a setting where the students are not comfortable. Through the building of community, the students will have a lower affective filter, meaning that they will feel more comfortable about practicing their second language, and, as a result, they will be able to take risks and chances as they speak and converse with one another, and gain skills which can be transferred to their academic performance.

The primary goal of English Language Development is to facilitate the transition of ELL students into the mainstream (English) classroom. Many times, these students may not have had the chance to develop a voice in their first language, and they are now asked to develop their voice in a second language, which can make education frustrating and a chore instead of a positive and rewarding experience. Therefore, it is instrumental for students to gain a sense of identity and establish their voice, for this is part of the academic process and eases acculturation while diminishing culture shock (Brown, 2014).

The needs of all second language learners are similar, whether they are learning English as a second language or Spanish as a second language, for they have the same basic need, which is to be able to build trust both within and outside of the classroom. All second language learners have the need to feel accepted before they can truly learn. Yet, some English learners have the added stigma of being undocumented or the privilege of a good academic education. Many of these ELLs live with constant fear of being exposed and deported to their native countries. As a result of this fear, many of these students keep to themselves and are tight-lipped about their familial circumstances (Brown, 2014).

Therefore, a way to meet many of the needs of students who have not become acculturated to their new society is community building, a form of cultural citizenship and critical universalism which respects particularities while working to dismantle oppression (Darder & Torres, 2004). Community building is the creation of a safe and nurturing environment in which students do not have to suppress their emotions (Lipman, 2004) and can thereby build their own identities and realities (Shor, 1999). It is important for all students to feel a sense of identity, especially minorities, because, at times, these students are viewed as not having any relevance or worth. At times, when these students are singled out, it is in a negative connotation, and they are seen as people who do not have anything to contribute to the class, making them even more vulnerable, for they are now viewed by both teachers and students as obstacles to learning (Lipman, 2004). Thus, the building of community is important for all students, but especially so for second language learners who are creating and practicing a new language.

Moreover, in the educational setting, community building can have many different aspects and variations, all of which should lead to a safe and nurturing place where all students feel secure enough to voice their own opinions and take chances without fear of being ridiculed (Gibbs, 2014). Community building can look like a circle group held at different times of the day, in which the students share their stories which empowers them and helps them to reclaim their own identity and voice. A part of community building can be class decision-making, which allows the students a certain amount of freedom, as they help to establish class rules and norms.

The building of community is also essential in group work because, for the group to reach its optimal learning capabilities, it must be cohesive and fluid, which involves

explicit training and a certain amount of discussion, as students negotiate their own learning through collaborative dialogue. Sadly, the building of community is not taken into account in most types of group work; very often, community building is taken for granted, but it must be explicitly taught, nurtured, and modeled in order to have optimal effect (Gibbs, 2014). Certain academic programs and curricula have been created to ensure that students are working together towards building a community of learners. These include Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS).

Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) is a program or curriculum developed to implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). PBIS was authorized in 1997 by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The idea was introduced in the 1980s and evolved from specifically targeting students with special needs, many of whom exhibit challenging behavior, to a systematic, schoolwide program which shifts the focus from addressing bad behavior to encouraging and rewarding good behavior. Programs like BEST have been used since the early 1990s. Results in the early 2000s showed that, over a three-year period, schools employing BEST saw student office referrals drop by 50%, and the staff in these schools reported experiencing more joy in their work (Positive Intervention and Supports, 2017).

The needs of all second language learners in the United States are similar. But besides learning a new language, some students, specifically ELLs, may be behind academically, while some may never have had formal schooling. Also, living in a new culture may make many second language learners, specifically English learners, uncomfortable, shy, and reluctant to speak out. By not speaking, these students are not

practicing, forming, and creating new language. There are many students in dual language immersion programs, second language learners, who have some of the same needs as ELLs. These students are learning a second language, which can be a daunting and terrifying experience if not properly addressed. Because learning a second language includes vocalization, which may sound funny at times, requires that the teacher must make sure that this moment of laughter does not turn into prolonged verbal ridicule and laughter aimed at the risk-taker (Gibbs, 2014).

### **Background and Need for the Study**

The best way to ease students' learning of a second language is by helping them feel comfortable in a safe learning environment, which will give them the confidence to take chances in their second language. The students need to learn social skills so that they can learn to build relationships with classmates and teachers. Even though speaking is natural, there is hesitancy and a certain amount of hesitancy involved when speaking in a second language. Community building is a sociocultural way to help all second language learners get used to speaking out about what they know, primarily themselves, which allows the rest of the class access to their identity.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Russian educator and psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) published his ideas about learning as a sociocultural process, in which a child's play is considered part of learning, and, as the child develops, playing takes on additional rules. For example, young toddlers play hide and seek or chase, yet, as they mature, they can develop added rules to these two simple games by employing dialogue, which plays an integral role in learning. As children's speech expands, these added rules are expected from them because, through play, their zone of proximal development continues to

expand, and they begin to look at things as a whole instead of just being interested in part, as is common in younger children (Swain, 2000).

A lot of important work in this area has been done by Merrill Swain (2000, 2013), who, through her output hypothesis (OH), has shown that the production of language occurs instantly, and, in a collaboration, the output of both speakers can be a test of the individual and collaborative hypotheses they are both constructing while building further knowledge. By continuing to test their own hypotheses, the students become aware of the gaps in their knowledge, internalize, reflect, and expand on what they already know, thereby constructing language and expanding their zone of proximal development. According to Swain, it is a lot easier for students to self-check and self-reflect when they are speaking, because they are simultaneously internalizing their output.

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of language learning includes three main components: social interaction, the role of a more knowledgeable other, and the zone of proximal development. Social interaction is part of the learning process. As the child learns, the child develops, in fact, the child actually learns and begins to have emotions in the womb. Some pregnant mothers play classical music to soothe their unborn babies; after birth, the child goes from the basic needs of being hungry or wet to more complex feelings of joy, giggles, and peek-a-boo. Vygotsky's theory of second language acquisition is the same as first language acquisition. He believed that social interaction with a more knowledgeable other, either a peer or a teacher, was needed for the development and learning of the child. Vygotsky (1978) explained the zone of proximal development thus: "learning awakens a variety of internal processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in

cooperation with his peers” (p. 90). In other words, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the difference between what learners can do with help and what they can do independently, so, as they learn, new avenues and structures for learning open up ahead of them (Swain, 2000).

Swain (2000) furthers Vygotsky’s sociocultural development studies in all manner of second language acquisition, as she points out that most of the research in second language acquisition has been focused on understanding or meaning and not on form and that, by using the output hypothesis, through collaborative dialogue (CD), both meaning and form are emphasized and develop simultaneously. Collaborative dialogue involves collaborative tasks (Swain, 1999), which means that students are involved in meaningful collaborative exercises. Collaborative tasks (CT) are tasks in which a group of students mediate their own learning through their involvement in activities. This can involve, for example, taking different roles and responsibilities while conducting and presenting research. Collaborative tasks are usually mediated by the students and work best when there is a high level of trust in the classroom. In the educational setting, collaborative dialogue is often seen in science and math, specifically in lab work and presentations, but it is not usually seen in language classes.

Swain (2013) also stresses that the role of emotion in second language acquisition has been inadequately researched, even though it lowers students’ affective filter. The research that has been done emphasizes emotion as a *product* of second language acquisition. More study is needed about how emotion can *contribute* to second language acquisition. Swain (2000) also points out that there is a lack of research into how second language students learn and states that further research must be done.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate whether the intentional nurturing of a safe educational and social environment through community building leads to better outcomes for second language learners. This study focused on how second language learners in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade were affected by collaborative dialogue and community building through the use of the BEST curriculum. The needs of English language learners are many, and both ELLs and second language learners share a need for a safe environment; however, the needs of English language learners may be different, since some ELLs may be illiterate, and some may be academically behind in their first language. Due to the pandemic limiting the researcher's access to most school sites, the participants were changed from English language learners only to second language learners. It is of the utmost importance for all second language learners to feel safe through community building, by which acculturation will be accelerated and culture shock will be diminished. All second language learners need a safe environment in which they can express their emotions, and this space is provided by community building. Through participation in collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks in a safe, supportive community, students gain a voice, therefore inclusion begins, and a sense of identity is further developed, as students take the opportunity to become acclimated to their new and different society.

The survey was administered in the spring of 2020 to three groups of 6<sup>th</sup> grade dual-language immersion students, including both English language learners and Spanish language learners, fourteen of whom received parental permission to participate in the study. The survey involved 14 quantitative questions and four qualitative, open-ended

questions. By conducting this study, the researcher gained valuable information from individual student voices of second language learners to help understand how the use of community building techniques in classrooms establishes the trust needed to positively affect the academic and social lives of second language learners.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research study was based on two second language acquisition theories: Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural development theory, which includes social interaction, learning from a more knowledgeable other, and the zone of proximal development, and Merrill Swain's output hypothesis, which includes collaborative dialogue, collaborative tasks, and the role of emotion in learning.

#### ***Vygotsky's sociocultural theory***

This study drew upon the sociocultural development theory (SCT) of Lev Vygotsky (1978), a Russian educator and psychologist who worked in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but whose work did not become well-known until the 1960s because of the fear of Communism and Marxism (Kinnear, Steinman, & Swain, 2015). Vygotsky's theory has three key concepts. The first is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in learning and precedes learning. The second is that students should interact with people who know more about the language than they do, people Vygotsky termed "the more knowledgeable other", whether they are students or teachers. The third key concept is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the academic range of the student's own ability without help, after learning from the teacher or a more knowledgeable classmate. It is the zone between students' current knowledge and ability and their potential,



therefore encompassing what they are ready to learn. As this learning takes place, with much practice, the student's ceiling continues to rise because the student constructs new knowledge and adds new information to what they already know.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of second language acquisition is the same as that of first language acquisition. He asserts that learning a second language is both a cognitive and an emotional process. Emotion is part of the learning development, and learning is an inter-psychological phenomenon whose foundation is social interaction. Vygotsky believed that the roles of emotion and cognition are inseparable from each other in learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky also believed that interaction through dialogue was the "genesis of learning" (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012, p. 37), because it lowers students' inhibitions. By doing so, students feel safe and daring enough to continue to take chances, thereby constantly expanding their learning while pushing the ceiling of their own ZPD. The lowering of inhibitions is beneficial for all students, including all second language learners, yet it is even more so for English learners in the United States, who are trying to make sense of a new language, a new culture, and new norms.

### ***Swain's output hypothesis***

Merrill Swain's output hypothesis of second language acquisition (1993, 2000) states that learning a second language is both a cognitive and a social process. This can be done through the use of collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks, which, because they encourage negotiation among peers, are both cognitive and social activities which also lower the affective filter. In the course of these negotiations, students are able to take chances, self-monitor, and self-correct, as they test out their learning theories

through their interaction with their peers. Students' initial output is language construction which they continue to build in the course of the dialogue.

Swain believes that student output can be observed through speaking, writing, utterances, verbalization, and collaborative dialogue, and that, through internalization, external activities are transformed into mental ones, becoming one's own. This cooperation with others includes reasoning, attention, and voluntary memory. She believes that problems can be solved through social interaction which can be observed, and that collaborative dialogue is commonly used as a mediating tool in math, science, and social studies, yet, when used in language instruction, it is a harder concept to understand, and this is evidenced by the lack of research (Swain, 1993, 2000).

Collaborative dialogue is a form of guided socialization which leads to self-awareness and self-correction, as it makes language learners aware of their mistakes and the gaps in their knowledge and motivates them to address them (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Swain observed that, while students are engaged in collaborative dialogue, they are noticing their own language gaps, which means they are continuously making hypotheses and testing out and reflecting on new language (Swain, 1999, 2000). As students notice the gaps and holes in their learning, they also learn what they can and cannot do, thereby expanding their ZPD.

When a classroom has a sense of community, collaborative dialogue can be used as an instructional tool, because second language learners feel safer and will, therefore, take more chances without fear of being ridiculed by more proficient speakers of the target language. Through the use of community building and collaborative dialogue, many of these students will find their sense of identity and, many times, regain their

voice that had been stifled by their lack of proficiency in their second language (Swain, 1997, 1999). Community is, in turn, built through collaborative dialogue around academic tasks, just as in other circumstances, students' conversational dialogue will lead to building a community of trust. One does not necessarily precede the other, as they should happen simultaneously.

Swain defines collaborative tasks as two or more students participating in a task through collaborative dialogue. Swain states that most tasks are focused on making meaning through language, rather than on the form or use of the language, but with collaborative dialogue, students can thus focus on both form and meaning instantly by trying out different hypotheses. The learning that takes place during collaborative tasks can be measured through written work, observations, or recordings by the teacher. The students get instant feedback as they encounter gaps in their knowledge, hypothesize about the construction of new language, test their hypotheses, and internalize their new learning. As students test their new theories, a safe, protected environment must be in place, for they are taking risks and thereby can be encouraged to talk more. Most students have been involved in collaborative tasks since their formative years in school, from forming a line at lunch to cleaning up their own mess. Therefore, collaborative tasks are part of most students' *a priori* practices by the time they reach middle school, and they are something they feel comfortable with (Swain, 1999, 2000).

According to Swain (2013), the role of emotion in second language acquisition is of equal importance to that of cognition. They are inseparable. This follows Vygotsky's assertion that emotion and learning are connected. Emotions are often viewed as private but are, in fact, interpersonal and part of the social, cultural, and cognitive construct.

Positive emotions support and enhance the language learning opportunities provided by collaborative dialogue, while negative emotions interfere with social interactions and undermine language practice and development. According to Swain, the production of language leads to actions, which leads to language learning. All of this points to the need for the building of community, the creation of a place where students trust one another and feel comfortable taking risks.

There are many similarities between English learners and those who are learning another second language, such as the need for a safe place where students can feel comfortable learning. However, besides having different experiences, English learners may have more acute needs, such as being behind in their first language, being behind academically, or lacking any formal schooling. The stigmatization of not being born in the United States is also a burden they have to bear. Their main need is to be able to trust, feel safe, and feel acknowledged as a human being.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this mixed-methods study:

1. How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?
2. How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?
3. How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?

### **Limitations/Delimitations**

This study was limited to second language learners in three mainstream 6<sup>th</sup> grade middle school English classes. All of these students were in a dual-language immersion program and had experienced community circles. In community circles, the students form a circle with their chairs or on the floor. Community circles are a safe place where students can voice their opinions, state facts, or just share what is going on in their lives. By interacting with one another within the circle, students and teachers are building a trusting community.

This study did not take into consideration the students' place of birth, legal status, or the first language of the second language learners. The amount of time the students had spent in the school district was not a factor, since all the participants had been attending the same school since Kindergarten. This study did not involve parents or other home-based factors. A further limitation was that the students self-reported their academic and behavioral history; therefore, their perspective may not be supported by their assessment scores or teachers' observations.

Another limitation of this study was that, when identifying the participants, the researcher relied on parental permission collected by sending letters to parents of all the sixth-grade students and asking them to sign and return a permission form. The researcher was given permission to use the responses of fourteen of the students. Even though all participants had begun their education in the same school (as required by the dual-immersion model), by the time they reached middle school, they may have had different school experiences and been exposed to different manners and degrees of community building.

A final limitation was that BEST is only one of various programs that can be used to implement PBIS in a school district. The research was limited to BEST and did not take into account other programs designed to achieve the same outcomes. The degree to which this research can be replicated and applied to schools and districts using other programs may be limited. Also, the survey did not include any questions specifically about PBIS.

The researcher acknowledges that there may have been students who did not feel comfortable participating because of the fear of being identified as immigrants. To circumvent this from happening and allay their fears, the three master 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, with whom the students had already formed relationships, were involved in the survey. The researcher's wife had been the English-language arts teacher to the participants for one year, and had been a reading intervention teacher at different elementary schools in the district for the four years prior. However, none of her former students were involved in the study. Finally, the fact that the researcher is an immigrant and speaks English as a second language may have colored his perceptions of the student data.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was to find out how effective community building, through the use of community circles supported by the BEST program, can be in meeting the needs of second language learners for a safe learning environment in which all students are taught to communicate in order to solve problems, reduce conflicts, and improve behavior. This study improved our understanding of how community building supports collaborative dialogue to improve second language acquisition.

Although the school district in which this study was conducted is only one of many districts that use BEST, this study helped gauge and understand student satisfaction and success. There is a need for more research into the relationship between the emotional and the cognitive processes of second language learning and how intentional community building affects language acquisition. By using a survey, the researcher was able to identify themes which can become the basis of future research.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been operationalized for this study:

### **Academic**

In this context, the word “academic” means formal instruction and learning in school.

This includes reading, writing, and critical thinking (Collins English Dictionary).

### **Action Research**

Action research is the method by which teachers can research the students in their own class while it is ongoing. Action research never stops; it is a continuous process

(Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993).

### **Building Effective Schools Together (BEST)**

Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) is a program or curriculum developed to implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). BEST is a schoolwide program which involves a three-tiered behavioral approach to all students using positive and consistent student discipline (pbis.org). The BEST curriculum, which encourages, supports, and expects positive behavior, also plays a role in building community. BEST teaches, instills, and encourages positive behavior instead of a negative behavior and gives students who may not have the social skills or cultural norms the knowledge of what is expected at school and the opportunity to learn and practice these tactics in a supportive environment ([http://www.schoolintervention.com/BEST\\_Behavior.htm](http://www.schoolintervention.com/BEST_Behavior.htm)).

### **Collaborative Dialogue (CD)**

Swain (1997) defines collaborative dialogue as two or more students participating in a collaborative task through dialogue. By using collaborative dialogue, students can focus on both form and meaning instantly by trying out different hypotheses.



### **Community Building (CB)**

For the purposes of this study, community building refers to the nurturing of a safe classroom atmosphere where students and teachers are viewed as equals and treat each other with care and respect (Shor, 1999; hooks, 1994).

### **Community Circle**

Community building can look like a circle group held at different times of the day, in which the students share their stories which empowers them and helps them to reclaim their own identity and voice. Initial teacher modeling can be followed by round robin student check-ins, in which the students state who they are and anything else they may want to share with the rest of the class. Student check-in is a fast and effective way to gauge the mood of the class. Once students feel safe and a safe atmosphere has been established, teachers must not ignore problems and tragedies, but instead encourage the transformation of the students by telling their own personal stories, thus helping them deal with the pain in their lives so that radical change can take place (Freire, 1978, 2000).

### ***Conscientização***

A term first introduced by Paulo Freire to describe the process of transformation that follows when students have gained critical awareness of their social identity and setting. Individual and class *conscientização* can only take place after student introspection and after a class has built a safe community in which the students feel comfortable expressing themselves and taking control of their learning (Freire, 2000). The building of *conscientização* includes critical pedagogy and participatory action research.

### **Critical Pedagogy (CP)**

Pedagogy designed and developed with the participants' unique needs in mind in order to decolonize and empower students. Critical pedagogy develops the critical lens and, along with praxis, constitutes the foundation of human rights education (Freire, 2000).

### **Critical Lens**

A critical lens is achieved as a result of the decolonization of the Western ideal of education. It is the state in which the student can take an objective approach to deconstructing and reconstructing their prior knowledge (Freire, 2000).

### **Dual-Language Immersion Program**

The setting is a dual-language immersion school that follows the two-way bilingual program 90-10 model, which means that most instruction between kindergarten and second grade is in Spanish, and the amount of instruction in English gradually increases until, in third grade, it makes up the majority of the instructional day. This dual-immersion program requires that the parents commit to keeping their students in the school from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, so new students cannot enter after kindergarten unless they are transferring from another 90-10 school (Napa Valley Language Academy, 2020: <https://nvla-nvusd-ca.schoolloop.com/language>).

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Vygotsky (1978) and Swain (2013) both believe that emotion and cognition are intertwined. A lower affective filter correlates with positive emotions, risk-taking, and the emergence of students' personal identities. Swain (2013) asserts that cognition and emotion are intertwined and cannot be separated. Emotions are inter-personal and, therefore, not private, and they cannot be ignored. She states that students' anxieties,

fear, frustration, and apprehension can be measured, but there is a lack of research into how emotion facilitates second language learning. A lack of emotional development leads to stunted emotional intelligence. Egocentrism follows, because the students continue to view the world through the narrow lens of self-interest (Darder, 2009).

### **English Language Development (ELD)**

Brown describes ELD as a specialized instructional program specifically designed to promote listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of English language learners (ELL). The primary goal of English Language Development is to facilitate the transition of ELL students into the mainstream (English) classroom (Brown, 2014).

### **English Language Learner (ELL)/English Learner (EL)**

The children of immigrant families often enter the school system not knowing English, where they become English language learners (ELL), or English learners (EL) (Brown, 2014). Besides high-stakes testing, most of these ELLs are suffering from a lack of reading relevant literature, and as a result they often feel a sense of disempowerment and urgency (Calderon, 2007) and are at risk (Evers & Schneider, 2009). In California, the terms ELL and EL are used interchangeably.

### **Mainstream English**

An instructional setting in which an English learner is placed in regular school classes after achieving a certain level of English proficiency. ([www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mainstream](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mainstream))

### **More Knowledgeable Other**

Vygotsky believed that a student can learn a language from another person, whether a peer or a teacher, who has more knowledge than the student (Vygotsky, 1978). Merrill

Swain, however, found that the other person does not have to be more knowledgeable (Swain 2013).

### **Output Hypothesis (OH)**

Merrill Swain (1993) states that the production of language occurs instantly and, by producing output, students learn to take chances, self-monitor, and address the gaps in their own development, thereby constructing and expanding further knowledge. The output hypothesis includes collaborative dialogue, collaborative tasks, and the role of emotion in learning. One of the results of output is that students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) continue to rise.

### **Participatory Action Research**

Participatory action research is a term that accompanies critical pedagogy and critical literacy. It differs from action research in that the students are co-researchers. By involving the students, the class gains insight into what is important to the students' lives, in order for them to find their own solutions. Making students co-researchers empowers them, because they are learning what is relevant to their lives instead of what is dictated by the curriculum (Freire, 2000).

### **Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)**

Certain academic programs and curricula have been created to ensure that students are working together towards building a community of learners. These include Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) is a program or curriculum developed to implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). PBIS was authorized in 1997 by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The idea was

introduced in the 1980s and evolved from specifically targeting students with special needs, many of whom exhibit challenging behavior, to a systematic, schoolwide program which shifts the focus from addressing bad behavior to encouraging and rewarding good behavior (<https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs>).

### **Praxis**

Praxis is the action which follows critical pedagogy. Once the problem has been identified through the development of a critical lens by means of critical pedagogy, and the solution has been imagined, the praxis is the action designed to achieve the solution (Park, 1993).

### **Second language learners/Dual language learners**

In this study, the researcher uses the term “second language learner” to refer to any and all students who are learning a second language, regardless of their first language or which language they are learning. This also includes English language learners, because all second language learners share a basic need: a safe place to take risks in order to construct new language (Swain, 1997).

### **Social Interaction**

Vygotsky believed that social interaction is personal and social, and parts of speech are play and drawing (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Sociocultural Theory (SCT)**

Also called Vygotsky’s social development theory, this theory states that socialization through interaction plays an active role in learning. It includes negotiation and collaboration in order to make new meaning, a process which can be seen from birth.

The three components of the sociocultural theory are social interaction, the more knowledgeable other, and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The Zone of Proximal Development is the zone between students' current knowledge and ability and their potential ability, which can be accomplished with the more knowledgeable other, either a student or a teacher. The student's zone of proximal development continues to rise as the student gains knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Summary of the Research Problem**

All second language learners must have low inhibitions in order to feel safe and take chances while learning a second language. This can be accomplished through the building of community in the classroom, which can meet all the students' sociocultural needs while they learn a second language. In order to narrow the achievement gap of English language learners, there are certain needs to be met. ELLs are often academically behind non-ELL students because of their lack of formal education, their lack of English proficiency, and their lack of a supportive learning community, which makes acculturation difficult. ELL students are facing many challenges besides learning a second language, and these include geographical, cultural, and social changes. Also, some students are undocumented or migrant, and have gaps in their education, so in order to expedite all of the students' needs, they must first begin to trust that the classroom is a safe and protected environment. English language learners and second language learners have the same need: to feel trust. As students gain trust, their anxiety level is lowered and their zone of proximal development is heightened, making them comfortable and willing to take chances in their second language.

In order to facilitate acculturation, as well as language proficiency, students must learn from one another through collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks. By engaging in these social interactions, students' anxiety level will be lowered as they build relationships with other students and teachers, thus creating an atmosphere of trust. Since sociocultural theory asserts that socialization is needed to optimize learning, this can be accomplished by all of these tasks. The product is the building of a learning community, and the outcome is the narrowing of the achievement gap.

Building community in the classroom can take many forms: by following a curriculum, such as Building Effective Schools Together (BEST), by creating collaborative dialogues among students, and while engaging in collaborative tasks and taking chances, thereby expanding their ZPD and creating a safe environment. When second language learners feel included as productive members of the classroom, they begin to feel more accepted and begin to take responsibility for their own learning. At this stage, students will have built relationships and interacted with one another without fear of being ridiculed, and, as a result, they will be willing to take chances because they are now in a safe and protective environment, for they have constructed a community of learners.

The significance of this research is that it helped to determine how collaborative community building is supporting second language learners, and whether the use of specific community building curricula is successful, as evidenced by the students' improvement in BICS, CALP, and behavior, how it accelerates the learning of a second language, as well as what specific part or parts of the curriculum are successful in supporting the acquisition of a second language.

The theoretical framework was Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of second language acquisition and Merrill Swain's output hypothesis. Vygotsky theorized that humans are social beings and that language is a social construct. Thus, social interaction is part of the learning experience (Vygotsky, 1978). Merrill Swain (1997) has demonstrated the value of structured verbal interaction, which she terms collaborative dialogue, for helping students reach proficiency in a second language. In addition to being an efficient tool for second language learning, positive social interactions among



students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds are a powerful way to facilitate integration, foster understanding, and reduce stigmatization.

Given the value of full participation in collaborative conversation for meeting the needs of second language learners, and the corresponding need to ensure that these interactions are positive and motivating, the quality of the learning environment is of utmost importance. This study explored the relationship between the intentional fostering of a safe, positive learning environment, or community building, and the success of English and other second language learners, as well as other second language learners, in taking advantage of collaborative dialogue to learn English and feel included.

The following research questions were used to guide this mixed-methods study:

1. How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?
2. How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?
3. How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research study was to investigate whether the intentional nurturing of a safe educational and social environment through community building leads to better outcomes for second language learners. Second language learners need a safe environment in which they can express their emotions, and this is provided by community building. Through participation in collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks in a safe, supportive community, students gain a voice; therefore, inclusion begins, and a sense of identity is further developed, as students take the opportunity to acclimate to their new and different society (Swain, 2000).

In this chapter, literature was reviewed to explore the role social interaction in a safe learning environment plays in second language learning. This chapter is made up of four sections. The first section, Second Language Acquisition, explains how learners acquire a second language. The next section covers the Role of Emotion in second language learning. The third section discusses the issues of Assimilation, Acculturation, Empowerment, and Identity for English learners in the United States. The final section shows how Community Building can help lower the stress, or affective filter, associated with learning a language and ease immigrant students' transition into a new culture.

#### **Second Language Acquisition**

This section covers Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural developmental theory, which includes social interaction, the more knowledgeable other, and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), as well as Stephen Krashen's Natural Approach to

second language instruction (Krashen & Terrel, 1983) and Merrill Swain's output hypothesis (Swain, 1993).

Some of the most enduring and influential ideas in the area of language learning are the contributions of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) to the sociocultural theory. Vygotsky's theory has three key concepts. The first is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in learning and precedes learning. The second is that the more knowledge one gets the better, so, to optimize learning, students should surround themselves with people who know as much or more about the subject as they do, whether they are students or teachers. The third key concept is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the range of a student's academic ability. The student's ceiling continues to rise as the student constructs new knowledge and adds new information. For Vygotsky, all three concepts of learning are socially constructed and are part of both the students' first and second language acquisition. All three concepts allow for the students' stress level to be lowered, making them feel more at ease, relaxed, and ready to learn (Ahmed & McCafferty, 2000).

### ***Social interaction***

Vygotsky believed that language and learning are acquired and happens naturally through socialization (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, newborn babies use sounds and gestures to convey their emotional state, such as smiling when happy or crying when hungry or wet. As these sounds or gestures are either ignored or rewarded by the parents, the babies learn to either stop or continue that behavior in order to meet their needs. This is the beginning of learning to communicate; because of the babies' basic human instincts and needs, they have learned to manipulate their world using gestures and sounds.

Through the social interaction with the parents, babies repeat and mimic the parents' words; thus, they are acquiring language and learning how to use it to make meaning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Kinnear, Steinman, & Swain, 2015).

Vygotsky's belief is that language is initially inter-psychological, or between people (Vygotsky, 2012). As the learner processes the information, it then becomes an intra-psychological cognitive process that, if successful, will be repeated until learned. He also believed that there are two types of speech: private, inner speech, and social speech (Ahmed & McCafferty, 2000) and that inner speech precedes both learning and language acquisition. As students reason, they create their own inner speech to make sense of their situation before taking the risk of verbalizing in their new language. For this reason, students must have enough time to process the new information before they are required to respond. As with first language acquisition, gestures precede verbal communication in the second language (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000).

For Vygotsky, the roles of emotion and cognition in learning are inseparable from each other (Vygotsky, 1978). Through social interaction, students develop a sense of inclusion, gain an identity, a voice, a critical lens, and become co-researchers in their own language learning, for learning is both a cognitive and an emotional process, for learning and the emotional process go hand in hand. Thus, emotion is part of the learning development, and learning is an inter-psychological phenomenon whose foundation is social interaction (Maftoon & Mirzaee, 2016; Swain, 2013). Social interaction among students also puts students at ease, lessening the stress that is usually associated with learning a new language (Maftoon & Mirzaee, 2016). Student interaction gives students

a safe way to express themselves and their emotions, at times simply through gestures, and this interaction leads to shared experiences. Social interaction allows the students to make connections through a social and cultural context; therefore, they are learning how to act and interact through their own shared experiences (Donato, 2004).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that students also learn how to mediate and negotiate their learning with one another as they try to make sense and convey their own meaning. Vygotsky refers to the culmination of these processes as *perezhivanie*, which means to make sense, or how people are experiencing their own inner reality or environment through inner, or private, speech and language. The students' own reality is how they view the world through their own personal lens (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012; Ohta, 1995).

#### ***The more knowledgeable other***

According to Vygotsky (1978, 2012), learners learn best through social, active participation, interaction, and collaboration with an expert, or a teacher. But the expert does not necessarily have to be a teacher because students learn language through negotiation of meaning, and their language abilities improve through negotiating with someone whose language is more advanced than theirs. This person, who could be another student, becomes the more knowledgeable other (Ohta, 1995). The negotiation of meaning can be accomplished through socially-situated activities in which both parties are motivated to accomplish a common task (Donato, 2004). This can be facilitated through teacher-modeled narratives in which the students reconstruct the narrative using the language they have at their disposal (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000).

### *The zone of proximal development*

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the distance between the students' ability to do something with someone else's help and independently (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2015). The zone of proximal development is always slightly higher than the students' current ability, so that knowledge is attainable and specifically targeted to their individual needs (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012). When the instruction is in this zone, students feel challenged and confident enough to take chances without being overwhelmed, thereby continuously raising their own ceiling through new learning (Maftoon & Mirzaee, 2016; Valsiner, 2015).

Vygotsky believed that, while in the zone of proximal development, students' learning is always provided in segments which act as scaffolding leading to the construction of new knowledge. Learning in segments is important for all students, but especially for second language learners, who need the additional time to process new information. The teacher, or the more knowledgeable other, has provided the scaffolding that is necessary through instruction and modeling (Vygotsky, 1978). What has been taught and modeled by the teacher should now be within the student's grasp, or zone of proximal development; therefore, they should be able to do it independently (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000). However, Zeus Leonardo and Logan Manning (2015) caution that, since the ZPD will be addressed through the lens of the dominant white society, this kind of instructional planning can perpetuate the existing power structure (Lyscott, 2017), which will then be transferred to the students, leading to a lack of identity and pride towards their native culture (Rodriguez, R., 1983).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that there are two types of motivation that a second language learner will use to better learn the second language. The positive attitude or motivation that the students have toward learning a second language is called integrative motivation and plays a large role in second language development. A positive attitude will lower the stress associated with learning and will allow the students to take chances after making sense of their situation through their own inner speech (Maftoon & Mirzaee, 2016). For the students, with time, integrative motivation can lead to monetary compensation, which is called instrumental motivation (Bailey, 1983; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). An example of this are students who have acquired a second language but continue and further their studies in order to earn more money.

### *The natural approach*

The connection between emotion and language learning has also been explored by linguist Stephen Krashen (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), who originated the term affective filter as part of the Natural Approach to second language acquisition. According to this theory, second language acquisition is similar to first language acquisition, in that a person learns subconsciously and with implicit knowledge, and the Natural Approach is the best way for children to learn a second language. Krashen makes a distinction between acquisition of a language, which happens subconsciously and without formal teaching, and learning a language, in which formal knowledge is explicitly taught. The Natural Approach advocates the natural acquisition of language through social contact, without formal instruction, and teachers following this model do not offer much help (Brown, 2014).

Krashen's Natural Approach (1983) encompasses five different hypotheses. The Affective Filter hypothesis asserts that low anxiety is crucial in order for effective learning to take place. For Krashen, the affective filter means the amount of stress a student may feel when learning a language, the same phenomenon Vygotsky referred to as inhibitions caused by stress. As a result, the lower the stress, the lower the filter, which makes learning easy and fun. That is, the affective filter must be low so that learners can feel encouraged to take chances in speaking. According to the Acquisition-learning hypothesis, the fluency of the learner will depend on what has already been acquired, not learned, where subconscious is better than conscious learning. Also, the ability to learn a second language does not disappear after puberty, although, if learned after puberty, there will be an accent (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Brown, 2014).

Krashen's Monitor hypothesis (1983) states that speakers self-monitor their speech before or after uttering a word. In the before stage, the utterances are derived from what the speaker has already acquired, and conscious learning will follow later. A teacher's constant monitoring of the learner/speakers' language can be detrimental and inhibit second language acquisition. In other words, too many corrections, or negative feedback, will make the learner shy and inhibited about using the language. Also, the teacher must be sure to give the learners enough time to think before speaking. The Natural Order hypothesis proposes that the learners will acquire certain linguistic forms and rules in a predictable manner and order in both first and second languages, called morpheme rank order. The Comprehensible Input hypothesis ( $i + 1$ ) is similar to the Vygotsky's ZPD, in which optimal learning takes place when the input (+1) is just beyond the learner's current level ( $i$ ) of knowledge but is still comprehensible ( $i+1$ ), in



other words, not too hard or too easy; this keeps the learner challenged and motivated (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Krashen also believes that there are two types of input: finely tuned and roughly tuned input, meaning that instruction may be detailed about specifics or generalities, and he promotes the Total Physical Response (TPR) method for teaching in the four stages of linguistic development, in which games, pictures, charades, charts, paraphrasing, and gradually increasing difficulty are used. TPR can be used in the classroom beginning in kindergarten and requires that the students use their whole bodies to respond to instructions given in the target language (Brown, 2014).

Jim Cummings (1979; 1980), a contemporary of Krashen, originated the terms basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to distinguish different kinds of language used in different settings. Basic interpersonal skills begins when babies talk with their parents and continues in conversation with friends. The cognitive academic language proficiency is the knowledge needed to learn a formal language with explicit instruction and rules (Cummings, 1979; 1980). However, Cummings (1991) later changed BICS and CALP to context-embedded and context-reduced education. An example of context-embedded language is a conversation between friends, while the language used for instruction in schools is usually context-reduced (Brown, 2014).

### ***The output hypothesis***

Merrill Swain (1993; 2000) questions Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis with her output hypothesis, in which she articulates the role of initial student output as expressive language in second language learning. However, her ties to Vygotsky and the sociocultural theory are evident in the output hypothesis because it is the verbal

negotiation between two second language learners. Donato and Lantolf (1990) agree and argue that second language instruction should be focused on dialogue, because, through it, students are co-constructing linguistic knowledge. While the students are trying out their own personal hypotheses, they are learning a second language.

Swain's output hypothesis includes collaborative dialogue, collaborative tasks, and the role of emotion in second language acquisition. Socializing through collaborative dialogue pushes students to expand their ZPD, as it allows them to recognize what they can and cannot do linguistically. They become aware of and learn through their gaps, mistakes, and holes, therefore constructing knowledge. Swain also suggests that students should reflect every time they use language, which enables them to develop strategies based on what they have constructed. This reflection is called meta-talk (Swain, 1998).

In 1985, Merrill Swain conducted a study of French immersion students in Ontario, Canada, who, despite 6-7 years of French immersion, had not reached native-like fluency. She found that the instructional emphasis was on linguistic forms instead of on using these forms to construct language for their own purposes. Swain concluded that teaching grammar is not enough, and that language instruction should be part of content instruction and should involve pairing students and assigning them collaborative tasks, such as written texts and presentations, which require participation in collaborative dialogue (Swain, 1999).

Swain states that a better way to learn a second language is through collaborative dialogue, which involves interaction between two people. Collaborative dialogue can best be accomplished by assigning students collaborative tasks. The characteristics of collaborative tasks are that students work in pairs, thereby ensuring participation, and that

the final product should include a written text and an oral presentation. By the use of collaborative tasks, students will focus on meaning and, by doing so, will also focus on form as they learn about their individual needs in second language acquisition. In the United States, students are engaged in collaborative tasks beginning in kindergarten. Therefore, they should have a sense of familiarity with collaborative tasks by the time they reach middle school (Lapkin & Swain, 2000).

Rod Ellis (1992) investigated whether instruction in the target language (English) in the classroom setting was enough for two second-language learning students to develop the specific illocutionary act of making requests in the target language. Two children learning English as a second language, both between 10 and 11 years old, were under observation for 15-21 months and produced a total of 410 requests while in a beginning English language class. Both subjects were selected because they were recent arrivals. One could answer yes or no, and the other could neither speak nor understand English. Even though both boys developed, their terms for requests did not vary because they did not have the sociolinguistic need to vary their requests according to whom they were addressing. The evidence shows that the interpersonal and expressive needs of both students were met; however, their sociolinguistic need was not met because the classroom did not provide instruction in requests in the curriculum, nor did they create an artificial situation in which students receive instruction and modeling and are allowed to practice making various kinds of requests.

Ellis concluded that, even though the school setting helps develop competence in English for English language learners, there is a need to provide an artificial setting in which to teach, possibly by play-acting with different people, from elders to persons of

authority to peers, in order to develop competence in making various kinds of requests in almost life-like settings. There were enough opportunities for performing requests, as well as a range of linguistic devices, used by the learners, to perform the requests. However, the students did not have the sociolinguistic opportunities, nor were they taught, how to vary their requests, depending on whom they were addressing (Ellis, 1992). This study can help educators understand the relationship between classroom communication and second language acquisition, and that not enough social opportunities are provided for second language learners to develop a variety of request forms and strategies. As a result, this information provides teachers and educators with the understanding that they must embed in their lessons the use of various requests and also provide various settings in which to practice making requests (Ellis, 1992).

Unlike Vygotsky, Swain (1997) does not believe that the other person has to be the teacher or a more knowledgeable other. Instead, because of the cooperation, through collaborative dialogue (CD), the internalization of external activities of both students is transformed and becomes their own. However, this theory resembles Vygotsky's, who viewed language as a tool to mediate physical and mental activities (Vygotsky, 1978). This problem solving through social interaction can be observed and assessed instantly as it occurs. Swain observes that collaborative language is seen as an educational tool in math, science, and social studies, yet there is very little use of collaborative dialogue in the teaching of second languages (Swain, 1997).

Swain (1998) believes that verbalization mediates the internalization of external activity. In other words, making utterances to convey meaning goes from an internal process to an external activity. Thus, through collaborative dialogue, social interaction is

mediated by both participants as they co-construct strategies. Since all students are social beings and are going to speak, Swain argues that verbalization through dialogue should be used to promote second language acquisition. Through dialogue, students can have the opportunity to reflect, self-monitor, and further construct second language acquisition. While speaking to each other, students notice and recognize the gaps in their language knowledge, which makes them aware of where they are in their own ZPD, and, as they speak, they are raising their own ceiling for second language acquisition.

Collaborative dialogue leads to students making their own immediate hypotheses and testing these through dialogue, which deepens their understanding. Collaborative dialogue leads to the collective behavior of the students and leads them into accomplishing collaborative tasks (Swain, 1998). Collaborative dialogue involves collaborative tasks (Swain, 1999), which means that students are involved in meaningful collaborative exercises. Collaborative tasks (CT) are tasks in which a group of students mediate their own learning through their involvement in activities. This can involve, for example, taking different roles and responsibilities while conducting and presenting research. Collaborative tasks are usually mediated by the students and work best when there is a high level of trust.

In 2014, Dobao conducted a study comparing the number of language-related episodes (LREs) in pair vs. small-group work among students learning Spanish as a foreign language at a large public university in the United States. She found that group work resulted in more LREs than pair work because the amount of group knowledge is greater, and the students have more opportunities to build group knowledge even when observing rather than actively participating. Dobao also concluded that the importance of

novice-novice work is greater than novice-expert because both learners can work simultaneously as novices and as experts. Furthermore, she found that students retained the knowledge constructed through collaborative dialogue built around collaborative tasks.

Dobao's work supports Swain's claim that language is a tool by which students can think, talk, and construct new language. Her study demonstrates the direct relationship between LREs and second language acquisition, and it supports the sociocultural argument that more students are better, even though, when working in pairs, students have more opportunities to talk. In group work, students benefit from the larger pool of knowledge, even when participating only as observers. A lack of student contribution did not mean a lack of participation. Dobao concludes that there is more work to be done of learners as observers, initiators, and solvers of levels of engagement (LREs), as well as the length and level of each engagement (Dobao, 2014).

Swain (1998) believes that, by the use of collaborative dialogue, meta-talk among students enables them to reflect on their use of the language, which makes meaning available and deepens student learning. Meta-talk is a meta-linguistic function which happens when students use language to reflect on language, making meaning available, which deepens students' understanding and learning. Swain states that meta-talk should always be modeled by the teacher and have specific rules. She observed that students in her research who participated in meta-talk supported by modeling and rules performed two and a half times better than students who did not receive the explicit support. Collaborative dialogue can be observed, as the students negotiate the correct form of speaking. By using CD, students mediate their own learning through problem-solving

and knowledge-building. Through the use of these instructional activities, the students' own ZPD will be raised; they learn new problem-solving and knowledge-building skills, which will further enhance their learning of the second language.

For many students, collaborative dialogue is a social activity. It is fun because it lowers their stress, or affective filter, and it is also a cognitive activity which must be processed. Student interaction leads to negotiation, which increases focus; by negotiating, students externalize their hypotheses and try them out through their utterances, as they try to make meaning together. Through the process of negotiation, both students are learning what the correct form of speech is. If it does not sound right when verbalized, students can infer that they have made the wrong hypothesis and self-correct. At this point, asking a more knowledgeable other can help. This learning is co-constructed, according to each student's level, proficiency, and needs. By the use of CD, teachers can gain a quick evaluation of the students' progress (Lapkin & Swain, 2000).

### ***Summary of second language acquisition***

In order to facilitate second language acquisition, one must understand Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Krashen and Swain further Vygotsky's research in second language acquisition through the natural approach to learning, which includes the affective filter hypothesis, acquisition learning hypothesis, monitor hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, and the input hypothesis. Swain's output hypothesis borrows heavily from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and includes the use of collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks. What all of these have in common is that they lower the students' affective filter, allowing them to self-monitor, take chances, and construct new language.

### **The Role of Emotion in Second Language Learning**

Like Vygotsky, Swain (2013) asserts that cognition and emotion are intertwined and cannot be separated. Emotions are inter-personal and, therefore, not private, and they cannot be ignored. She states that students' anxieties, fear, frustration, and apprehension can be measured, but there is a lack of research into how emotion facilitates second language learning. Swain postulates that it may be because speaking about personal emotions makes people uncomfortable. Emotions influence second language learning, and it is reciprocal, because second language learning influences emotion. Thus, the role of collaborative dialogue includes emotion as well as cognition. Some emotions students may have are pleasure, pride, trust, exhilaration, joy, or the satisfaction of doing well; these, in turn, build students' confidence.

Since emotion and learning go hand in hand, there will be times when conflict arises between students. The teacher listens, recognizes, and understands both students' needs. They recognize talking as a way to manage conflict while making sure that the students respect their own individual space and give the students enough time to reflect. This does not just happen; it must be modeled and must be part of the curriculum. Even though emotions are often viewed as private, they are not, because they are based on the interpersonal connection, which is based on the social and cultural structure. Positive emotions lead to trust, which, in turn, leads to students taking chances through practicing and developing their language (Swain, 2000; Swain, 2013).

Brown (2014), showed that these emotional and psychological characteristics affect second language acquisition: self-esteem, willingness to communicate, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, empathy, and extroversion. All these characteristics involve a low



affective filter. The acquisition of a language depends on the learner's global self-esteem; that is, being comfortable with their own identity, because learners with high self-esteem will be confident enough to understand their own identity in different situations, which is called situational self-esteem.

Self-esteem also encompasses task self-esteem, which is how the learner relates to specific situational tasks. Learners with strong self-esteem have lower affective filters and understand that making mistakes is part of learning a new language. High self-esteem leads to the willingness to communicate and take chances in a second language, which leads to another important factor, risk-taking. Taking risks while learning a second language can be daunting; however, the more successful learners are willing to take chances in spite of the fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed. Risk-taking is more likely to take place in a classroom built on trust and caring. Taking risks pushes learners into their ZPD and keeps them there as their skills develop, thereby maximizing their learning (Brown, 2014).

Finally, inhibitions are the defenses that we use as buffers to avoid being hurt. It is a natural process, yet, in extreme cases, can be debilitating to the learner, as their ego usually suffers. Students learn languages better in a safe atmosphere, where taking chances is encouraged as being part of the process of learning. Student social interaction in the classroom is a way by which students can lower their inhibitions and practice a new language in a fun and meaningful way. For example, assigning students to pair-share and begin a dialogue is a great way to lower inhibitions, as is asking students to sit next to someone with whom they would not normally sit. Thus, the common

denominator among all six factors is that the optimal second language learner will have a low affective filter (Brown, 2014).

In 2010, Yasuhiro Imai conducted a case study about how emotions in second language acquisition and collaborative learning either inhibit or expand learning. This three-month study consisted of two case studies of two different groups of Japanese students studying English as a foreign language. The students were videotaped, engaged in group work, filled out emotion logs, and answered emotional questionnaires. The students self-formed groups and mostly had the same negative emotions towards collaborative group work. This study found that, as the students' knowledge ZPD expands, so does the emotional ZPD, thereby agreeing with Vygotsky that emotions mediate learning. Students had to adjust as they realized they had to be aware of their emotions before learning and, thus, reconfigure their emotional affect before learning. Emotions are mediators that either allow or inhibit second language acquisition.

### ***Summary of the role of emotion in second language learning***

Vygotsky and Swain both believe that emotion and cognition are intertwined. A lower affective filter correlates with positive emotions, risk-taking, and the emergence of students' personal identities. Brown agrees with Vygotsky and Swain, yet states that a student must have global self-esteem; the stronger the self-esteem, the lower the affective filter, leading to the suppression of the inhibitions used for self-defense and eventually to voluntary risk-taking. For Brown, the key is student to student interaction.

### **Acculturation, Assimilation, Empowerment, and Identity**

In order to fully attain competence in their second language, English learners in the United States must also learn to navigate their new culture and establish a place for themselves in a society in which they are looked down upon. The difference between assimilation and acculturation is that, in acculturation, a person's home language and culture continue to be part of their identity, whereas, in assimilation, as in a melting pot, the learner loses his or her home language as well as the culture and social norms of the home culture, becoming one of many. Acculturation is preferable because the learner will remain bilingual and bicultural (Brown, 1994; 2014). The difference in instruction can be summed up as follows: in acculturation, the classroom celebrates individual differences, while in assimilation, the class celebrates everyone's similarities. One way to encourage acculturation is asking students to present about their families' native cultures and languages. Encouraging students to bring typical foods and dishes from their native countries is also a fun way for students to present, for they need to talk about what they know and what is important to them. When teachers show interest in all student cultures, they build student self-esteem, lower student anxiety, and encourage students to take risks (Brown, 1994; 2014).

Acculturation and assimilation are both in the full recovery stage, the last of the four stages of socio-cultural transition, yet they differ in the last stage (Brown, 1994). The four stages are excitement, culture shock, gradual recovery, and full recovery. In the excitement stage, positive attitudes abound, the learner is optimistic about both education and occupational opportunities, is full of dreams and expectations, and is eager and willing to learn. In the culture shock stage, the learner fears and rejects the new culture,

has negative experiences and attitudes, is confused, and, as a result, is not an eager learner. In the gradual recovery stage, the learner is able to recognize cultural differences, has a positive attitude, and is eager to learn and to succeed. In the near or full recovery stage, assimilation and acculturation diverge, because, in assimilation, the person becomes part of a melting pot and eventually loses the customs and language of the home country, whereas, in acculturation, immigrants are empowered to retain their native language, culture, and rituals, thus embracing their full identities and becoming part of a patchwork quilt of society (Brown, 1994).

In the 2017 study titled *Interaction mindsets, interactional behaviors, and L2 development: An affective-social-cognitive model*, Masatoshi Sato conducted research on two 10<sup>th</sup> grade English as a second language classes in Chile using the grounded theory methodology in order to find and code recurring themes. The researchers found that positive mindsets lead to interactional behavior and learning. Interactional behavior is the social behavior among students as they negotiate a learning task. Before this can happen, community must be built so that the students can feel trust and are eager to take chances. Sato also found that peer to peer interaction is more productive than novice to native speaker interaction because it lowers the affective filter. Scaffolding by peer is bi-directional, as the students raise their own ZPD within the collaborative peer interaction. Scaffolding is more evident in group work than in whole-class instruction. The researchers stress that collaborative tasks must be modeled by the teacher and that reluctant learners are not necessarily non-participating learners. Acceptance of teacher feedback is affected by the number of LREs.

According to Sato, 83% of teachers did not value group work, which may be why student attitude was lackadaisical. As a result, it is of utmost importance that the teachers receive training in how to create learning communities and how to build and manage group work, for this does not just happen but must be modeled. Interactional behavior is first formed by an interactional mindset, that is, the willingness and eagerness to perform a task. Future research must be done on the teachers' role in supporting and scaffolding the students during group work. A learning community must be in place (Sato, 2017).

Education with the goal of empowering students, known as human rights education (HRE), finds its origins in the work of Paulo Freire, an innovative educator from Brazil who introduced the concept of critical pedagogy in 1970 with his defining book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In this work, Freire introduced critical pedagogy and participatory action research (PAR). Critical pedagogy (CP) is the process by which people critically think about an issue and reach a common understanding through shared values for the benefit of the community. The Freirian concept of critical pedagogy that is used in human rights education is intended to empower all, especially the voiceless and marginalized students (Freire, 2000).

Critical pedagogy includes the development of critical literacy, in which literature is viewed by the students through a critical lens, which will lead to their critical reflection on a problem and so, eventually to a solution to the problem and action on the solution. This stage of solution/action is called praxis. CP involves the critical reflection of both the students and the teachers, on a level playing field. As a result of the equal relationship that has now been created in the classroom, the students' affective filter is lowered, which allows them to develop a critical lens based on critical literacy and

become empowered to identify and address social and personal issues that matter to them (Freire, 2000).

Like collaborative dialogue, critical pedagogy can only succeed when students trust the teacher and each other. This place of trust, which is both a physical and an ideological place, is called community (Freire, 2000). Community building in the educational setting refers to the nurturing of a safe classroom atmosphere where students and teachers are viewed as equals and treat each other with care and respect, which is a prerequisite of true learning (Shor, 1999; hooks, 1994). Trust can only be developed with time and energy by both the students and the teacher.

Freire's (2000) views on education sadly, at times, are associated with socialism and are considered radical because they empower the student while disempowering the teacher, thus creating a balance mitigated through trust, inquiry, and genuine understanding (Allman, 1994). In our modern society, in which teachers are overworked and students are over tested, relinquishing any kind of power can be a terrifying thought, because many times that power can never be regained. However, common goals and the need for genuine understanding and comprehension lead to what Freire calls *conscientização*, a form of consciousness that results as relationships transform and evolve into a communal consciousness. In order for the consciousness to fully develop, the experience of the struggle to transform relations and the process of the experience of this transformation are indispensable (Allman, 1994).

Through the building of *conscientização*, sensitive issues that are often avoided can be discussed, explored, and transformed (Freire, 2000). *Conscientização* can only take place after a class has built a safe community in which all the students feel

comfortable expressing themselves and taking control of their learning. Then, the students become agents of social change because of *conscientização*, the liberatory process that only happens when the students and teachers are both viewed as equals, as co-educators. In order for this to happen, the teacher, who has the power, must relinquish this power to the students. So, through empowerment, introspection, critical literature theory, and the action that grows out of these, the students can identify who they are and gain an active voice in their education to become active participants for individual and societal change. However, relinquishing control of the class goes against the banking model of education. The banking model is a one-way, non-negotiated transaction between the teacher and the students. In this model, which is reflected in the Western concept of education, the student is the blank receptacle for the teacher's knowledge, which is distinctly different from co-partnership education (Shor, 1999).

Ira Shor (1999), a colleague of Paulo Freire, believes that students must be allowed to express themselves and their emotions in order to build their own reality. For him, disruptive behavior created by the students can be solved through student introspection and community building. When teachers make misbehaving students accountable to the class, these situations will be ironed out. This is contrary to regular teacher training, which instills that the teacher must set and enforce the rules without any student input. By doing so, the teacher becomes the judge and the police, and is seen by the students as an enforcer and someone of authority to defy. Instead, when classroom rules are co-created by students and teachers working together, accountability and true learning take place.

Shor (1999) defines critical literacy as what we are, what we say, and what we do. Shor draws a contrast between critical literacy and what Freire calls banking models. Critical literacy is the study of meaningful texts that empower students and give them a critical lens, or a more meaningful critical reflection, followed by student-derived solutions and actions. The students gain a different, more personal, perspective on the world. For Freire, the empowerment of the individual leads to radical education, because the students find the answers to their unique situations, based on their own derived solutions, as co-participants and co-researchers. Thus, the students find themselves on equal footing with their teachers. True revolutionary leadership will ensue from this dialogue, and because of the new-found *conscientização*, human beings will be beings with the world instead of consumers of the world (Allman, 1994). Critical literacy can empower and invite students into action, which is the beginning of change towards equality (Shor, 1999).

A colleague of Freire's, bell hooks (1994), points out that, in order for all to feel included in the classroom, certain things need to be in place: a teacher trained in human rights education, literature that is meaningful and engaging, and the shifting of power from the teacher to the class. *Conscientização* is also required of the teachers, because they will be in an unfamiliar place, as the paradigm has shifted from the banking system to social transformation by the students. The students are no longer passive learners; instead, as they become aware of their own identity, they become the problem solvers. This shift of power can lead to uncomfortable discussions about sensitive topics that must be addressed within the classroom.



Freire (2000), hooks (1994), and Shor (1999) all believe that the students, who are social products, need social interaction, through which they can acquire both meaning and form; thus, they facilitate and take responsibility for their own learning. The use of community building enhances student self-esteem and morale, especially for second language learners. This empowerment will lead to the radical transformation of the students; to these thinkers, community building is part of teaching, especially teaching as an act of love (Darder, 2009).

### ***Summary of acculturation, assimilation, empowerment, and identity***

According to Brown, acculturation and assimilation are the outcomes of learning a new environment. Both acculturation and assimilation include the following stages: excitement, culture shock, gradual recovery, and full recovery. However, they differ in that, in acculturation, students will celebrate individual differences, while in assimilation, they celebrate the class similarities. Shor and hooks follow on Freire's work in human rights education, which is transformative, which includes critical pedagogy, which will lead to critical literacy, and which will result in student empowerment and identity. Shor and hooks also believe in the power of community building.

### **Community Building**

In Paulo Freire's (2000) model for education, community building in the educational setting refers to the nurturing of a safe classroom atmosphere where students and teachers are viewed as equals and treat each other with care and respect (Shor, 1999; hooks, 1994). The building of community must always happen before students and teachers can explore sensitive issues such as racism and social inequalities, for these are topics that are often avoided but should be discussed freely (Mayo, 2004). Since most

students are not used to sharing their experiences with one another, the teachers must take the lead by first modeling telling the class about themselves as human beings with all the emotions that make us human.

Initial teacher modeling can be followed by round robin student check-ins, in which the students state who they are and anything else they may want to share with the rest of the class. Student check-in is a fast and effective way to gauge the mood of the class. Once students feel safe and a safe atmosphere has been established, teachers must not ignore problems and tragedies, but instead encourage the transformation of the students by telling their own personal stories, thus helping them deal with the pain in their lives so that radical change can take place. For Freire (2000), the key to development of *conscientização* is building a community of trust, because, when education becomes neutral, the silent students will be heard at times negatively (hooks, 1994).

### ***Professional development***

For teachers, the act of community building requires time, stamina, trust, and love (Peterson, 1990). Teachers have to realize that relinquishing power within the classroom does not leave them powerless, yet they have to believe that the process will work. Building community within the classroom requires a lot of trust, on the part of both the students and the teachers. Thus, the building of community must be planned and therefore written into the curriculum to ensure that there will be sufficient time allowed for trust and confidence to overcome the fear that many students, especially immigrants, have of sharing their inner lives and primary concerns with adults outside of the family.

Community can be and should be part of the curriculum, thereby giving the building of community a place during the normal teaching hours.

For Freire (2000), the teachers in the classroom, who have been trained in the European model of education, must break the chains of their own formal education, past training, and teaching habits before they can build a sense of community in order to change the world through human rights education (HRE). Because students have multiple intelligences, the teaching should be diversified and can include mime, drama, role-playing, read-alouds from student-generated writing, presentations, chants, and oral storytelling all allow students to describe and reflect on their own world while at the same time improving their communication skills (Peterson, 1990). The teachers themselves, from all ethnic backgrounds, should have special training (Nieto, 2002), and they should have worked through their own ethnic identities, in order to model to the students so that transformation can take place; otherwise, student agitation, by itself, without any arousal to learn and transform will only lead to further introversion of the voiceless (Darder & Torres, 2004). Darder (2009) states that Freire had exposed well-meaning teachers who, through their lack of critical moral leadership, had disabled the hearts, minds, and bodies of their students because they lacked political clarity.

Darder (2009) adds that Freire's greatest contribution to the world was his capacity to love human beings, his regard and concern for children, teachers, the poor, and his willingness to share his moments of grief, disappointment, and frustration, which led to a new love in his pursuit of a coherent and honest life and is an example of radicalization. Therefore, human rights education is radical, because it takes into account the unknown, which may be a result of genuine love and inquiry, and by being open to

the other person's way of thinking, it empowers both individuals. This is why HRE is known as teaching for liberation.

According to Patrick Roz Camangian (2015), an assistant professor of education at the University of San Francisco, students of color, or minorities, especially need a humanizing pedagogy based on culturally-relevant pedagogy and literacy in order to agitate and arouse the students' critical curiosity and transformation. He asserts that community building, which is an ongoing process, is integral especially to students and teachers of color. Camangian, like Freire, views agitation as the place in which students engage in critical reflection and distinguish social problems. Before change begins, there must be a period of questioning to arouse reflection. After the students' curiosity is aroused by their critical lens, they reach the stage of inspiration, in which they come up with answers to their problems, giving them a voice and a sense of identity, at times in nearly hopeless situations.

At times, new teachers are placed in uncomfortable surroundings, low-performing schools in low socioeconomic areas, and tend to leave as they get tenure. Therefore, a requirement for building community is teacher commitment, in which the teachers can divulge painful or disconcerting experiences in their own lives, either from the viewpoint of the minority or of the majority. When teachers model this strategy, students lose some of the apprehension and fear that is often involved with sharing personal difficulties (hooks, 1994). Community building can begin by simply asking students to share something about their lives. Although it is uncomfortable at first, once students recognize that community is a confidential place where they can be open and honest, they

are very eager to voice their status, because, in the classroom, there are people who will listen (Nieto, 2002).

Research conducted in 2012 by Gomez, Gujarati, and Heckendorn examined a program called the Orbital Experience. The researchers studied two groups of Spanish as a second language students in four classrooms at a suburban high school in New York State. The Orbital Experience is made up of activities designed to allow students to research and become experts in a topic about which they are interested and passionate, and also to practice using their second, or target, language across subject areas. Both these aspects lead to high student motivation. Even though students found speaking harder than either thinking or writing in their second language, they began bonding and creating community as they got to know the students in their own group. Consequently, the researchers found that the Orbital Experience lowers the affective filter of the students. They learn to stay calm, have more confidence, and are better at overcoming pauses. To them, getting to know the members of their own group was fun and motivating. Also, teachers were positive about students' topics because they were meaningful to the students. The researchers point out that teachers must create situations in which students can scaffold off one another, which increases speaking opportunities.

TRIBES is a curriculum originally designed by Jeanne Gibbs to prevent substance abuse in school districts in Contra Costa County in California. The secondary goal was to promote cooperative learning. The mission statement includes that all students need to develop knowledge, skills, and resiliency to be successful in this world. TRIBES gives teachers tools for creating a classroom built around student centered, active learning facilitated by student inclusion and involvement. TRIBES provides students with a safe

place and invites them to share experiences and gain a sense of inclusion. Gibbs states that 80% of the students who are beginning school in kindergarten feel good about school, but, by fifth grade, only 20% of students do. Through community building, progressive learning happens, and the teachers play the role of interactors and not just facilitators, in order to promote a safe environment that promotes human growth and learning (Gibbs, 2014).

TRIBES includes the four agreements, which are attentive listening, appreciation/no put-downs, mutual respect, and the right to not participate (Gibbs, 2014). These are vital to community building. When trained in TRIBES, teachers also use multiple strategies such as critical thinking and collaborative skills of academic content. TRIBES provides over 175 strategies that teachers can use in their classroom. Among the outcomes of the use of TRIBES is a 75% decrease in student behavior problems in a span of three months. Teachers of special education classes report that their students were involved in positive social and emotional development as a result of TRIBES. In response to many inquiries and training requests from schools in the United States and Canada, Gibbs developed CenterSource Systems, LLC in 1995, whose task is to develop a research-based, whole-school model for TRIBES and to create a professional teacher training system based its philosophy (Gibbs, 2014).

The schoolwide program Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) involves a three-tiered behavioral approach to all students. These involve positive and consistent student discipline (pbis.org). BEST is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all

students (<https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs>). The BEST curriculum, which encourages, supports, and expects positive behavior, also plays a role in building community. According to the California Healthy Kids Survey, in 2014, 87-97% of students attending schools using BEST reported that, as a result of BEST, they felt safer, more connected, and had more caring relationships with their teachers than students whose schools did not use BEST (pbis.org). These personal connections and nurturing of caring relationships among students and teachers are key outcomes of community building.

In the BEST program, tier one is schoolwide, tier two consists of students at risk, and tier three is where students with emotional and behavioral problems get intensive support. Tier one targets all students, and it is incorporated throughout the day in all classes and activities. Positive behavior is explicitly taught, modeled and expected, which encourages student positive participation and the use of these skills in their academic and social lives. By making positive behavior a part of the norm, it becomes proactive and allows more time to be allotted to students whose positive behavior needs are greater. Since positive behavior is the expectation from all the students, tier one provides positive interventions schoolwide, giving staff the additional time and resources that are needed to further assess, address and develop individual positive behavioral tactics. Tier two consists of the targeted support for students who do not respond to the universal tier one interventions. Tier three is available to students whose needs are greatest and are provided with the most intensive support (Golly & Sprague, 2005).

BEST teaches, instills, and encourages positive behavior instead of a negative behavior and gives students who may not have the social skills or cultural norms the

knowledge of what is expected at school and the opportunity to learn and practice these tactics in a supportive environment. Therefore, the learning of social skills is not taken for granted, but is part of the curriculum. By doing so, all of the students' social skills are on a level field, meaning that both teachers and students know what is expected and appropriate, and students who have not learned the same expectations at home are not at a disadvantage. In addition to being individualized in the classroom and generalized schoolwide, this approach also develops positive familial communication and collaborative behavior (Golly & Sprague, 2005).

### ***Summary of community building***

Shor and hooks give us an insight into the meaning of community building and its requirements, such as a trustful and safe place which lowers inhibitions. Creating this space takes time and should be part of the curriculum. Teacher training on how to build community is imperative, because it will lower teachers' own biases and inhibitions, and they will learn how to model expected behavior. TRIBES is a curricular tool created by Jeanne Gibbs that provides teachers with lesson plans and ideas about how to build a community of learners. TRIBES was created to prevent substance abuse and promote cooperative learning, as it is student-centered.

### **Summary of the Literature**

The needs of second language learners are many, yet some of the most important involve a safe environment in which students are able to talk and socialize without the fear of ridicule. This can best be accomplished by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; 2012). When in practice, the students will need a low affective filter in order to be able to discuss matters without fear (Brown, 2014); when



students are able to converse without fear, they can practice their language skills while raising their ZPD, make meaningful connections, and build relationships which lead to inclusion, acceptance, empowerment, and higher self-esteem. Socialization also leads to student self-identity, which allows them to take chances and learn from their mistakes. Second language learners also need an engaging pedagogy; in order for their learning to be meaningful, it should be tied to personal experiences. Teachers need to be re-trained (hooks, 1994) with the sociocultural theory in mind, specifically, building a safe community of learners.

However, a safe and secure atmosphere does not just happen. It must be intentionally created and modeled by the teacher (Freire, 2000). This can best be accomplished by building community. Community building provides the safe place students need to support healthy social interaction and opportunities to practice language skills. It also provides communication with students who normally would not interact with one another, therefore building and establishing relationships based on common understandings. Community building can be the initial place where student transformation begins as they learn about themselves and their place in the society and in the world (Shor, 1999).

In order for community building to be successful, teachers must be supported by the school and district administration. Community building requires time to be allotted during normal teaching hours and embedded in the curriculum. The teachers must be committed to staying in their positions long-term and receive the training that is needed to deal with a community of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The teachers must be able to model the proper behavior that is associated with a learning community.

Lastly, both students and teachers must buy in to the ideals of community building to resolve problems (hooks, 1994; Shor, 1999; Swain, 1993; 2000).

Merrill Swain's output hypothesis, which includes collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks, uses Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Recent studies have reaffirmed the importance of socialization in second language acquisition (Dobao, 2014; Imai, 2010; Gomez, Gujarti, & Heckendorn, 2012; Sato, 2016). While the literature reveals evidence of the importance of social interaction for all second language learners and of the benefits of community building, the relationship between community building and second language acquisition has not yet been studied. This study begins to fill that gap.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

In this study, the effectiveness of creating community in facilitating second language acquisition was explored. The first section of chapter three provides a restatement of the purpose of the research. In the second section, the research design and the reasons why a mixed methodology was chosen to collect the data are explained. The third section will describe the setting and the school district. The fourth section will identify the participants and explain how they will be selected. The fifth section describes ethical considerations and steps taken to protect the human subjects of the study. The sixth section details the pre- and post-data-collection procedures to be employed. The seventh and final section introduces the researcher's background and credentials. The following research questions guided this mixed-methods study:

Table 1

Research Questions	Quantitative Survey Questions	Qualitative Survey Questions
1.How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?	#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14	#7, 17
2.How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?	#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 15	#7, 17
3.How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?	#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 16	#7, 18

### **Restatement of Purpose**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate whether the intentional nurturing of a safe educational and social environment through community building leads to better academic and interpersonal outcomes for second language learners. This study explored the relationship between the building of a safe and nurturing classroom community and successful acquisition of a second language.

### **Research Design**

The research was conducted as a mixed-methods study, which involved both quantitative and qualitative data gathering, giving the researcher a more thorough and complete understanding of the students' level of anxiety and needs (Plano & Creswell, 2011). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both the participants and the research design changed in the following ways: the participants included all second language learners instead of targeting only English learners, the participants were self-identified instead of being selected by the researcher, student self-reporting was used instead of school records to identify students' language backgrounds and progress, and two questions were added to the survey about the students' experiences of community during distance learning and their suggestions for improving the community experience in online classes. Students from three 6<sup>th</sup> grade English classes at one K-6 dual-language immersion school were asked to complete the survey during the Spring of 2020.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey was administered as a Google form during their Zoom class by their English teacher and the researcher. All 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in the survey; however, the researcher only used the survey responses of those students whose parents signed and returned the permission form. The

survey was designed to generate both quantitative data, in the form of responses using a rating scale of 1 to 5, and qualitative data in the form of open-ended, short-answer questions. There were 14 quantitative questions and four qualitative, open-ended questions, for a total of 18 questions. These questions were approved by an expert panel of three credentialed 6<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual teachers who are experienced in working with second language learners and familiar with the school and district. The researcher recruited the three 6<sup>th</sup> grade educators to participate in the expert panel.

Once IRB approval was received, the expert panel evaluated the survey questions, and the questions were modified according to the expert panel's response. Through expert panel input and student responses, this research study explored the connection between community building and successful second language learning and acculturation.

### **Research Setting**

This study took place in a K-6 dual language immersion school located in Northern California in the Napa Valley, which is situated north of San Francisco. Napa Valley is a popular tourist region famous for its vineyards and wineries. The school serves wealthy winegrowing families as well as the families of the laborers who work the fields and service workers in the hospitality industry, some of whom are recent immigrants from Mexico, while others have been established for a generation or more. Moreover, the schools' student demographics reflect the ethnic, social, and economic diversity of the population of the valley.

The school is one of 18 elementary schools in the district. The school's student body consists of 664 students, with a 24:1 student to teacher ratio. The students are 79% Hispanic, 18% white, 2% two or more ethnicities, and 1% Asian. 52% of the students are

low income, 43% are English learners, 54% are female, and 46% are male. In the school district, 80% of the teachers have three or more years of teaching experience, and 100% of them have a bilingual credential (BCLAD) in English and Spanish. The district's student population in the 2018-2019 school year was 17,849 (<https://nvla-nvUSD-ca.schoolloop.com/>).

The setting was a K-6 dual-language immersion school that follows the two-way bilingual program 90-10 model, which means that most instruction between kindergarten and second grade is in Spanish, and the amount of instruction in English gradually increases until, in third grade, it makes up the majority of the instructional day. At the end of sixth grade, these students receive a diploma from the Spanish Ministry of Education and can enroll in a writing contest sponsored by the Spanish Embassy. This dual-immersion program requires that the parents commit to keeping their students in the school from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, so new students cannot enter after kindergarten unless they are transferring from another 90-10 school. The school's motto is that students learn a second language the same way they learn their first language, which is naturally (<https://nvla-nvUSD-ca.schoolloop.com/>). This coincides with the theories of Vygotsky and Swain, which are the essence of the researcher's theoretical framework.

The school uses the curriculum Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) in order to support the creation of safe classroom learning communities. BEST involves a three-tiered behavioral approach to all students. These involve positive and consistent student discipline ([pbis.org](http://pbis.org)). BEST is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an

integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students (<https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs>).

In the BEST program, there are three tiers of behavioral interventions and support:

--Tier one is schoolwide. Tier one interventions target all students and are incorporated throughout the day in all classes and activities. Positive behavior is explicitly taught, modeled and expected, which encourages student positive participation and the use of these skills in their academic and social lives. By making positive behavior a part of the norm, schools become proactive. This allows more time to be allotted to students whose positive behavior needs are greater.

--Tier two consists of students at risk. Since the majority of students respond to tier one interventions, this gives staff the additional time and resources that are needed to further assess and develop individual positive behavioral tactics for tier two students, that is, those who do not respond to the tier one interventions.

--Tier three is where students who do not respond to tier two interventions get intensive support. These are the students with emotional and behavioral problems who have specialized needs which cannot be met in the mainstream by classroom teachers. Thus, students whose needs are the greatest receive the most support (Golly & Sprague, 2005).

By incorporating the BEST curriculum in all aspects of learning, these schools teach, instill, and encourage positive behavior instead of negative behavior and give students who may not have the social skills or cultural norms, as some ELLs, the knowledge of what is expected at school and the opportunity to learn and practice these

behaviors in a supportive environment. In addition to being individualized classroom and schoolwide, it also develops positive familial communication and collaborative behavior (Golly & Sprague, 2005).

The BEST curriculum, which encourages, supports, and expects positive behavior, also plays a role in building community. According to the California Healthy Kids Survey, in 2014, 87-97% of students attending schools using BEST reported that, as a result of BEST, they felt safer and more connected, and established more caring relationships with teachers than students whose schools did not use BEST (pbis.org). These personal connections and nurturing of caring relationships among students and teachers are key outcomes of community building (Golly & Sprague, 2005). The schools participating in this study began implementing BEST ten years ago, in 2009, and one of the elements they have chosen to incorporate is holding community circles in all classrooms.

### **Participants**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants changed from English language learners exclusively to all second language learners, including those learning English. This study focused on 14 second language learning students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in grade 6. All the participants attended a K-6 dual language immersion school and had been exposed to the BEST curriculum for 6-7 years. Between 12 and 15 participants was the ideal number, realizing that some students may withdraw; however, the study could have been carried out with as many as 20 participants or as few as six. There were nine male participants and five female participants. Pseudonyms were used



to keep the participants' identities confidential. Participation in this survey was voluntary and required a signed letter of student and parental permission. The letter was provided in both English and Spanish. All participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

Since the participants of this study were minors, special ethical considerations, such as parental permission, the use of pseudonyms to protect their identities, and the option to withdraw from the study at any time, were taken into account. Ethical considerations were also applied in the following areas: access to research, data collection, and interpretation. The collected data was limited to student responses to the survey questions. The identities of the expert panel of educators were also protected by pseudonyms. The final survey questions were submitted for approval to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of San Francisco. After reaching out to the district, the researcher received approval from the site administrator to conduct the survey.

### **Sources of Data Collection**

Student survey responses were used to determine students' language backgrounds and years attending U.S. schools as well as their experience with classroom communities, levels of anxiety or comfort in the classroom, and levels of comfort with their second language (academic and conversational), as well as their behavior.

## **Procedures**

### ***Pre-data-collection stage***

After receiving approval from the IRB, the researcher contacted the school district superintendent, the site principal, and the three sixth grade teachers, who were used to facilitate the administration of the survey and also served as the expert panel to evaluate the survey. Following discussion with the expert panel, the research questions were edited to better facilitate student understanding.

### ***Administration stage***

Due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, during the Spring of 2020, classes and the survey were held electronically via Zoom. The researcher and the English teacher administered the survey to three classes each day during three successive days. The first day was used to introduce the researcher, the study, and the survey to the students. The second and third days were used to provide clarification and answer any student questions as the students filled out the two parts of the survey on two Google forms.

### ***Post-data-collection stage***

After the surveys were completed, the researcher collected the responses from the participating students, consolidated the answers to the survey questions that reflected common experiences and levels of anxiety, and interpreted them as descriptors of common themes. The quantitative data was tallied and graphed. The qualitative responses were read, and similar ideas and observations were highlighted to allow common themes to emerge. After separately reporting the quantitative data and the qualitative themes that emerged from the student responses, the researcher combined both

types of information, grouping the students into three groups according to the students' levels of safety in the classroom, as well as making individual observations of four students who felt varying levels of safety. Based on these themes, future researchers will be able to study the results to inform future research.

### **Background of the Researcher**

Some of the researcher's earliest lessons in life were learned from his mother, who taught him how to think critically and problem-solve, as well as instilling the duty to share with the less fortunate, which requires empathy, compassion, and sympathy. Becoming an English language learner at the age of 10, the researcher has had unique experiences in both his home country of Perú and in Brooklyn, New York. Community plays a very important role in Quechua, the indigenous culture of Perú, because it takes the community to overcome adversity and survive. However, this was evident neither in the private, parochial school system in Perú nor in the public schools in New York City, both of which employed the rote learning (European model) approach to education. This approach contradicted the philosophy which had been instilled by the researcher's mother that, as evolved beings, we all have the capability and responsibility to overcome our problems through discussion.

One year after their arrival in the United States, the researcher's mother was able to obtain scholarships for him and his brother to attend an experimental communal private boarding school in upstate New York. At Glenrock Community, all the students and teachers had a vote and a say in matters that concerned themselves and the rest of the school, from grades to discipline to which movie to attend on movie night. This community approach to learning was also reflected in the small classes, in which students

discussed the task at hand and how to tackle it, the process Swain would later refer to as collaborative dialogue to achieve collaborative tasks. While at Glenrock Community, the researcher learned that, although he did not have the English language skills of his native-speaking classmates, his thoughts were important and had value. Later, after returning to public school in Brooklyn, only the football team gave him the same sense of inclusion, acceptance, and love he had missed since leaving Glenrock.

As an adult, while working as a construction supervisor, the researcher used the community approach to construction, involving all his workers in helping each other, which, among other benefits, overcame language barriers. It was time to give back, by teaching, by learning about his workers and their various cultures, and by allowing them the freedom to find their voices. After 25 years, the construction industry left the researcher with the feeling that he was not growing intellectually, so he left his career to return to school. Graduating from Wake Forest University with a double major in English and Spanish literature made him think about becoming a teacher. He relocated to San Diego, California, where he enrolled in a teacher preparation program in which the community approach to teaching was emphasized, even though it was not practiced in the local schools. This led to frustration and the desire to learn more about community building. It was at this time that the researcher first heard of Paulo Freire and his educational ideas, giving name to what the researcher had experienced at Glenrock and was practicing in the classroom.

While community building is usually encouraged by educational leaders, it is a concept that is hard to implement, and, therefore, it is rarely seen in practice, whether in elementary school or graduate programs. The process of building community requires

trust, time, and administrative support. The researcher was once asked what subjects he taught, and his answer was, "I teach love."

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Overview

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate whether the intentional nurturing of a safe educational and social environment through community building leads to better outcomes for second language learners. The study was guided by the central question, “What is the role of community building in second language learning?” To explore this question, the researcher conducted a survey of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in a dual language immersion program about their experiences with community building in their classes and their perceived level of success in acquiring their second language (either Spanish or English). The survey was conducted in the spring of 2020, and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was administered through Zoom as part of the distance learning. Parental consent was collected on paper through the mail and digitally with DocuSign. Pseudonyms and the first initials of pseudonyms are used to refer to the participants without compromising their confidentiality. The results of the survey are presented as quantitative data, qualitative themes, and as mixed methods, grouping by safety and individual observations (case studies), which combines both. Students’ responses are presented in the form of graphs and tables, with a companion key, as well as in narrative form. All survey questions and responses can be found in Appendices A and B. Responses to survey questions 6 and 8 are presented in this chapter only in tables, for they do not address the research questions. These survey items were added in response to the pandemic in order to give voice to the students’ experience of distance learning, and, as a result, they will be addressed in chapter 5.

## Introduction

Both the quantitative data and qualitative themes are organized under the three research questions and share the same categories: community building, academic language, conversational language, and behavior. Since all three questions are designed to explore the impacts of community building, the same information regarding the students' experiences with community building is repeated as part of the results for each question, then compared with different information about learning and behavior. The researcher then used a mixed methods approach to look at the results in different ways. First, the students were grouped according to the level of safety they reported. Finally, four individual student participants are presented as case studies.

## Participant Profiles

The participants were fourteen 6<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in a K-6 dual language immersion school. All the participants were learning a second language, but for some it was English and for others it was Spanish. Although the two part, 18-question survey was administered to all the 6<sup>th</sup> graders in three different English classes, only fourteen students received parental permission to have their answers included in this research study. All 14 students completed the first part of the 18-question survey, and 13 students completed both part one and part two (see Table 2).

Table 2

Participant Profiles

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Home Language</b>	<b>Current Grade</b>	<b>Grade of U.S. School Entry</b>	<b>Second Language</b>
Alejandro	Male	Spanish/English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	unknown
Betty	Female	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-school	Spanish
Charles	Male	unknown	6 <sup>th</sup>	unknown	unknown

Dustin	Male	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	Spanish
Ezekial	Male	English/Japanese	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-school	Spanish
Frank	Male	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	Spanish
Genevieve	Female	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-school	Spanish
Henry	Male	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-school	Spanish
Isaiah	Male	Spanish	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-school	English
Jenny	Female	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-school	Spanish
Katya	Female	Spanish	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	English
Lawson	Male	Spanish	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	English
Mohammad	Male	English	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	Spanish
Nerry	Female	Spanish	6 <sup>th</sup>	Kindergarten	English

### *Spanish as a second language*

There were eight students who were learning Spanish as a second language.

Dustin, Frank, and Mohammad were male students who began attending U.S. schools in Kindergarten. Ezekial was a male student from a bilingual household (English and Japanese). He started U.S. school in pre-school. Henry was a male student who began attending school in the U.S. as a pre-schooler. While, Betty, Genevieve, and Jenny were all female students who started attending U.S. schools in pre-school (see Table 2).

### *English as a second language*

Four students were studying English as their second language. Lawson was a male student who began attending U.S. schools in Kindergarten. Katya and Nerry were female students who began school in Kindergarten, while Isaiah was a male student who began school as a pre-schooler.

There were two participants whose second language could not be established from their survey responses. Alejandro was a male student who was born into a bilingual family and was exposed to both English and Spanish at home. Students from bilingual homes were instructed to consider the language in which they felt the least comfortable as



their second language in their survey responses, but they were not directly asked which language that was. Alejandro started school in the U.S. in Kindergarten. Charles was a male student who only responded to the first part of this survey, and as a result his second language is unknown as well as the grade level he was in when he started school in the United States (see Table 2).

## **Findings**

### ***Introduction***

Since all three research questions were designed to explore the impact of community building, the survey questions targeting the participants' experience of community pertain to all the research questions. The findings are presented in three separate sections: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

### ***Research questions***

1. How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?
2. How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?
3. How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?

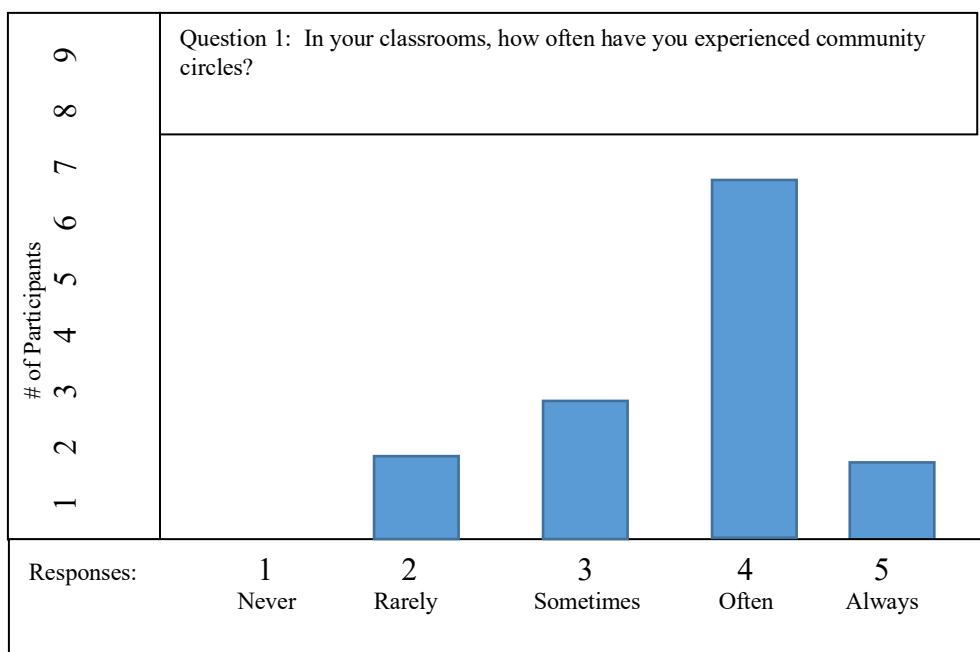
### Quantitative data

#### Research question 1:

*How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?*

*Data regarding community building.* One common manifestation of community building is the community circle. All 14 students had some familiarity with community circles. Nine students indicated that they were very familiar with community circles. Three students had some experience with community circles, and two students had little exposure (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

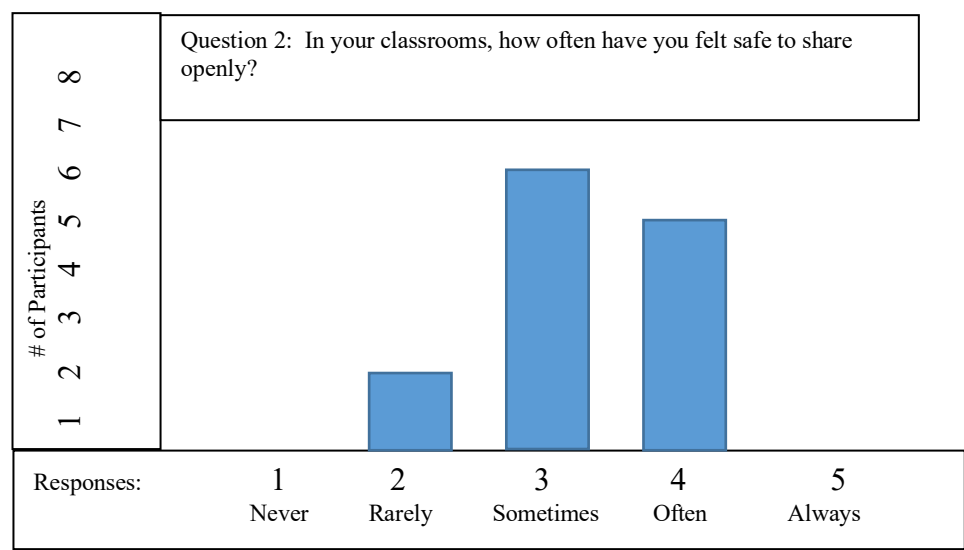


Therefore, all of the students had been introduced to community circles, how they work, and what they are designed to accomplish. This is important because community circles are intended to create a trusting environment in the classroom and set the stage for

community. Community circle should be a place where the students feel nurtured, safe, and willing to reach out to other students.

In addition, there are other ways to gauge the effectiveness of community building efforts. One of these is how safe students feel. In response to the question about how safe they felt, five students indicated that they often felt safe sharing in class, five students said they sometimes felt safe, and two students rarely felt safe. Two students did not respond. So, out of the 12 students who responded, 10 generally felt safe, while two students felt relatively unsafe (see Figure 2). Aside from question 1, which explicitly asked about students' experience with community circles, all the remaining questions regarded the overall classroom experience.

Figure 2

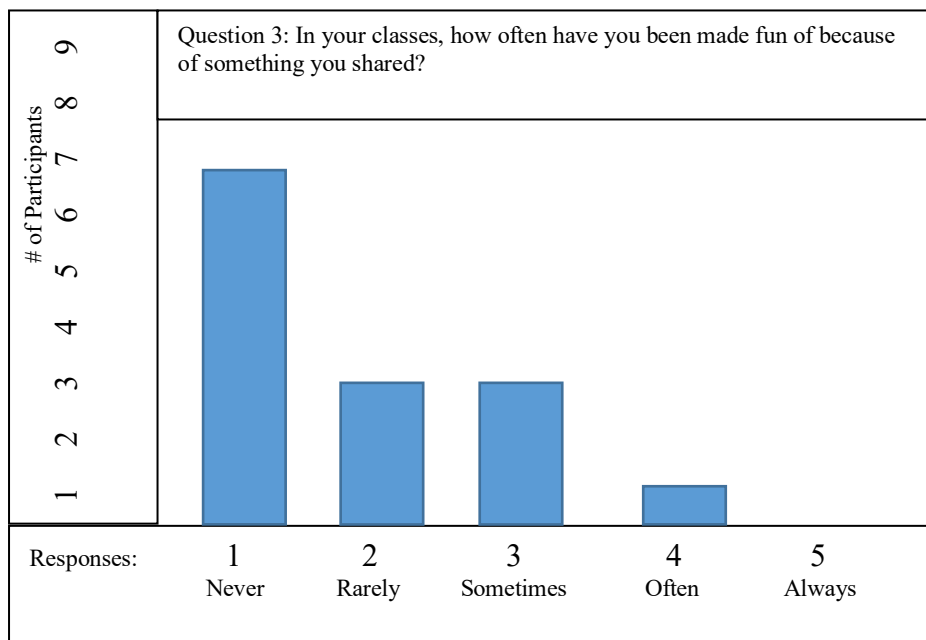


There were five participants who often felt safe; however, six other students felt safe only at times. Two students felt relatively unsafe. As a result, a total of eight students rarely or sometimes felt safe. There were two students who did not respond. These two students may not have felt safe enough to respond to the question about how

safe they felt to share openly. In general, in order for the students to learn at an optimal level, safety is crucial. If a student does not feel safe in the classroom because of something they may have said and been made fun of, it often leads to the student's reluctance to participate because of the pressure that is involved when personal safety is concerned. The experience of being ridiculed while sharing in class inhibits students' questioning and learning (see Figure 2).

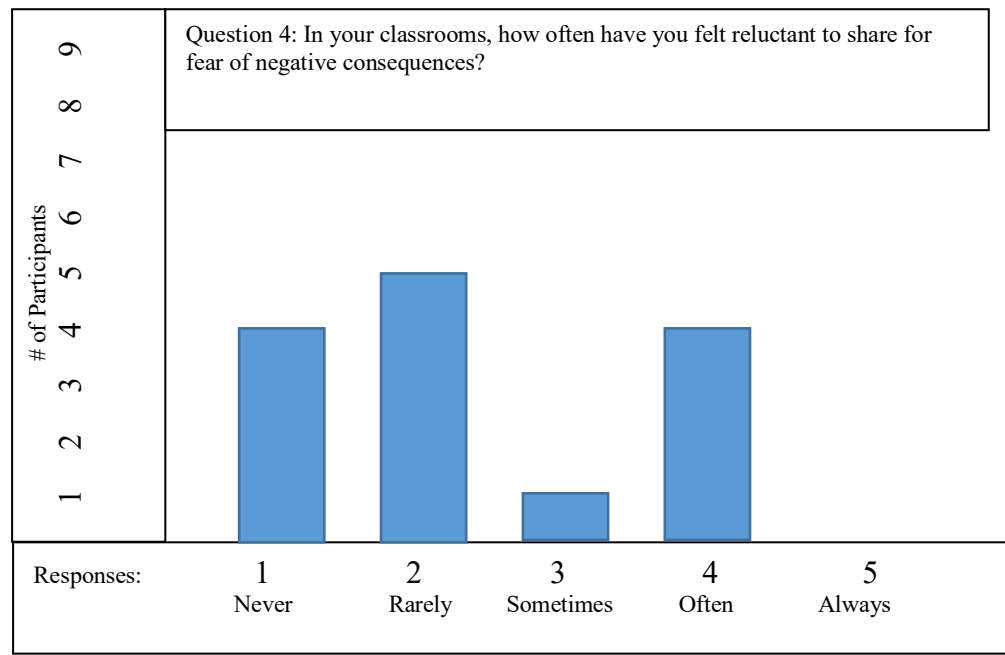
In response to the question, "In your classrooms, how often have you been made fun of because of something you shared?", seven students reported that they had never been made fun of, three students had hardly ever been made fun of, three students had sometimes been made fun of, and one student reported being made fun of most of the time (see Figure 3). So, while the majority of students (10) had never or rarely been ridiculed, the students who had experienced ridicule sometimes made up a significant minority (4).

Figure 3



Other topics related to community building in the survey were the levels of reluctance and pressure in sharing by students, which indicated their level of discomfort in the classroom. To the question, “In your classrooms, how often have you felt reluctant to share for fear of negative consequences?” four students responded that they had never felt any reluctance, five students hardly ever felt reluctance, one student sometimes felt reluctant to share, and four were often reluctant (see Figure 4).

Figure 4



Even though the majority of students (9) had rarely or never felt reluctant to share for fear of negative consequences, there remained a significant minority of students (5) who had felt reluctance at times or often. One student had at times felt reluctance, and four others had often been inhibited by fear of repercussions. Very often, in the classroom, a student’s reluctance to participate is followed by seconds of silence, which

often leads to the student feeling pressured because of the length of time spent in the spotlight.

The participants were also asked, “In your classrooms, how often have you felt pressure to participate?” As Figure 5 shows, seven students indicated that they had experienced some degree of pressure, while the other seven students had rarely or never felt any pressure. Four students had sometimes felt pressure, and two students often felt pressure. One student indicated that she always felt under pressure. Four students had never felt pressure to participate, three had hardly ever been pressured.

Figure 5

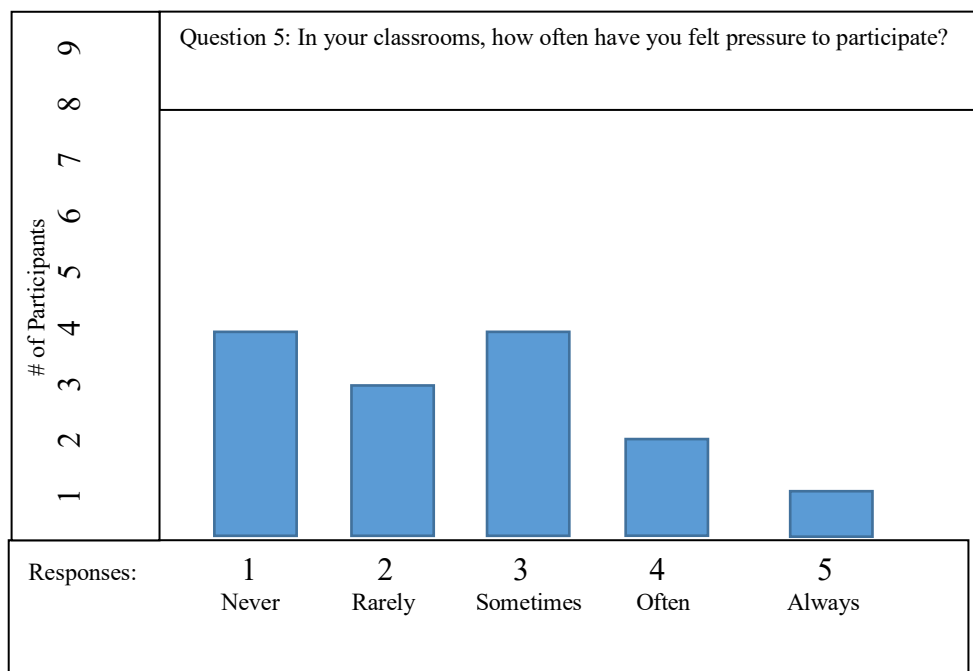


Figure 5 shows that, while half of the participants (7) never or rarely felt pressure, the other half (7) had experienced pressure, with three students indicating that they had this experience often or always. The experience of pressure and the reluctance to participate may make some students feel very uncomfortable and unsafe. Consequently,

the students are not at ease nor open to learning, instead becoming closeted, negative, inhibited participants. When the researcher asked the students how safe they felt sharing openly in class, it was with the understanding that the fear was emotional and not a physical fear. Safety is the foundation of creating a community of independent learners. Since feeling safe to share openly indicates trust that the community will listen respectfully, hereafter, the researcher will use the words “trust” and “safety” interchangeably, in order not to confuse emotional safety with physical safety.

*Summary and analysis of data regarding community building.* According to Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory of language acquisition, learning and emotion are inseparable (Swain, 2013). Social interaction is a form of socialization, from the most basic form, mimicking, to advanced interactions like engaging in academic discussions. Participating in these interactions requires a certain level of trust from all of the participants, as students must feel safe that the mimicking is required as part of the learning process of acquiring a new language, instead of being used as a tool for mockery. Similarly, the teacher must be sensitive to the students’ emotions if ridicule is taking place (Gardner & MacIntyre, 2000).

The goal of community building is to attain a level of student *conscientização*. Freire used this word to mean an independent and conscientious learner, which can only happen when trust has been established (Allman, 1994; Freire, 2000). Teacher training must take place in order to facilitate community building (Soto, 2014), as teachers must learn to, and become comfortable with, relinquishing some power to the students (hooks, 1994). Thus, the students become empowered and then become willing to take responsibility not only for their own learning, but also for the safety and learning of

others in the community. Since safety was a major concern for some of the students in this class, it appears that empathy and responsibility for others was lacking from their backgrounds. Therefore, safety became the marker that the researcher used to determine the success of the community building in the students' experience.

Some of these second-language-learning students had been ridiculed, some had reluctance, some felt pressure to share and participate, and, as a result, were not risk-takers. Without safety, robust learning does not take place (Brown, 2014). Through training, teachers become aware of the needs of second language learners, who may, for example, need additional time to respond (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000). When students are not given the time required to formulate their thoughts, they may feel pressure or reluctance, and experience ridicule (Swain, 2013). With training, teachers are better able to instill in their students the importance of trust that can only be based on student safety. Teachers must also learn to show genuine interest in order to empower students (Freire, 2000). This, in turn, lowers the students' affective filter, which reduces their level of anxiety and encourages students to take risks (Brown, 1994). It is important to note that acquisitional learning, where subconscious learning is better than conscious learning, may not be happening, because some students are instead uncomfortable in their surroundings (Brown, 2014).

*Data regarding cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).* Having stated the negative relationship that feeling unsafe, pressured, and reluctant to participate has on student comfort, the participants were asked the question, "When you started school in the U.S., how comfortable were you with the textbooks and instruction in your second language?" four students indicated that they were very comfortable understanding



textbooks in their second language when they started school, another four students were comfortable, three students were somewhat uncomfortable, and two students were very uncomfortable (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

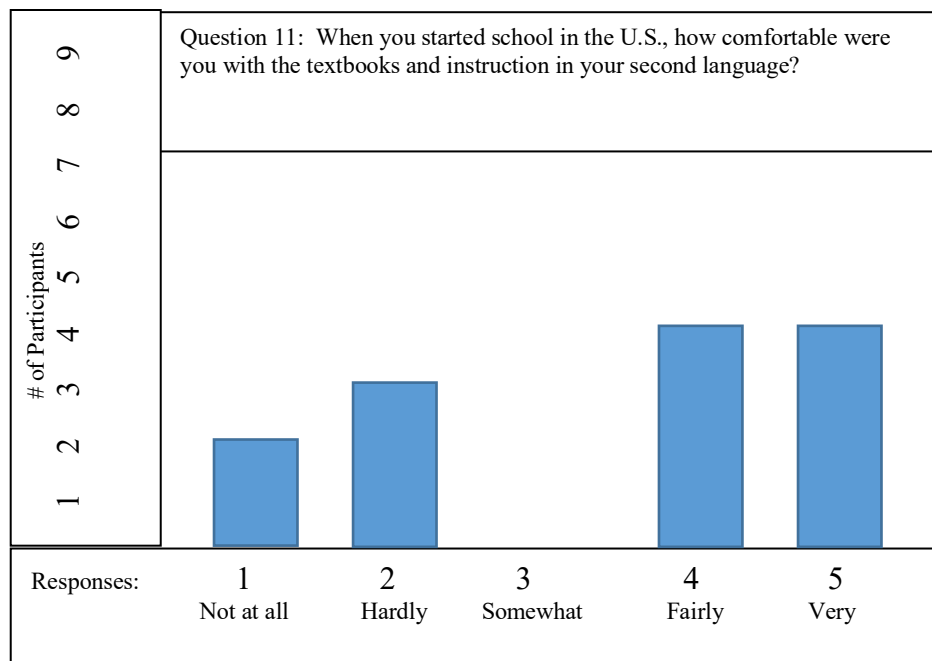
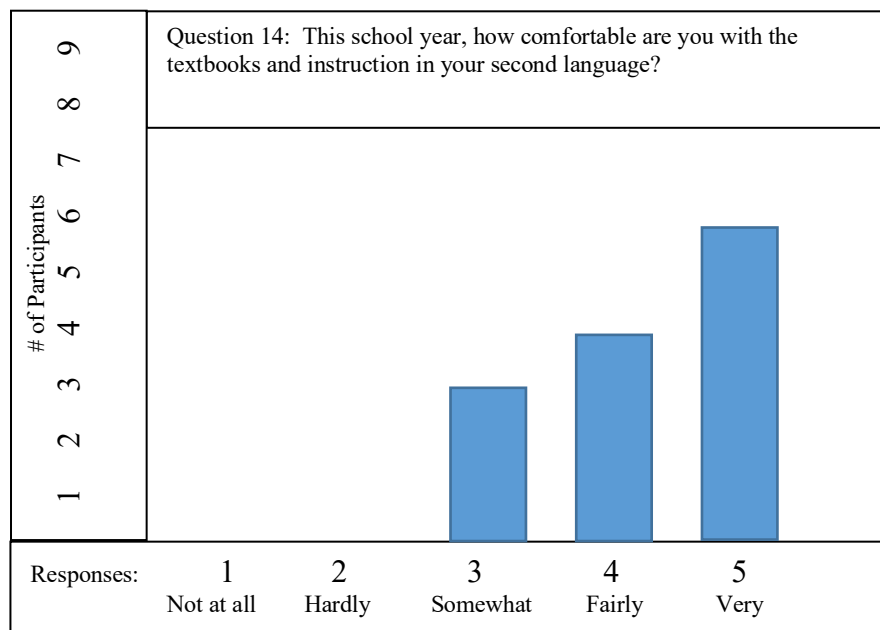


Figure 6 shows that, at the outset of their schooling, the majority of the survey participants (8) were fairly or very comfortable with the instruction and textbooks in their second language. Yet, the students who felt hardly or not at all comfortable made up almost half the cohort (6). The subsequent question was intended to establish how much the students felt their second language skills had improved since they started school.

In response to the question, “This school year, how comfortable are you with the textbooks and instruction in your second language?”, ten students indicated that they were fairly to very comfortable with the textbook instruction in their second language, while three students responded that they were somewhat comfortable (see Figure 7).

Figure 7



Overall, the students' level of comfort had increased, yet there were three students who were only somewhat comfortable using their second language for academic tasks. It is important to note that at the time of the survey, no students remained entirely uncomfortable with the textbooks and instruction in their second language.

*Summary and Analysis of data regarding cognitive academic language proficiency.* There is no direct evidence that community building had any relationship to the students' progress in their academic language. However, the level of cognitive academic language proficiency had increased for most of the students, which can be the result of a low affective filter. Krashen believed that in order for the students to feel comfortable with their own learning, they must have minimal stress, which will result in a low affective filter. For other students, hesitancy may be the result of over-monitoring by the teacher, which will inhibit the taking of risks, such as asking for clarification (Brown,

2014). Student hesitancy added to ridicule, apprehension, and reluctance to take risks may also be the reason for their passive learning.

The students' mixed levels of academic language improvements may also be a result of some students' limited experience in community building, for they may lack self-esteem and not feel empowered in their own learning. To overcome the students' unease in using their second language for academic tasks, learning can be minimized into shorter segments (Dabao, 2014). Collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks should also have been used to ease the students' discomfort in academic tasks. When students begin using collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks, they begin to learn about one another as people, reach a certain level of trust, and thereby lower the affective filter, which will build their self-esteem, emboldening and allowing them to feel empowered in the creation and construction of new language (Lapkin & Swain, 2000). Now that the academic language competence has been established, the development of the participants' conversational language will be discussed.

### ***Research question 2***

#### ***How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?***

*Data regarding community building.* As has been shown (see Figure 1), all 14 students had some familiarity with community circles. Nine students indicated that they were very familiar with community circles. Three students had some experience with community circles, and two students had little exposure. Five students indicated that they often felt safe sharing in class, five students said they sometimes felt safe, and two students rarely felt safe. Two students did not respond. So, out of the 12 students who

responded, 10 generally felt safe, while two students felt relatively unsafe (see Figure 2). Seven students had never been made fun of, three students had hardly ever been made fun of, three students had sometimes been made fun of, and one student reported being made fun of most of the time (see Figure 3). Four students never felt any reluctance, five students hardly ever felt reluctance, one student sometimes felt reluctant to share, and four were often reluctant (see Figure 4). Four students had never felt pressure, three had hardly ever been pressured, four students had sometimes felt pressure, and two students often felt pressure to participate. One student indicated that he or she always felt under pressure (see Figure 5).

*Summary and analysis of data regarding community building.* According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of language acquisition, learning and emotion are inseparable (Swain, 2013). Social interaction is a form of socialization, from the most basic form, mimicking, to advanced interactions like engaging in academic discussions. Participating in these interactions requires a certain level of trust from all of the participants, as students must feel safe that the mimicking is required as part of the learning process of acquiring a new language, instead of being used as a tool for mockery. Similarly, the teacher must be sensitive to the students' emotions if ridicule is taking place (Gardner & MacIntyre, 2000).

The goal of community building is to attain a level of student *conscientização*. Freire used this word to mean an independent and conscientious learner, which can only happen when trust has been established (Allman, 1994; Freire, 2000). Teacher training must take place in order to facilitate community building (Soto, 2014), as teachers must learn to, and become comfortable with, relinquishing some power to the students (hooks,

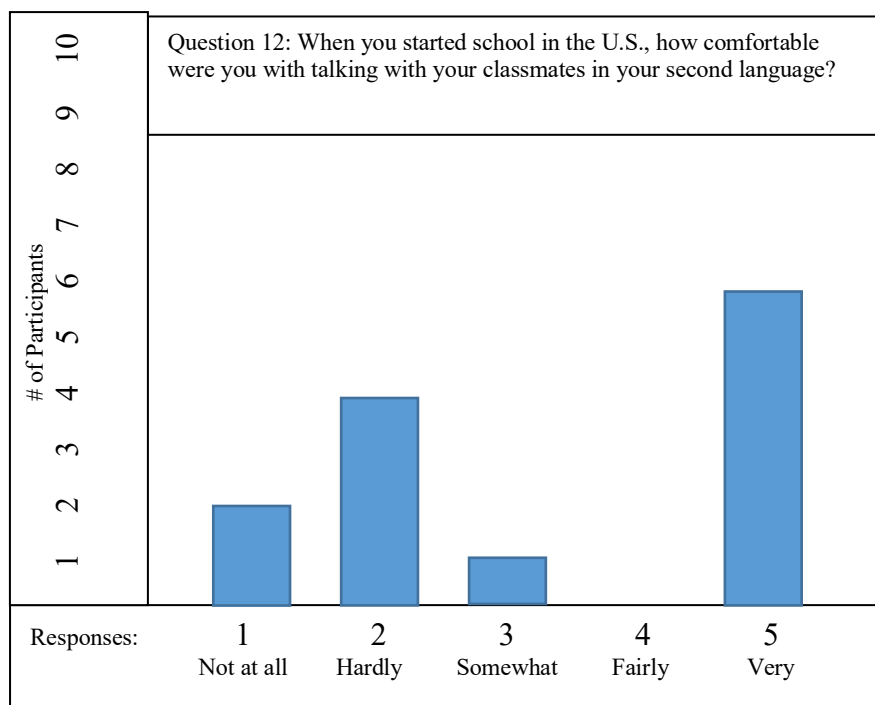
1994). Thus, the students become empowered and then become willing to take responsibility not only for their own learning, but also for the safety and learning of other students in the learning community. Since safety was a major concern for some of the students in this class, it appears that empathy and responsibility for others was lacking from their backgrounds. Therefore, safety became the marker that the researcher used to determine the success of the community building in the students' experience.

Some of these language learners had been ridiculed, some had reluctance, some felt pressure to share and participate, and, as a result, were not risk-takers. Without safety, robust learning does not take place (Swain, 2000). Through training, teachers become aware of the needs of second language learners, who may, for example, need additional time to respond (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000). When students are not given the time required to formulate their thoughts, they may feel pressure or reluctance, and experience ridicule (Swain, 2013). With training, teachers are better able to instill in their students the importance of trust that can only be based on student safety. Teachers must also learn to show genuine interest in order to empower students (Freire, 2000). This, in turn, lowers the students' affective filter, which reduces anxiety and encourages students to take risks (Brown, 1994). It is important to note that acquisitional learning, where subconscious learning is better than conscious learning, may not be happening, because some students are instead uncomfortable (Brown, 2014).

*Data regarding basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS).* In response to the question, "When you started school in the U.S., how comfortable were you with talking to your classmates in your second language?" six students said they were very

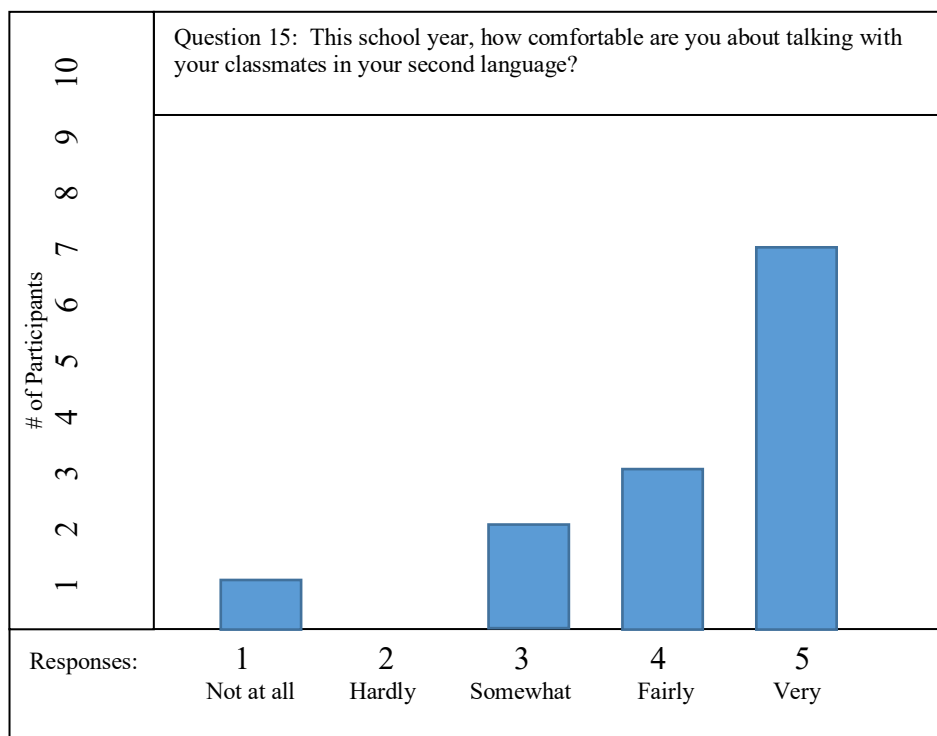
comfortable, while seven students' reported a comfort level in the not at all to somewhat range (see Figure 8).

Figure 8



In response to the question, “This school year, how comfortable are you talking with your classmates in your second language?”, ten students indicated that they were fairly or very comfortable, while three students were somewhat or not at all comfortable. Seven students answered that they were very comfortable, three students answered fairly comfortable, two students were somewhat comfortable, and one student reported being not at all comfortable making conversation in his or her second language (see Figure 9).

Figure 9



The level of comfort the students felt about talking with their classmates in their second language generally increased. The number of students who responded that they were very comfortable increased from six to seven, while the number of students who felt fairly comfortable increased from zero to three. In addition, the number of students who felt somewhat comfortable increased from one to two. The number of students who were not at all comfortable also decreased from two to one. It is significant to note that the four students who were hardly comfortable at the beginning of their school careers all reported a greater level of comfort in the present. However, there remained one student, out of an initial two, who continued to feel uncomfortable making conversation with classmates (see Figure 9).

*Summary and analysis of data regarding basic interpersonal communication skills.* There is no clear evidence that community building had an effect on the students' interpersonal communicative skills. Trust had not been built, and the students did not venture out of their comfort zone. It is concerning that there were still three students who felt uneasiness about talking with their classmates, while two students felt only somewhat comfortable and one student remained very uncomfortable talking to classmates in their second language from the beginning of their schooling (pre-K or K) until the sixth grade. One of the reasons that these students' conversational language proficiency did not increase may be that they did not have trust that their peers would not respond with ridicule. The students' stress, and thus their high affective filter, needed to be lowered (Cummings, 1979, 1980). The role that emotion plays in students' conversational language may possibly be higher than that of cognitive academic language proficiency because of the higher affective filter. There is a certain amount of individual space, respect, and reflection that is needed in order for the students to have a low affective filter before they can begin to have meaningful relationships with their peers. The role that emotion plays in learning has already been addressed, so when the students have a low affective filter, they are not in an emotional state of agitation and are more receptive to learning from both teachers and classmates. The role of emotions should not be ignored. Another reason may be over-monitoring by their classmates. When students are continuously over-corrected, especially by their peers, they often shut down (Brown, 2014).

It is also interesting to note that the students' uneasiness had not been addressed. Teaching requires both students and teachers to get out of their comfort level, and it is the



teacher's duty to reach out and get to know all the students and their emotions. Teaching must always be, as Freire (2000) noted, an act of love. Now that academic and conversational language development have both been discussed and tied to community building, the relationship between community building and student behavior will be explored.

### ***Research Question 3***

***How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?***

*Data regarding community building.* All 14 students were familiar with community circles. Nine students indicated that they were very familiar with community circles. Three students had some experience with community circles, and two students had little exposure (see Figure 1). Five students indicated that they often felt safe sharing openly in class, five students said they sometimes felt safe, and two students rarely felt safe. Two students did not respond. So, out of the 12 students who responded, 10 generally felt safe, while two students felt relatively unsafe (see Figure 2). Seven students had never been made fun of, three students had hardly ever been made fun of, three students had sometimes been made fun of, and one student reported being made fun of most of the time (see Figure 3). Four students never felt any reluctance, five students hardly ever felt reluctance, one student sometimes felt reluctant to share, and four were often reluctant (see Figure 4). Four students had never felt pressure, three had hardly ever been pressured, four students had sometimes felt pressure, and two students often felt pressure to participate. One student indicated that he or she always felt under pressure (see Figure 5).

*Summary and analysis of data regarding community building.* According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of language acquisition, learning and emotion are inseparable (Swain, 2013). Social interaction is a form of socialization, from the most basic form, mimicking, to advanced interactions like engaging in academic discussions. Participating in these interactions requires a certain level of trust from all of the participants, as students must feel safe that the mimicking is required as part of the learning process of acquiring a new language, instead of being used as a tool for mockery. Similarly, the teacher must be sensitive to the students' emotions if ridicule is taking place (Gardner & MacIntyre, 2000).

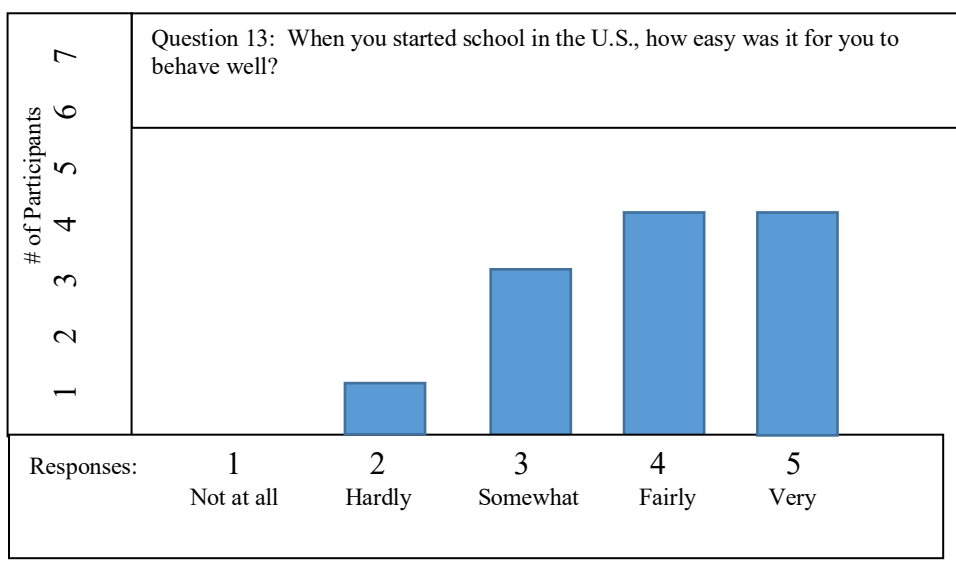
The goal of community building is to attain a level of student *conscientização*. Paulo Freire used this word to mean an independent and conscientious learner, which can only happen when there is trust (Allman, 1994; Freire, 2000). Teacher training must take place in order to facilitate community building (Soto, 2014), as teachers must learn to, and become comfortable with, relinquishing some power to the students (hooks, 1994). Thus, the students become empowered and then become willing to take responsibility not only for their own learning, but also for the safety and learning of others in the community. Since safety was a major concern for some of the students in this class, it appears that empathy and responsibility for others was lacking from their backgrounds. Therefore, safety became the marker that the researcher used to determine the success of the community building in the students' experience.

Some of these students had been ridiculed, some had reluctance, some felt pressure to share and participate, and, as a result, were not risk-takers. Without safety, robust learning does not take place (Brown, 2014). Through training, teachers become

aware of the needs of second language learners, who may, for example, need additional time to respond (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000). When students are not given the time required to formulate their thoughts, they may feel pressure or reluctance, and experience ridicule (Swain, 2013). With training, teachers are better able to instill in their students the importance of trust that can only be based on student safety. Teachers must also learn to show genuine interest in order to empower students (Freire, 2000). This, in turn, lowers the students' affective filter, which reduces anxiety and encourages students to take risks (Brown, 1994). It is important to note that acquisitional learning, where subconscious learning is better than conscious learning, may not be happening, because some students are instead uncomfortable (Brown, 2014).

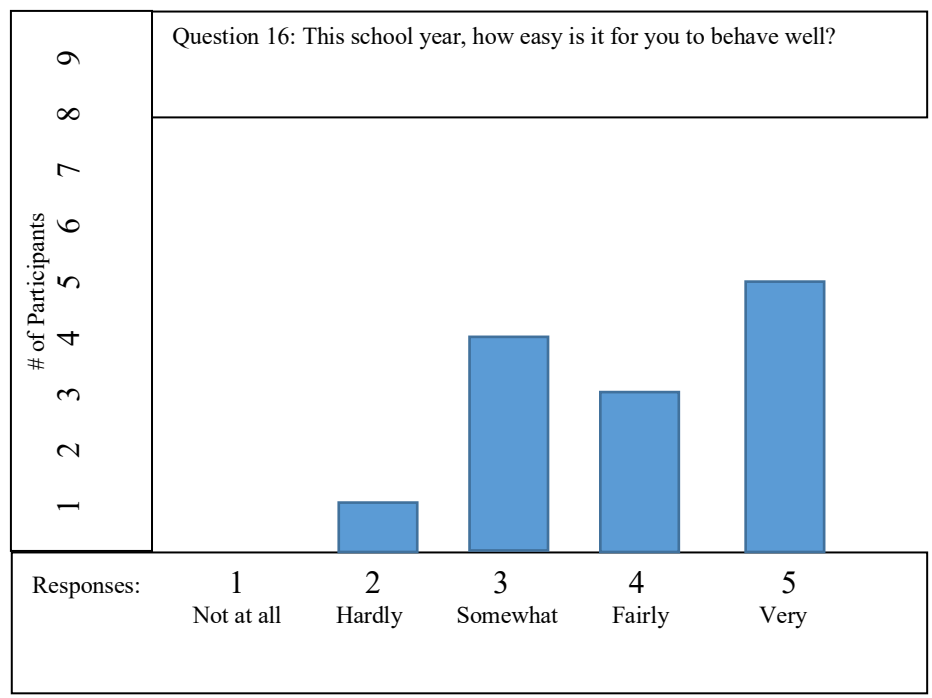
*Data regarding behavior.* In response to the question, "When you started school in the U.S., how easy was it for you to behave well?" (see Figure 10), eight students indicated that it was fairly to very easy to behave well, while four responded that it was difficult or somewhat difficult to behave well. Four participants found good behavior very easy, four found it fairly easy, three found it somewhat difficult, and one student found it difficult to behave well.

Figure 10



In response to the question, “This school year, how easy it is to for you to behave well?”, eight students reported that it was fairly to very easy to behave well in the present school year, and five students said that it was difficult or somewhat difficult. Five students said it was very easy to behave well, three students said it was fairly easy, four students said somewhat difficult, and one student said it was difficult (see Figure 11).

Figure 11



There remained eight students who found it fairly to very easy to behave well, the same number who reported in that range at the beginning of their schooling. The number of students who found it difficult or somewhat difficult to behave well increased from four to five. The number of students who found it very easy to behave well increased from four to five. The number of students who found it fairly easy to behave well decreased from four to three. However, the number of students who reported that it was somewhat easy to behave well increased from three to four. It is important to note that, for one student, it was difficult to behave well early on and remained difficult. Since all the students began school in either pre-school or Kindergarten, this represents six school years without any improvement. In general, behaving well became a little easier for most of the participants.

*Summary and analysis of data regarding behavior.* There is no evidence of a direct connection between community building and student behavior. Student confidence in their ability to behave well decreased minimally from the beginning of their academic careers in the U.S. (either in pre-K or in Kindergarten) to the present. Even though the number of students who found it somewhat easy to behave well had increased from three to four, one student reported that it remained hardly easy to behave well. It is important to note that this student's difficulty with behavior had not changed since he started school. Often, students act out because of negative emotions. Though it is important for students to show emotion in the classroom, it is also important for the teacher to model appropriate ways to show emotion in the academic setting (Shor, 1999). Very often, when a student misbehaves, the teacher's tendency is not to relinquish power but, instead, to punish the student. Yet the teacher needs to look at that misbehaving student as a being who is calling out for help (Allman, 1994; hooks, 1994). It is the teachers' responsibility to inquire and care about the students' emotional well-being in the class, in the school, and also at home. Now that the association between behavior and community building has been discussed, the qualitative themes will be presented. The researcher will use the emerging qualitative themes to better identify and learn about the students.

***Summary and analysis of quantitative data***

The role of emotion in second language learning, including CALP and BICS, as well as behavior has been discussed; emotion and learning are inter-twined. Community building is the key to students' emotional growth, for it provides them with what they need, socialization and social interaction, which raises their emotional and academic ZPD. Community building is interactional, empowering, and, as students share their

values, it allows for students to construct personal relationships and build empathy, allowing them *perechavanie*, to change and grow. *Perechavanie* is a term used for how the student perceives the world. This, in turn, leads to a positive mindset followed by critical thinking, creating responsible learning, *conscientização*, and, finally, class *conscientização*. Student dialogue provides students with opportunities to socialize through collaborative discussions as well as collaborative tasks and are part of Swain's student output hypothesis of second language acquisition.

Teacher training is badly needed. Certain students were not risk-takers, lacked empathy, and did not take responsibility for others. The need for student safety has already been established; however, seven students indicated that they rarely felt safe or at times felt safe. Four students had been ridiculed often or sometimes. Five students were either often reluctant or felt reluctant at times. Finally, seven students indicated that they always, often, or sometimes felt pressure. Teacher training may be needed in order for the teachers to become aware that they have to reach out to these students, whose concern for safety, ridicule, reluctance, and pressure, which may be reflected in their behavior, puts them in a negative mindset, which would be easily identified and corrected with proper training.

As has been stated, emotion and learning are closely associated, and this was evident in the students' answers as to how comfortable they were initially with teacher instruction and textbooks in their second language. Five students stated that they were hardly or not at all comfortable with the academic language when they began school. Presently, the number of students decreased slightly, as there were only three students who were somewhat comfortable with their academic language. Generally, the students'

CALP scores somewhat increased. Some of the students' hesitancy to ask for clarification may be a sign of their low self-esteem; the students were scared to take chances and remained passive learners. Besides teacher training, teachers must provide students with segments of work in order not to overwhelm them and implement collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks to build student self-esteem. In order to raise their academic language zone of proximal development, the teacher can begin by assigning the students to work in pairs, followed by group work and oral presentations. For once a student is ridiculed, the fear of being made fun of is ever-present, so the student does not feel safe and, as a result, is not liberated to learn.

The participants had mixed responses for their basic interpersonal communication skills. The students were not comfortable talking with one another, which is evident by their mixed results, as five students, at the onset of their academic schooling, felt somewhat comfortable, hardly comfortable, or not at all comfortable talking with other students in their second language. At present, there remained three students who were still not at all or somewhat comfortable speaking with their classmates. Not enough socialization has taken place, which was evident from the students' high affective filter, which led to stress and worry about their safety and ridicule as well as anxiety and pressure in having interpersonal conversations. To put it simply, the students do not trust one another.

The role that emotion plays in BICS may be even more important than the role that emotion plays in CALP, because the teacher may only be aware of what happens in class and not know how students treat one another outside of class. Teacher training is needed in order to model how to avoid teacher and student peer overcorrections, which



may lead to student over-sensitivity. The teacher can implement Swain's output hypothesis by assigning the students collaborative dialogue and collaborative tasks so that they can learn about another, build trust, lower their affective filter, and increase class consciousness. The teacher must model and instill empathy in order for the students to know how to feel empathy for other students. Student empathy must replace student apathy, for students who are loners are highly visible with proper training.

It has already been discussed how the academic zone of proximal development is tied to the emotional ZPD of the students. At the beginning of their academic studies, in pre-K or K, four students stated that it was hard or somewhat hard to behave well. Presently, there were two students who felt it was hard or somewhat hard to behave well. This means that, in six years, the negative behavior of two students did not change. Bad behavior is a result of negative emotions, which are the result of low self-esteem and students crying out for help. In six years, these two students had not learned to control their emotions and did not get the proper instruction on how to behave.

Teacher training is very important in order to thwart negative behavior and to model and instill the proper emotional and academic behavior that is best suited to learn. The teacher must learn how to relinquish power to the students without seeming passive and timid. This is very hard to do, and it requires trust, which takes time. In order to teach proper, consistent behavior, teachers should invite the students to co-create some fun and friendly rules about proper behavior within the class. Once started, some students may come up with nonsensical suggestions. Even so, the teacher must write down all the students' responses with their names on a chart. By doing so, the students can take ownership of the class-generated rules. By creating a list, the teacher can model

how to make good choices by vocalizing their own stream of consciousness (meta-talk), discarding the nonsensical suggestions, for the students themselves will be the first ones to laugh at and discount the ridiculous ones. By doing so, the teacher is modeling how to create constructive responses.

Play-acting also works. The teacher can ask for a volunteer to play-act a scene and create the needed artificial situation for the proper behavior to be modeled. The teacher can instruct the student actor to be engaged in writing while the teacher, who is playing the student role, disrespectfully snatches one of the other students' pencils "because he needed it." The teacher then asks the class the question, "How would you like for somebody to behave like that?" and prompts the students to suggest the proper behavior. The teacher can chart all of the students' responses, teach the students how to discard the goofy suggestions while teaching critical thinking and reasoning in order to create class rules.

Class rules for behavior should always be co-created, written down on a poster, and posted in the classroom with all the students' and the teacher's names, thereby creating a social contract. Teachers should make a big deal out of this, because it is a big deal; it is new to the students and to the teacher, because the teacher is forfeiting power in the classroom, which also merits a lot of trust. Teachers need to instill community building in their values in order to build student and class self-esteem so the students can be responsible for their classmates' learning as well as their own. Also, teachers must get to know their students in the academic as well as their familial setting. This can be done by asking the students about their families and get to know the students as human beings.

Consistent parental communication by the teacher is needed for all of the students, and it can be looked as touching base.

The quantitative data of the participants only gave the researcher a partial profile of the students’ experiences. However, adding these findings to the qualitative themes that emerged gave the researcher a more complete picture.

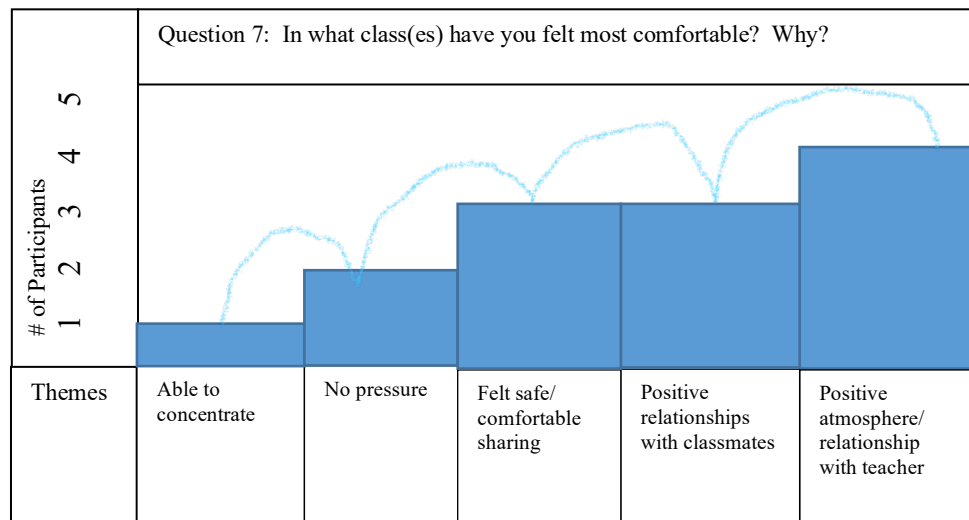
***Qualitative themes***

***Research question 1***

***How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?***

*Community building themes.* The first qualitative question in the survey was the open-ended question, “In what class(es) have you felt most comfortable? Why?” (see Figure 12). The themes that emerged from the participants’ responses were their desire to learn in a positive atmosphere (4), the relationship with the teacher (4), relationships with peers (3), feeling safe to express themselves (3), not feeling pressured (2), and being able to concentrate (1).

Figure 12



Four students cited a positive atmosphere and their relationship with the teacher. Charles responded that he was most comfortable with a particular teacher who is “nice and funny.” Alejandro reported feeling comfortable in most of his classes “because the teachers do not tolerate bad behavior.” Henry referred to a teacher who “was always strict but he gave rewards for good practices. Also, he made sure no kids got picked on.” Mohammad replied simply, “I feel more safe when I’m in a class with a teacher I like and friends.”

Three students cited a positive relationship with classmates. Katya said she was most comfortable in her 4<sup>th</sup> grade class “because I had my friends in that class.” Isaiah also chose the class in which “I have some friends,” and Mohammad, as has been mentioned, chose the class “with...friends.” For these students, a friendly face, which goes with positive relationships, is meaningful.

Besides Mohammad’s need for safety, two other students described a class in which they felt safe. Genevieve indicated that she was most comfortable in the class where “you get to share how you’re feeling.” Nerry cited the class in which “we had community circle where we could say anything on our mind.” Generally, safety is needed before students can build on positive relationships.

Two students said they were more comfortable when they felt less pressure. Katya cited the class in which “I never got asked a lot of questions, so I didn’t have to participate because I am shy.” Ezekial responded that he was most comfortable in the class in which he did not “feel a lot of pressure.” Lawson responded that he was most comfortable in “English because I can concentrate.”

Finally, there were three participants who did not give the researcher any indication of what made them feel comfortable. Frank did not respond to the question, Betty wrote only “I felt most comfortable in my 4<sup>th</sup> grade class room,” while Dustin indicated the classes in which he was comfortable but admitted “Idk why”.

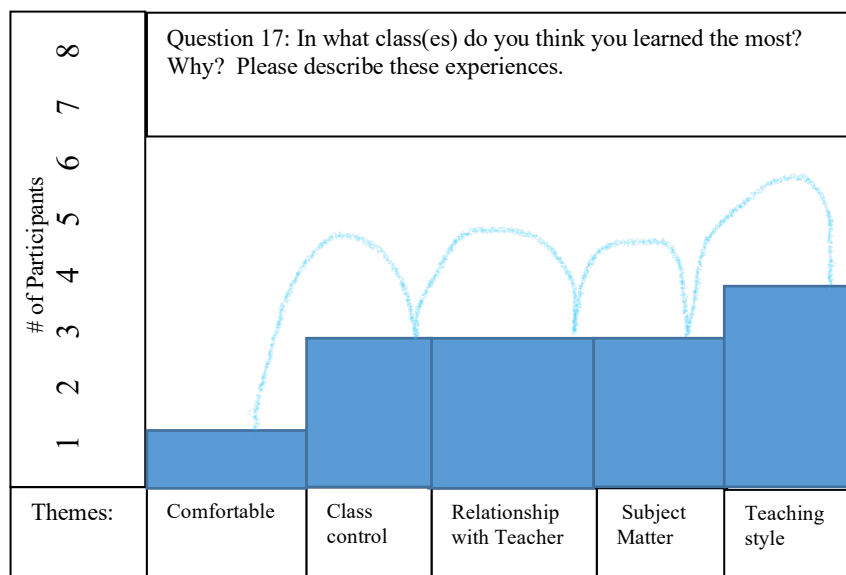
For the majority of the respondents (7), a positive atmosphere and positive relationships, whether with the teacher or peers, were important to make them feel comfortable. For three students, the need to feel safe sharing with the class was a priority. Two students identified a low-pressure environment, and one felt that being able to concentrate was the key to a comfortable classroom.

*Summary and analysis of community building themes.* The need to feel safe in the classroom is closely tied to the students feeling comfortable in the classroom. The themes identified by the students, which begin with the basics of self-care and maintenance (to be able to concentrate, lack of pressure, the feeling of being safe and comfortable while sharing) and range all the way to positive relationships with classmates and teachers, correlate with Brown’s emotional and psychological characteristics, which are self-esteem, willingness to communicate, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, and student extroversion (Brown, 2014). Some of the students’ emotional state changes, due to a low affective filter, from one of inhibition and the need to be recognized to one of having and valuing relationships with others. Some of the students progressed and some did not, because of fear and the need to feel safe, therefore remained inhibited and probably acted like visitors in their own classroom. As the ceiling of the emotional ZPD begins to expand, the students’ academic ZPD also continues to grow (Imai, 2010). At times, passive teachers model passive learning.

The researcher used the community building themes in combination with the emerging language learning themes to address research question one.

*Language learning themes.* Participants were also asked, “In what class(es) do you think you learned the most? Why? Please describe these experiences” (see Figure 13). The themes that emerged were teaching style (4), subject matter (3), relationship with the teacher (3), class control (3), and feeling comfortable (1).

Figure 13



Four students mentioned teaching style. Dustin indicated that he learned most in the class with a teacher who “has a fun teaching style with good prizes for good work.” Nerry chose the class in which the teacher “would explain more.” Ezekial felt like he learned the most in “math because I learn new things every week.” Jenny described the class in which “we always had work to do, we always were on top of something,” adding, “I learn best when I’m doing independent worksheets or reading.”

Three students wrote about their relationships with the teacher. In addition to her other comments, Jenny also mentioned that “the teacher was friendly.” Betty shared that

she “learned best in my fifth grade class because my teacher was very nice and listened to our opinion.” Frank wrote simply, “I learned the most in all of my classes because I had great teachers.”

Three students cited subject matter. Isaiah reflected that he “learned the most in Spanish and/or history because I learned about many people that came before us and new words in Spanish.” Mohammad also felt that he learned the most in Spanish “because he teaches a lot of Spanish history and Spanish vocabulary.” Genevieve responded bluntly, “Spanish because I came from a D+ to an A+.”

Four students described classes in which the teacher has control. Henry cited a class in which the teacher “can control the class well and teach without being interrupted.” Lawson chose the class which was “not loud.” Alejandro felt that he “learned the most equally throughout all of my classes because the teachers tried their best with keeping the environment very still, quiet, and calm.” Katya indicated that she learns best in the class where she feels most comfortable “because it’s after recess, so I feel relaxed and calm. Also, I get better grades because I focus.”

For four students, the teaching style was the most important factor in their learning. Subject matter, relationship with the teacher, and class control were each mentioned three times, and one student learned best when she felt comfortable and at ease. It is notable that none of the students cited safety as a key ingredient in their learning.

*Summary and analysis of language learning themes.* The language learning themes for the students were somewhat similar to the community building themes. The students’ needs, again, begin at the basic intra-personal need of being comfortable, which

is linked to class control. Students' need to feel safe is a basic instinct. Fighting is not an option, flight cannot happen, and, for some, misbehaving is also not an option, so they just sit and become invisible. These are followed by more intra-personal issues: relationships with the teacher, the ability to make a decision about subject matter, and, lastly, teaching style. The association between learning and safety is again the basic need, which culminates in teaching style. Thus, the students' responses support what Vygotsky and Swain both assert, that emotion and learning are intertwined; therefore, emotions can be measured and should not be ignored (Swain, 2013). The basic need for survival, which is safety, was not met, and some students became passive learners. Now that research question one has been addressed, research question two follows.

### ***Research question 2***

#### ***How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?***

*Community building themes.* The first qualitative question in the survey was the open-ended question, "In what class(es) have you felt most comfortable? Why?" (Figure 12). The themes that emerged from the participants' responses were their need for a positive atmosphere (4), relationship with the teacher (4), relationships with peers (3), feeling safe to express themselves (3), not feeling pressured (2), and being able to concentrate (1).

Four students cited a positive atmosphere and their relationship with the teacher. Charles responded that he was most comfortable with a particular teacher who is "nice and funny." Alejandro reported feeling comfortable in most of his classes "because the teachers do not tolerate bad behavior." Henry referred to a teacher who "was always



strict but he gave rewards for good practices. Also, he made sure no kids got picked on.” Mohammad replied simply, “I feel more safe when I’m in a class with a teacher I like and friends.”

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Besides Mohammad’s need for safety, two other students described a class in which they felt safe. Genevieve indicated that she was most comfortable in the class where “you get to share how you’re feeling.” Nerry cited the class in which “we had community circle where we could say anything on our mind.” Generally, safety is needed before students can build on positive relationships.

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Finally, there were three participants who did not give the researcher any indication of what made them feel comfortable. Frank did not respond to the question, Betty wrote only “I felt most comfortable in my 4<sup>th</sup> grade class room,” while Dustin indicated the classes in which he was comfortable but admitted “Idk why”.

For the majority of the respondents (7), a positive atmosphere and positive relationships, whether with the teacher or peers, were important to make them feel comfortable. For three students, the need to feel safe sharing with the class was a priority. Two students identified a low-pressure environment, and one felt that being able to concentrate was the key to a comfortable classroom.

*Summary and analysis of community building themes.* The need to feel safe in the classroom is closely tied to students being comfortable in the classroom. The themes identified by the students, which begin with the basics of self-care (to be able to concentrate, lack of pressure, the feeling of being safe and comfortable while sharing) and range all the way to positive relationships with classmates and teachers, correlate with Brown's emotional and psychological characteristics, which are self-esteem, willingness to communicate, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, and student extroversion (Brown, 2014). The students' emotional state changes, due to a low affective filter, from one of inhibition and the need to be recognized to having relationships with others. As the ceiling of the emotional ZPD begins to expand, the students' academic ZPD also continues to grow (Imai, 2010).

*Language learning themes.* Participants were also asked, "In what class(es) do you think you learned the most? Why? Please describe these experiences" (see Figure 13). The themes that emerged were teaching style (4), relationship with the teacher (3), subject matter (3), class control (3), and feeling comfortable (1).

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ease. It is notable that none of the students cited safety as a key ingredient in their learning.

*Summary and analysis of language learning themes.* The language learning themes for the students were somewhat similar to the community building themes. The students' needs again begin at the basic intra-personal need of being comfortable, which is linked to class control. These are followed by more inter-personal issues: relationships with the teacher, the ability to make a decision about subject matter, and, lastly, teaching style. The association between learning and safety is again the basic need, which culminates in teaching style. Thus, the students' responses what Vygotsky and Swain both assert, that emotion and learning are intertwined; therefore, emotions can be measured and should not be ignored (Swain, 2013). Now that the association between community building and conversational language has been explored, the themes regarding community building and behavior will be discussed.

### ***Research question 3***

#### ***How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?***

*Community building themes.* The first qualitative question in the survey was the open-ended question, "In what class(es) have you felt most comfortable? Why?" (see Figure 12). The themes that emerged from the participants' responses were a positive atmosphere (4), relationship with the teacher (4), relationships with peers (3), feeling safe to express themselves (3), not feeling pressured (2), and being able to concentrate (1).

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and funny.” Alejandro reported feeling comfortable in most of his classes “because the teachers do not tolerate bad behavior.” Henry referred to a teacher who “was always strict but he gave rewards for good practices. Also, he made sure no kids got picked on.” Mohammad replied simply, “I feel more safe when I’m in a class with a teacher I like and friends.”

Three students cited a positive relationship with classmates. Katya said she was most comfortable in her 4<sup>th</sup> grade class “because I had my friends in that class.” Isaiah also chose the class in which “I have some friends,” and Mohammad, as has been mentioned, chose the class “with...friends.” For these students, a friendly face, which goes with positive relationships, is meaningful.

Besides Mohammad’s need for safety, two other students described a class in which they felt safe. Genevieve indicated that she was most comfortable in the class where “you get to share how you’re feeling.” Nerry cited the class in which “we had community circle where we could say anything on our mind.” Generally, safety is needed before students can build on positive relationships.

Two students said they were more comfortable when they felt less pressure. Katya cited the class in which “I never got asked a lot of questions, so I didn’t have to participate because I am shy.” Ezekial responded that he was most comfortable in the class in which he did not “feel a lot of pressure.” Lawson responded that he was most comfortable in “English because I can concentrate.”

Finally, there were three participants who did not give the researcher any indication of what made them feel comfortable. Frank did not respond to the question,

Betty wrote only “I felt most comfortable in my 4<sup>th</sup> grade class room,” while Dustin indicated the classes in which he was comfortable but admitted “Idk why”.

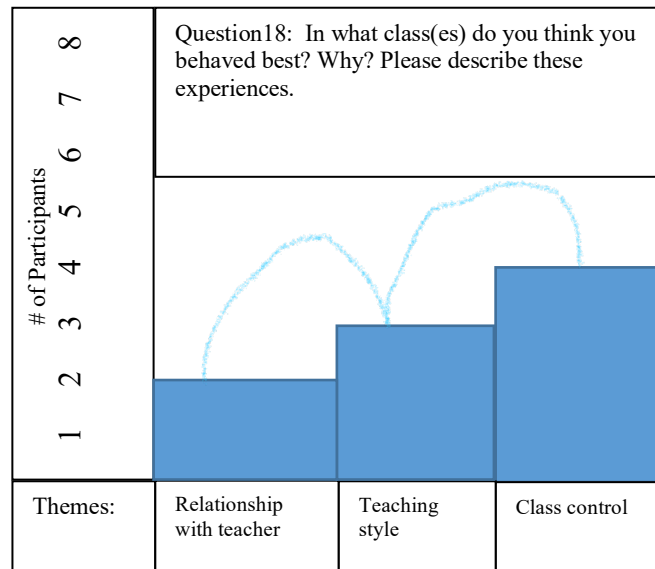
For the majority of the respondents (7), a positive atmosphere and positive relationships, whether with the teacher or peers, were important to make them feel comfortable. For three students, the need to feel safe sharing with the class was a priority. Two students identified a low-pressure environment, and one felt that being able to concentrate was the key to a comfortable classroom.

*Summary and analysis of community building themes.* The need to feel safe in the classroom is closely tied to students being comfortable in the classroom. The themes identified by the students, which begin with the basics of self-care (to be able to concentrate, lack of pressure, the feeling of being safe and comfortable while sharing) and range all the way to positive relationships with classmates and teachers, which create a positive atmosphere, correlate with Brown’s emotional and psychological characteristics, which are self-esteem, willingness to communicate, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, and student extroversion (Brown, 2014). The students’ emotional state changes, due to a low affective filter, from one of inhibition and the need to be recognized to one having meaningful relationships with others. As the ceiling of the emotional ZPD begins to expand, the students’ academic ZPD also continues to grow (Imai, 2010). Now that the students’ responses about community building have been presented, they will be compared with the themes which emerged about classroom behavior.

*Behavior themes.* In the responses to the question, “In what class(es) do you think you behaved best? Why? Please describe these experiences” (see Figure 14), the

researcher identified three themes: class control (4), teaching style (3), and relationship with the teacher (1).

Figure 14



Four students said they behaved best when the teacher had control of the class. Alejandro indicated that he “behaved best when the students were not very loud and crazy, because it was very hard to concentrate when the environment was not very focused.” Katya shared that, although she herself always behaves well, “I do not like when people take time from our classes by not behaving.” Similarly, Betty reported that she “behaved my best in all my classes, but sometimes it’s hard when your teacher doesn’t actually teach you anything and their class is out of control.” Ezekial responded that he behaved best in “ELA because I am comfortable there.”

Three students mentioned teaching style. Dustin said that the class he behaved best in “was fun and entertaining and therefore you were paying attention and not goofing around.” Jenny reflected, “I do behave better when we have work to do because I like to

be on top of things in the class.” Henry described the class in which there were “good rewards for people that behave well and get everything done on time.”

Two students cited their relationship with the teacher. Mohammad indicated that he behaved best for the teacher who “is nice and I will feel bad if I were to be disruptive.” Genevieve described getting to know the new teacher, writing, “at first I was new to [the new teacher’s] rules and now it’s one of my favorite classes.”

Four students did not provide any information about their behavior. Frank left the question blank, while Lawson, Nerry, and Isaiah identified the classes in which they behaved the best without explaining why. Even though Isaiah identified the class in which he was able to behave relatively well (Spanish), he also reported that it was equally difficult for him to behave well when he started school and in the present.

For four students, class control played an important role in their behavior. The teacher’s style was important to three students, while relationships with the teacher was identified by two students as a key factor in their behavior. Another four students answered only the first part of the question and did not provide an explanation as to why they behave better in some classes than others.

***Summary and Analysis of Behavior Themes.*** The themes that emerged from the students’ responses ran from the basic need for class control to teaching style and, finally, relationship with the teacher. For the students, class control is the key to their behavior, suggesting that they are passive learners who rely on the teacher to manage their behavior as well as their learning. Teacher training in community building is critical in order for the teacher to learn how to give up and distribute power to the students without losing class control (hooks, 1994). It is very difficult for teachers to regain control in a class in



which power has been distributed to students who have not behaved in a conscious manner. These students lack *conscientização*, or communal consciousness, and also lack their own critical reflection (Allman, 1994). A certain amount of trust and student buy-in must be established and modeled, for example, in artificial settings such as play-acting, before the students can understand that they are responsible for their own behavior.

### ***Summary and analysis of qualitative themes***

The researcher collected qualitative responses in three categories: community building, language learning, and behavior. The themes that arose from student responses in each category were clearly divided into basic and more advanced student needs. The basic themes that emerged about community building were the need to feel safe, concentrate, not feel pressure, and be comfortable. The more advanced themes were positive relationships with classmates and teachers. The themes that emerged in the language learning category were the basic needs of feeling comfortable and knowing that the class was under control, as well as the more advanced themes of positive relationships with the teacher, teaching style, and subject matter, all of which contribute to a positive atmosphere.

The researcher used Merrill Swain's output hypothesis, in which the students create language any time they speak in their second language, because it includes socialization provided through collaborative dialogue, collaborative tasks, which allows for the expansion of their academic as well as emotional ZPD. Overall, the participants' responses indicate that their classes were somewhat successful in implementing Swain's recommendations. Approximately half of the participants were in the more advanced needs stage; therefore, there is a huge distinction among the students with regard to their

needs, basic and advanced. Fear may be what kept the students from successfully participating in CD and CT, and, as a result, many of the students did not view relationships, either with teachers or with other students, as important. There are obviously unresolved issues that inhibit these students from advancing both emotionally and academically.

The qualitative themes could also be categorized into fear and lack of fear. Fear includes the inner turmoil students experience when not feeling comfortable, while those who lack fear are able to reach outward and construct positive relationships with their peers and their teachers. Since all the students began their schooling in pre-K or K, the teachers have had plenty of time to get to know all of the students and meet their basic needs. Some students do not need much to spur them on, yet others require a tender touch. A genuine interest in their lives must be conveyed by the teacher. Since this has not happened in the seven or more years the students have been in school, the need for teacher training around how to build a successful learning community must be emphasized. The objective of community building is to create a safe and supportive environment for all. The students whose needs are not met tend to become either highly visible or invisible. The qualitative themes that surfaced from the survey again give us a picture of the students' beings and needs. However, in order to gain a better understanding and perspective on the participants, the researcher used the mixed methods approach to analyze all the responses holistically, at times tying categories together: textbook and second language instruction, conversation then and now, and student behavior then and now.

### *Mixed methods*

In looking for patterns within the results as a whole, the researcher identified safety as a key indicator of successful outcomes for the students and, by grouping them according to their reported level of safety, was able to draw some conclusions and identify certain students to highlight in case studies.

#### *Safety, behavior, and learning themes*

Only five of the students (Alejandro, Dustin, Ezekial, Frank, and Henry) had felt safe to share openly in their classrooms, while six (Isaiah, Jenny, Katya, Mohammad, Genevieve, and Lawson) felt somewhat safe and two (Betty and Nerry) did not feel safe at all (see Figure 2). There were three students (Alejandro, Katya, and Lawson) who had sometimes been made fun of because of what they shared, and one, Isaiah, who had often had this experience (see Figure 3). Frank, Katya, Lawson, and Nerry were often reluctant to share for fear of negative consequences. Five students (Alejandro, Charles, Ezekial, Henry, and Jenny) rarely felt reluctant to share, and one student, Genevieve, sometimes felt reluctant to share or participate (see Figure 4). There were seven students who felt at least some pressure to participate: four sometimes (Alejandro, Dustin, Lawson, and Nerry), two often (Betty and Ezekial), and one, Katya, always felt under pressure (Figure 5).

Some of these students' commonality is that they did not feel safe to share openly in class because they had been made fun of while feeling pressure and reluctance to participate for fear of the negative consequences. As a result, for these students, their own personal safety was their main concern. People generally need to feel safe, which requires them to have a low affective filter, before they can begin feeling comfortable.

The amount of community circle did not have any bearing on how safe students felt (Brown, 2014).

The word “safety” is only used once in this survey, and it is then replaced with the word “comfortable.” The reason for this is that the researcher did not want to use the word “safety” throughout the survey and wanted to put the students at ease and avoid any confusion between their own physical safety and being comfortable. Before a person can feel comfortable, they must feel safe. The goal of community building, according to Freire (2000), is to create a positive atmosphere in which all students feel comfortable, therefore safe. Thus, the researcher used the students’ own safety level as one measure of how successfully community has been established in their classes (see Figure 2).

The students’ most basic need in order to learn is to be able to concentrate (Lawson), which in turn creates a less pressured classroom atmosphere (Ezekial and Katya), and the student begins to feel safe (Nerry) and comfortable sharing (Ezekial). The student then begins to have positive relationships with teachers (Genevieve, Dustin, Henry, Frank, Mohammad, Charles, and Jenny) and classmates (Isaiah, Katya, and Mohammad), which in turn creates a positive atmosphere within the classroom (see Figures 12, 13, and 14).

To build on how being comfortable is tied to learning, the students supplied the following answers: when there are explanations by the teacher (Nerry), the student begins to feel safe (Nerry), there is a certain amount of class control (Betty, Lawson, Jenny, Henry, and Alejandro) which makes the students comfortable (Katya and Ezekial), and they can begin to have a relationship with the teacher (Charles, Dustin, Frank, Genevieve, Mohammad, Betty, and Henry) and peers (Isaiah, Katya, and Mohammad) and be

comfortable with the teaching style (Ezekial, Dustin, Charles, Mohammad, Genevieve, Henry, and Nerry), which was the theme that was mentioned most often. Some students referred to subject matter (Isaiah, Mohammad, Genevieve, and Ezekial), suggesting they appreciate having a choice about what subjects they like and what they don't like (see Figure 12, 13, and 14). If students are able to focus on their subject matter preference, it is an indication that all their basic needs have been met.

*Summary and analysis of safety, behavior and learning themes.* The word "comfortable," which is one of the answers offered by students, is a necessary step so the student can begin to take risks. This is always preceded by the primal necessity of being safe (Nerry). Then, the students begin to share (Lawson) and build relationships in class (Mohammad and Katya), which creates a positive atmosphere. As a result, the students feel safe, and, instead of worrying about their personal safety, they can focus on the subject matter (Ezekial and Jenny).

By grouping the students in this manner, it is evident that there are two types of students: the student whose need for safety, if not met, creates fear and inhibition and causes the student's ZPD to remain stunted and becomes a passive learner, and the other type of student, those who have no concerns about their safety, creating confidence and positive attitude which constitutes a responsible learner. The underlying reasons for feelings of safety or the lack of safety are the same: teachers, peers, and familial support, and the amount and quality that these students receive makes all the difference between hesitancy and optimism. Teacher training has already been established as part of the solution to instill safety in the classroom. By observation and through training, the

teacher can observe if there are some students who may be emotionally bothered by their classmates. The students' families could also be the source of the fear, or they could be a source of information for the teacher. Very often, sensitive issues concerning family members are not welcome when the students begin to share negative stories. However, when the teacher gets to know the students as emotional beings, they will involve the family as part of the learning community. Now that the safety, behavior, and learning themes have been associated, the information revealed by grouping students according to their safety scores will be presented.

### ***Grouping by safety themes***

Safety was a concern to the students when seven of them reported that they either rarely or sometimes felt safe. Since the researcher noticed that safety was a priority to these students, the researcher grouped the thirteen students into three groups, based on their common experiences of feeling safe. When grouped in this way, certain patterns emerged with regard to the amount of circle the students had experienced, the level of safety to share openly, whether the students had been ridiculed, their reluctance, how much pressure the students had felt, and how these experiences correlated with changes in the academic language, conversational language, and behavior, as well as each group's stated priorities (Figure 4).

Table 3

Key to Survey Questions and Responses

AC=able to concentrate C=comfortable CC=class control CBB=class w/best behavior CCS=community circles CLM=class learned most DL/F=distance learning/future DL/P=distance learning/past	E=English FT=facetime FSS=feel safe sharing GW=group work I=inclusion J=Japanese K=kindergarten LP=less pressure MF=made fun	MCC=most comfortable class PK=pre-Kindergarten RF=relationship w/friends RT=relationship w/teacher S=sharing Sp=Spanish SM=subject matter TS=teaching style
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*Group 1: often safe (level 4)*

Table 4

Students Who Felt Mostly Safe (Alejandro, Dustin, Ezekial, Frank, Henry)

pseudonym	Q1: C	Q2: S	Q3: M	Q4: F	Q5: R	Q6: D	Q7: L/N	Q8: MCC	Q9: DL/F	Q10: PK	Q11: C	Q12: BI	Q13: B/P	Q14: C	Q15: BI	Q16: B/N	Q17: CLM	Q18: CBB	
A	3	4	3	2	3	3	FSS	I	K	Sp/E	5	5	4	5	5	4	RT, CC	CC	
D	3	4	1	1	3	5		S	K	E	1	1	5	4	3	5	TS	TS	
E	4	4	2	2	4	3	LP	CCS	PK	E/J	4	5	3	4	5	3	SM, TS	CC	
F	4	4	1	4	2	4			K	E	5	3	3	5	5	5	RT		
H	2	4	2	2	1	5	RF, RT	S	PK	E	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	CC	TS

All five students in this group, Alejandro, Ezekial, Dustin, Frank, and Henry (see Table 4), reported feeling safe most of the time (4). The amount of community circle experienced by this group did not follow any certain pattern, nor did the amount of ridicule. All the students in this group either improved or remained the same with respect to their academic language, conversational language, and behavior. The students whose

CALP improved were Henry (2-5) and Dustin (1-4). Three students reported that their comfort level with CALP remained the same. They were Alejandro (5-5), Frank (5-5), and Ezekial (4-4). Henry's CALP comfort level increased from 2 to 5, as did Dustin's, from 1 to 4. The conversational comfort of the following students increased: Henry from 2 to 5, Dustin from 1 to 3, and Frank from 3 to 5. For two students in this group, Ezekial and Alejandro, their comfort with conversational language remained high, at a level of 5. The behavior of one student, Frank, improved from 3 to 5, while Dustin and Henry maintained a level of 5, Alejandro maintained a 4, and Ezekial held steady at 3. The priorities noted by this group were also varied, but class control and relationships with the teacher came up most often, as well as teaching style.

*Group 2: sometimes safe (level 3)*

Table 5

Students Who Felt Somewhat Safe (Isaiah, Jenny, Katya, Mohammad, Geneveive, Lawson)

pseudonym	Q1: C	Q2: S	Q3: M	Q4: F	Q5: R	Q6: P	Q7: DL/N	Q8: M	Q9: L/F	Q10: PK-K	Q11: ALP/P	Q12: BI CS/P	Q13: B/P	Q14: ALP/N	Q15: BI CS/N	Q16: B/N	Q17: CLM	Q18: CBB
I	4	3	4	1	1	3	RF	GW	PK	Sp	4	2	2	4	3	2	SM	
J	4	3	1	2	2	2	RT	CCS, GW	PK	E	2	2	4	4	4	3	SM, T S, RT	TS, C C
K	5	3	3	4	5	4	RF, LP	GW	K	Sp	2	2	5	5	5	5	C	CC
M	5	3	1	1	1	5	FSS, R T, RF	I	K	E	4	5	4	3	4	4	SM	RT
G	4	3	2	3	2	2	FSS	FT	PK	E	4	5		5	4	3	SM	RT, C
L	4	3	3	4	3	4	AC	S	K	Sp	5	5	4	3	5	4	CC	

(Key: See Table 3)

This group of six students, represented in Table 5 (Genevieve, Katya, Jenny, Isaiah, Lawson, and Mohammad), all reported feeling somewhat safe (at a level of 3).



These students also had the highest levels of community circles, all 4 or 5. There was no pattern related to the amount of pressure, ridicule, or reluctance the students felt. For this group, neither the academic language nor the conversational language followed any pattern. Three students reported improvement in their CALP: Genevieve from 4 to 5, Katya from 2 to 5, and Jenny from 2 to 4. Isaiah's CALP remained at a 4, while Lawson's decreased from 5 to 3. The BICS scores also had mixed results. Isaiah's score went up from 2 to 3, Katya's from 2 to 5, and Jenny's from 2 to 4, while Lawson's conversational language stayed at 5. There was one student, Genevieve, whose conversational language comfort decreased from 5 to 4 but remained at a high level. The behavior of three students remained the same: Katya (5-5), Lawson (4-4), and Isaiah, whose behavior score remained consistently low, at a level of 2. Jenny's behavior score decreased from 4 to 3. Although 3 is not a particularly low score, the fact that she was the only student who reported that behavior became more difficult is worthy of note. Genevieve did not indicate how easy it was for her to behave well when she started school, but in sixth grade, she reported a score of 3. This group's priorities were subject matter, relationship with peers, relationship with the teacher, teaching style, and class control.

*Group 3: rarely safe (level 2)*

Table 6

Students Who Felt Rarely Safe (Betty, Nerry)

pseudonym	Q1: C S	Q2: S	Q3: M F	Q4: :R	Q5: :P	Q6: DL /N	Q7: M CC	Q8: D L/F	Q9: PK- K	Q10: :L1	Q11: CAL P/P	Q12: BI CS/P	Q13: B/P	Q14: CA LP/N	Q15: BI CS/N	Q16: B/N	Q17: CLM	Q18: CBB
B	2	2	1	1	4	5		FT	PK	E	5	1	5	5	1	5	RT	CC

N	3	2	1	4	3	3	s	ccs	k	s	1	5	3	3	5	3	TS	
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(Key: See Table 3)

These two students, Betty and Nerry (see Table 6), both reported feeling relatively unsafe (2). They both had relatively limited experience with community circles (2 and 3) and had not experienced ridicule. These students felt some reluctance and some pressure. The academic language increased for Nerry, from 1 to 3, and remained the same (5) for Betty. The conversational language for both these students remained unchanged. Betty's comfort remaining at 1 and Nerry's at 5. Their behavior also remained the same, Betty at 5 and Nerry at 3. It is interesting to note that both conversational language and behavior did not change for either of these students, with the only change being Nerry's CALP level, which increased from 1 to 3. So the only change was a positive one. This group's priorities were teaching style, relationship with the teacher, and feeling safe when sharing.

*Summary and analysis of grouping by safety themes.* Thus, the most important factor for the students appears to be safety. The group that felt safest (group one) was the most likely to report improvement in their language skills, both academic and conversational, and in their behavior. It is interesting to note that group one had no English learners. The amount of community circle in their background did not correlate with how safe the students had felt, nor how much pressure, reluctance, or ridicule they had experienced in the classroom. Two of the groups (one and three) reported no decreases in any area. Group two's scores were mixed, with some increasing, some decreasing, and some remaining the same. This group consisted of three native English speakers and three native Spanish speakers.

Now that the relationship between safety, learning, and behavior has been highlighted, some observations about individual participants will be shared.

### *Individual observations (case studies) themes*

The researcher chose participants Henry, Katya, Nerry, and Lawson to highlight (see Table 7), because these students stood out for their unusually high or low scores in one or more areas and their varied levels of community circles.

Table 7

#### Individual Case Studies (Henry, Katya, Nerry, Lawson)

pseudonym	Q1: C S	Q2: M S	Q3: M F	Q4: R	Q5: P	Q6: D L/N	Q7: M C C	Q8: D L/F	Q9: P K	Q10: L 1	Q11: C A L P/P	Q12: B I C S/P	Q13: B/P	Q14: C A L P/N	Q15: B I C S/N	Q16: B/N	Q17: C L M	Q18: C B B
H	2	4	2	2	1	5	RF, R T	S	PK	E	2	2	5	5	5	5	CC	TS
K	5	3	3	4	5	4	RF, L P	GW	K	S	2	2	5	5	5	5	C	CC
N	3	2	1	4	3	3	S	CCS	K	S	1	5	3	3	5	3	TS	
L	4	3	3	4	3	4	AC	S	K	S	5	5	4	3	5	4	CC	

(Key: See Table 3)

*Henry.* Henry, a native English speaker, had a limited amount of community circle (2). However, this student reported feeling safe (4), having little reluctance (2), experiencing little ridicule (2), and feeling little pressure to participate (1). Henry's academic and conversational language rose from 2 to 5, while behavior was consistently great (5). Henry reported that class control and his relationships with his teachers were the most important factors in his learning and behavior.

Henry drew the researcher's attention because of the low levels of community circle, reluctance, ridicule, and pressure. All of these conditions are ideal, even with the low level of community circle. Henry feels safe in the classroom, is eager to learn and

values relationships with teachers. Henry's academic and conversational language increased, while behavior remained excellent. Perhaps because of the limited amount of community circle, Henry does not put a priority on relationships with peers.

*Katya.* Katya, a native Spanish speaker, had a high amount of community circle (5). Katya had felt somewhat safe (3) but also experienced some ridicule (3) and felt a lot of reluctance (4) and an extreme amount of pressure (5). Katya reported an improvement in both her academic (2 to 5) and her conversational language (2 to 5), while her excellent behavior remained the same in sixth grade, at a level of 5. Katya also reported, "I am shy" and identified a low amount of pressure, a relaxed and calm atmosphere, and class control as the most important priorities.

Even though Katya had a lot of experience with community circles, her priority was a calm, relaxed atmosphere, which, in her experience, was one controlled by the teacher. Relationships with other students was not a priority, which may be a result of her shyness. Katya felt only somewhat safe, which may be associated with the high amount of reluctance and pressure she felt.

*Nerry.* Nerry is a native Spanish speaker who had some experience with community circles (3), did not feel very safe (2), yet had never been ridiculed (1). Nerry felt quite reluctant to participate (4) and some pressure (3). Her academic language improved from 1 to 3, while conversational language remained excellent (5 to 5). Nerry's behavior held steady at 3. Her priority was the teacher's explanations.

Nerry did not feel very safe participating in the classroom, reporting a lot of reluctance and a certain amount of pressure. Nerry's behavior did not change over the course of her schooling, but remained mediocre (3). Nerry also looked to the teacher to

control the classroom and did not place importance on relationships with the teacher or other students.

*Lawson.* Lawson, a native Spanish speaker, had a lot of community circle (4). Lawson felt somewhat safe (3), had sometimes been ridiculed (3), felt a lot of reluctance (4), and some pressure to participate (3). Lawson's academic language decreased from 5 to 3, while the conversational language remained excellent, at 5, and his behavior remained good, at 4. His priorities were class control and being able to concentrate.

Lawson had been ridiculed, felt a lot of reluctance, and did not feel very safe. The decrease in academic language proficiency may be attributable to his inability to feel safe because of having been made fun of in the past. Lawson looked to the teacher to control the class and facilitate an environment conducive to concentration. Lawson also did not put any emphasis on relationships.

*Summary and analysis of individual observations themes.* The one common denominator shared by these four students was the need for the teacher to set the tone in the classroom. They did not value relationships with their peers, relying instead on the teacher's control of the class for their security and success. The student who felt the safest, Henry, had the smallest amount of community circles yet had not experienced reluctance, pressure, or ridicule and was successful as a language learner.

The two students who reported feeling somewhat safe, Lawson and Katya, shared the same amount of ridicule, reluctance, and some of the pressure. Yet, Lawson's comfort with academic language decreased, which may be due to a negative class environment, while Katya's language scores increased. They both reported a lot of

experience with community circles, but neither value peer relationships. They both look to the teacher to control the learning environment.

Nerry did not feel very safe at all. Even though she had had some exposure to community circles (3) and a low amount of ridicule, she felt a lot of reluctance and some pressure to share. Her BICS score remained high, while her CALP score increased and her behavior remained somewhat easy. Nerry relied on teacher explanations, therefore, on the teacher, and placed no importance on relationships.

All four of these students relied on the teacher to control the class and lead the learning, suggesting they were all passive learners. Only one student valued relationships of any kind, and that was the student who felt safest. The students did not have individual *conscientização* and, therefore, did not achieve class *conscientização*, in which the students take responsibility for one another's learning.

### **Summary of Findings**

All three sections, the quantitative responses, the qualitative responses, and the mixed methods view of the responses, gave the researcher a clear indication that community circles did not have the expected result, which is community building. However, there is evidence that the level of safety that the students felt impacted their academic language learning, their conversational language acquisition, and their behavior. It is also evident that the students looked to the teacher for class control and, therefore, were passive learners, did not have a sense of empathy, and did not value relationships with others. The students had been inhibited by fear, which had not been identified by the teachers. Teacher training is needed in order for the teachers to begin to

reach out to all the students and address their diverse needs, keeping in mind that, without safety, many student needs will not be met, causing hesitancy in their learning.

The students' zone of proximal development was stunted within the confined, structured environment of the classroom. As a class, they had not learned to think outside of themselves, develop empathy or trust, or build positive relationships with their classmates. Their academic and emotional ZPD was restrained by their fear and inhibitions. It is also evident that not enough opportunity for collaborative dialogue has been provided. At times, it is difficult for the teacher to become a class facilitator and let the students take the lead. Instead, teachers tend to rush and, by doing so, create reluctance and pressure, which inhibits some students.

Table 8

Summary of Findings

Research Questions	Summary of Findings
Question #1: How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?	Although there had been many opportunities to build community in the classroom through community circles, there is no clear evidence that it affected students' cognitive academic language proficiency. Trust within the classroom community had not been established.
Question #2: How does community building affect the interpersonal	Since there was no trust built, in spite of ample opportunities to do so, there was no

communicative competence of second language learners?	clear connection between community circles and students' conversational language proficiency.
Question #3: How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?	Even though all of the participants began attending school in either preschool or kindergarten and had many opportunities to build community, it did not happen. There is no clear indication that community was successfully established, since students' comfort level with regard to behavior slightly decreased.



**CHAPTER V**  
**DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,**  
**AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Overview**

This chapter reviews the findings of the survey as they relate to the purpose and theoretical underpinnings of the study, and offers suggestions for future research and the researcher's final thoughts. Some aspects of this research can be replicated, such as the survey questions, yet the experiences and perceptions of the research participants are uniquely their own. The perceptions of the participants may vary from the academic data. This chapter contains a summary of the study, summary of findings, discussion of research question #1, discussion of research question #2, discussion of research question #3, conclusions of the study, implications of the findings, recommendations for future research, and closing remarks.

**Summary of the Study**

All second language learners must have a low affective filter in order to feel safe and, therefore, take chances while learning a second language (Brown, 2014). This can be accomplished through the building of community in the classroom, which can meet all the students' sociocultural needs while they learn a second language (hooks, 1994). Building community in the classroom involves many components, such as practicing positive discipline by following a curriculum like Building Effective Schools Together (BEST), holding community circles, providing opportunities for collaborative dialogues among students, and creating a safe environment for risk-taking. When students feel included as productive members of the classroom, they begin to feel more accepted and

begin to take responsibility for their own learning (Brown, 1994). At this stage, students will have built relationships and interacted with one another without fear of being ridiculed, and, as a result, they will be willing to take chances because they are now in a safe and protective environment, for they have constructed a community of responsible learners.

The significance of this research is that it helped to determine how collaborative community building is supporting second language learners, and whether the use of specific community building curricula is successful, as evidenced by the students' improvement in BICS, CALP, and behavior, and how it accelerates and supports the learning of a second language. The theoretical framework of this study was Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of second language acquisition and Merrill Swain's output hypothesis. Vygotsky theorized that humans are social beings and that language is a social construct. Thus, social interaction is part of the learning experience (Vygotsky, 1978, 2012).

Merrill Swain (2000) has demonstrated the value of structured verbal interaction, which she terms collaborative dialogue, for helping students reach proficiency in a second language. In addition to being an efficient tool for second language learning, positive social interactions among students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds are a powerful way to facilitate integration, foster understanding, and reduce stigmatization. Given the value of full participation in collaborative conversation for meeting the needs of second language learners, and the corresponding need to ensure that these interactions are positive and motivating, the quality of the learning environment is of utmost importance. This study explored the relationship between the intentional

fostering of a safe, positive learning environment, or community building, and the success of English and Spanish language learners, in taking advantage of collaborative dialogue to learn a second language and feel included.

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate whether the intentional nurturing of a safe educational and social environment through community building leads to better outcomes for second language learners. A group of second language learners in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade were asked to complete a survey designed to gauge how they were affected by collaborative dialogue and community building through the use of the BEST curriculum. The survey was administered in the spring of 2020 to three groups of 6<sup>th</sup> grade dual-language immersion students, fourteen of whom received parental permission to participate in the study. The survey involved 14 quantitative questions and four qualitative, open-ended questions. By conducting this study, the researcher gained valuable information from individual student voices of second language learners to help understand how the use of community building in classrooms has positively affected the academic and social lives of second language learners.

The following research questions were used to guide this mixed-methods study:

1. How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?
2. How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?
3. How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?

### Summary of the Findings

The participants' responses to the survey gave the researcher a clear indication that community circles did not have the expected result, which is community building. However, there is evidence that the level of safety that the students felt impacted their academic language learning, their conversational language acquisition, and their behavior. It is also evident that the students looked to the teacher for class control and, therefore, were passive learners, did not have a sense of empathy, and did not value relationships with others. The students had been inhibited by a lack of trust, which had not been identified by the teachers (Sato, 2014). Teacher training is needed in order for the teachers to begin to reach out to all the students and address their diverse needs, keeping in mind that, without trust, students will not feel safe and many student needs will not be met, causing hesitancy in their learning.

The students' zone of proximal development was stunted within the confined, structured environment of the classroom. As a class, they had not learned to think outside of themselves, develop empathy or trust, or build positive relationships with their classmates (Swain, 2013). Their academic and emotional ZPD was restrained by their lack of trust, causing fear and inhibitions. It is also evident that not enough opportunity for collaborative dialogue has been provided. At times, it is difficult for the teacher to become a class facilitator and let the students take the lead. Instead, teachers tend to rush and, by doing so, create reluctance and pressure, which inhibits some students.

## Discussion

At first glance, the association between community building and the students' self-reporting about their academic language, their conversational language, and their behavior was not clearly apparent, because the number of times the students had participated in community building did not correlate with their improvement in language and behavior. However, a lack of trust led to the emotion of fear, which was evident in some of the students' responses. The researcher, therefore, used the level of safety reported by the students to establish a correlation with their reported academic, conversational, and behavior levels.

### *Research question #1*

*How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?*

The level of the students' comfort in their academic language skills improved, however hesitantly, because approximately half of the participants reported still not feeling comfortable taking risks because of the fear of being picked on and ridiculed. Instead, the students relied on the teacher to set the tone and control the class, while they themselves remained invisible, silent, passive learners. The need for the teacher to have class control was a recurring theme in the student responses. As a result of the lack of trust, some of the students were not willing participants in the creation of a positive atmosphere in the classroom. The students' reported hesitancy in asking for clarification from the teacher was proof that they did not feel safe or comfortable voicing their questions, since they were under a lot of pressure. The teachers may have failed to

provide the artificial learning situations through which second language learners can construct language and seem to have instructed from the book (Swain, 2013).

Conversational discussions about academic content, that is, collaborative dialogue, are needed in order for the students to take risks, construct language, and expand their academic and emotional zone of proximal development (Swain, 1997). Overall, the students did progress, as the teacher set the tone for learning, because some of the students did need and relied on their teachers to take control of the class. However, the reliance on the teacher made the students prioritize their relationship with the teacher instead of cultivating natural relationships with their peers. It appears that second language is being taught without incorporating collaborative dialogue into the curriculum and, as a result, teachers are not making it part of the class norm. The students' responses suggest that they were accustomed to rote learning, which mainly consists of lecture, repetition, note-taking, and assessment. The lack of dialogue also made the students feel like strangers to one another. Conversational language will be elaborated on in the discussion of research question #2.

### ***Research question #2***

#### ***How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?***

The students have a structured environment in the classroom, which helps facilitate academic language development; however, if relationships among students are not started in the classroom, the students will fail to learn about and from one another and may, at times, begin to avoid each other. These students will not be comfortable having interpersonal conversations with their classmates or other students. Instead, the other

students will become familiar faces but remain strangers. The fear, pressure, hesitancy, and lack of positive interactions with other students, which may have been their experience in the classroom, will be magnified outside of the classroom, because the students do not trust one another. When this happens, students tend to isolate, for they may barely know their classmates by name. This often means a lack of acknowledgement of their classmates as people, for they place little importance on peer relationships.

The students have not been taught social interactions, and, hence, have never learned the value of positive interactions and friendships with their classmates (Vygotsky, 1978; Imai, 2010). By not having positive relationships with other students, these students have been denied the opportunity to learn about one another, their families, and their respective cultures. If the students barely took risks within the structured atmosphere of the classroom, they will be even more hesitant to reach out to others outside of the classroom. Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning precedes the developmental process, which is consistent with these findings, because the conversational language and emotional development of the participants lags behind their academic development.

Also, a few students responded that they were shy, which at times can be overcome with the teacher's guidance. Yet, in a conversational environment, such as recess or lunch, these shy students cannot rely on the teacher to facilitate conversations. As a result, the students do not benefit from these opportunities for conversational development or the emotional development that is associated with learning. By learning a second language through conversational dialogue, the students' emotional ZPD will

also grow, and, as they learn to value relationships, the feeling of empathy quickly replaces that of apathy (Swain, 2013). With a positive mindset, it is easier for students to make friends, as they learn about one another, not only as classmates, but also as human beings with both commonalities and differences. The task of being introduced to a new culture is then looked upon by the students with favor and hope, instead of fear and dread. Now that the role that emotion plays in academic and conversational language development has been identified, the researcher will delve into the relationship between emotion and behavior (Brown, 2014).

***Research question #3***

***How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?***

The emotion of fear caused by a lack of trust often manifests itself in students' actions and misbehaviors. Isaiah, a participant, was not highlighted as a case study in chapter four. However, he stood out because, for him, good behavior remained difficult (2) even after seven years of schooling. Isaiah has had a substantial amount of community circle (4) and did not feel any reluctance (1) or pressure to participate (1); however, he felt only somewhat safe (3) and had often experienced ridicule in the classroom (4). Isaiah's academic language did not change over the course of his schooling, remaining high (4) throughout. His conversational language improved slightly (from 2 to 3), but he ended up feeling only somewhat comfortable making conversation in his second language. Instead, Isaiah's priorities were his relationships with his friends and subject matter.



Isaiah's survey responses point to a smart student who has been made fun of in class and, as a result, only values the relationships he has already established, his friends, and not new relationships with other students. He is outgoing, as evidenced by his stated interest in other societies and cultures, and he almost seems like the ideal student to participate in community building. Yet, it seems possible that, in the past, Isaiah has been ridiculed because of his willingness to share, or because of what he shared, and, as a result, his need to be heard is manifested in bad behavior.

When a student has been the subject of continuous laughter, this laughter can quickly turn to ridicule. The difference between laughter and ridicule is that laughter occurs when everyone laughs together, but if it is prolonged and it is aimed at a certain person, especially if that person is not laughing, the laughter becomes ridicule, which is a form of oppression (Shor, 1999). Isaiah may have also been ridiculed by some teachers or felt betrayed by teachers who passively encouraged the ridicule by keeping silent. Thus, Isaiah, who seemed like the ideal candidate to benefit from community building, is not being well served by his exposure to community circles. Isaiah only feels somewhat safe, because ridicule creates oppression, which is a form of bullying, and this fear and bullying have not been successfully addressed by his teachers, likely resulting in his impulse to act out. Isaiah's developmental process in conversational language was stunted because of his lack of societal skills, and he could have benefited from the building of a safe and trusting community.

Bad behavior should be quickly addressed by the teacher, for if it is not, it can become progressively worse, and, at times, when bad behavior persists, the misbehaving student can set the tone and take over the class. This can result from their negative

actions creating disruptions, which can cause negative reactions by other students and, unless it is addressed by the teacher, can lead other students on the same path. Losing control of a class is one of a teacher's biggest fears, for it becomes very difficult for the teacher to regain control. The participants had had a fair amount of community building, and they all understood what community means and what community building is supposed to do. This is evident from their survey responses. Although behavior is an integral part of community building, student or class misbehavior had either been ignored or dealt with unsuccessfully. The behavior had not been addressed. As a result, the class had not learned how to use community building to mediate and as a tool to overcome their struggles with bad behavior (hooks, 1994).

Most students do not want to be negatively singled out, and good behavior is something that can be described, modeled, encouraged, and rewarded easily enough. This approach to behavior learning quickly changes the student mindset, for now the student is included as part of the class instead of apart from the class. Then the students begin to take responsibility for their own actions, their own learning, and can begin focusing outward on helping their classmates to learn. True learning takes place when the students begin actively constructing their own *conscientização* (critical consciousness and responsibility for their own learning), which eventually leads to class *conscientização* (in which students take responsibility for each other's learning) (Freire, 2000).

Community building teaches students to take responsibility for themselves and also for making sure everyone learns, which can only happen when the teacher has created an atmosphere of trust (hooks, 1994). At times, teachers forsake one student by not holding him or her accountable, in order to allow the other students to learn. This

approach only encourages the student's bad behavior. Very often, the time that the student has spent behaving badly is never regained. Both the misbehaving student and the class have lost valuable learning opportunities. Chronic bad behavior also stunts the social development of emotional intelligence, because the misbehaving students have not learned to deal with their problems through conversation or mediation. The students' academic ZPD has likewise been stunted. Since emotion is tied to learning, misbehaving students often fall or remain academically behind and seek other alternatives for socialization outside of school (Swain, 2013).

### **Conclusions**

The theoretical framework for this research study began with Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which was further developed by Merrill Swain in her output hypothesis (Swain, 2000), which asserted the role of collaborative dialogue (Swain, 1997), collaborative tasks (Swain, 1999), and emotion in second language learning (Swain, 2013) and emphasizes the construction of a second language through conversation. This mixed-methods study explored the impact that emotions, both positive and negative, can have on learning. Emotions are personal, and they are a part of what makes us unique; our feelings are our own. The emotions that stood out were fear, for there was a lack of safety stemming from students' lack of trust.

The advantage of using this mixed methods approach was that considering quantitative and qualitative findings together led to grouping the students by levels of safety and individual case studies. Using this mixed methods approach to the research also reduced the time it would have taken to obtain the results, because various surveys would have been required to reach the same findings (Plano Clark & Cresswell, 2011).

By doing so, the researcher gained a unique perspective on the students' needs, as individual students as well as in the classroom. It is also important to note that the answers were the students' own perceptions of their zone of proximal development, and these may vary from the academic data.

The students provided the necessary steps to get them from the basic instinct of fear and self-preservation to the needs of a more responsible learner who becomes an active participant with a voice in their education (see Figure 12). When the students answered in which classes they were most comfortable, their answers were gradual and incremental: the need to be able to concentrate in an atmosphere without pressure, which then makes the student feel safe and comfortable sharing, which builds positive relationships with classmates, creating a positive learning atmosphere, and culminating in their relationship with the teacher. Also, the students' answers to the question of which classes they behaved best in varied, yet class control, followed by teaching style and relationship with the teacher, were the themes that came up the most often. By answering these two questions, the students gave the researcher the understanding of what their current needs are and the necessary steps toward becoming responsible learners (see Figure 14).

Generally, the emotional needs of the participants were not met by the ample amount of community circles of which they had been a part. Also, there is no sign or evidence that collaborative dialogue or collaborative tasks were included in the instructional practice in their classes. Fear, resulting from a lack of trust, was felt by some of the students, which was reflected in their responses about the levels of ridicule, reluctance, and pressure they had experienced in the classroom. What is lacking is trust:

student trust, teacher trust, and the trust that the community building process is going to work. One step toward establishing trust is teacher transparency. This can happen when the teacher informs the students of where they are headed, what they are doing, what community is, what the class is trying to achieve as a community, student *conscientização*, followed by, class *conscientização*. Emotions such as anger, fear, and distress are basic instincts; however, the emotion of trust takes time to build and must be implemented throughout the curriculum, with teacher transparency about what they are trying to accomplish and the methods of how to get there (Allman, 1994).

Fear can be debilitating, because it contradicts or challenges the basic instinct of survival. Fear creates self-centeredness and even selfishness (Shor, 1999), both of which were evident from the fact that few participants placed importance on their relationships with their classmates. Instead, they valued some of their relationships with their teachers, mainly because of how the teachers controlled the class. Fear immobilizes people; it compels students to focus on their own survival, making them oblivious to what others may be going through and, therefore, unable to develop a sense of empathy and community (Allman, 1994). Instead of becoming empathetic and caring about one another, the students' own concerns led to an atmosphere of apathy, one of not caring about one another.

The lack of safety caused by the emotion of fear can make a shell out of a student and, if not recognized by the teacher, can lead to the beginning of isolation, self- and class-ostracism, and behavioral issues. Long-term fear can lead to student stress, for the students feel invisible, nobody has identified or acknowledged their emotions, for they have become voiceless, yet have the power to create a hostile class atmosphere, which, at

times, can lead to tragedy. Trust must be established in order for all students to feel safe and secure.

However, there was evidence of some trust having been built among students, parents, and teachers, and that was the student participation in this survey. There had to have been some level of trust already established by the sixth-grade teachers in order for fourteen students and their families to choose to participate in this research study. There was parental choice, student choice, and teacher choice about whether to participate or not, as well as school site choice, because the school principal allowed the sixth-grade team to tackle the survey administration in the midst of distance learning resulting from the pandemic. All of this trust by the different stakeholders is a sign that the vision of the school for dual immersion instruction is attainable.

Strong parental support may also have played a role in some student success, which is evidenced by their willingness to become research participants. Since the setting was a dual language immersion school, strong parental support was needed and expected. The students also had to buy in to the expectations that a dual immersion school had for their education. Enrolling in this school is a voluntary process, which accentuates the willingness of the students and parents to succeed. At times there has been a lottery to choose the students that the school can best serve. The teachers were all experienced BCLAD (bilingual) teachers, and they also had to buy in and trust the process of community building. This has not happened. The teacher training and curricula intended to foster community building need to be examined with a focus on building trust within the classroom. Although there is teacher commitment to build

community in their classrooms, community, at times, is hard to implement and not often seen, from grade school to graduate school, yet it remains a much talked-about topic.

For the most part, the participants' zone of proximal development in their academic and conversational language did not reach their own potential, because their emotional ZPD had become stunted. There was evidence of growth, but it was hesitant, not fluid. Any of the three tools detailed by Merrill Swain in her output hypothesis, which emphasizes collaborative dialogue, collaborative tasks, and the role emotion plays in learning, empathy, and sensitivity; if used successfully, would have enhanced the community building effort, because their commonality is student social interactions with each other. By doing so, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory would have been successfully addressed (Swain, 1998).

The school district provided these teachers with plenty of resources with which to build community, including TRIBES, BEST, and AVID, however unsuccessfully. Within and outside the curriculum, there were plenty of opportunities to build trust. This did not happen. If students do not learn to trust each other, community circles can become just another version of show and tell. There is no trust built in community circles if the teacher always provides the students with sentence starters to dictate the topics. Trust begins when the topic of discussion is agreed upon by the class, including the teacher. Otherwise, circle becomes nothing more than a round-robin discussion (hooks, 1994; Shor, 1999).

This survey consisted of a small sample of voluntary participants. This was approximately one-fifth of the sixth graders in the school and also represents a much lesser amount of all the sixth-grade students in the district. Since participation in this

dual immersion school required active participation from both the students and their families, they are not a true measurement of the needs of all the sixth-grade students in the district. Because the demands of a dual immersion school are greater, the overall student needs of the sixth-grade students may be even greater. The English language learning students may have even more needs and less academic support.

The school site's theme, *Dos Idiomas, Un Corazón*, which means two languages, one heart, is a great beginning, because it focuses on love, patience, and empathy, not only for oneself, but also for classmates, teachers, faculty, families, and beyond. Love, patience, and empathy all require trust, and trust requires time and attention. Trust and love must not remain simple slogans or sayings; instead, as educators, we must at times look at ourselves and wonder what else we can do to reach that distressed student. Since emotion can be measured, it can be quickly assessed and addressed by the teacher, especially in grades K-5, where the classes only have one teacher. Because from the sixth grade on, the students will participate in a 55-minute block for each class and subject, the pace and the speed of learning will quickly accelerate, and it becomes very hard, if not impossible, for some of these students to catch up.

According to their website, the following are the school's goals:

- Students will develop high levels of proficiency in their first and second language;
- Academic performance will be at or above grade level in both languages;



- All students will demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and positive cross-cultural attitudes (<https://nvla-nvusd-ca.schoolloop.com/about>).

All of these goals, if properly addressed, lead to student acculturation, by which they become proficient in both languages and learn to accept and respect other cultures. This requires cultural adjustment, which is a process that takes trust and time. When either acculturation or assimilation do not take place, it is because there has been a lack of cultural adaptation, thus creating cultural divergence. What also follows, because of the ignorance of other cultures, is a feeling of indifference and a disregard for others. This negative outlook may also include insensitivity, disinterest, detachment, and dismissiveness of other people and their ideas and cultures. What follows is prejudice and racism (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2000).

Table 9

## Summary of Conclusions

Research Questions	Summary of Conclusions
Question #1: How does building community in the mainstream classroom affect the acquisition of academic language among second language learners?	Though there were ample community building efforts, trust had not been established. As a result, there was no clear indication that community building had the desired effect. Language skills improved minimally over the course of seven years, and almost half the participants still reported

	not feeling comfortable taking risks because of the fear of being picked on and ridiculed.
Question #2: How does community building affect the interpersonal communicative competence of second language learners?	Since a sense of a community of trust in the classroom had not been established, students did not feel comfortable conversing with other students in their second language. Social interactions were not taught, resulting in an absence of positive relationships among classmates.
Question #3: How does building community affect the classroom behavior of second language learners?	Trust is a key goal of community building, but trust had not been established and there was no noticeable improvement in student's behavior. Bad behavior is a result of students reaching out for help and, if not addressed, leads to chronic misbehavior and a negative classroom atmosphere.

### **Implications**

When any type of fear within the classroom is not addressed, it can create and accentuate ridicule and bullying, which can make the targeted students withdraw, and this is often evidenced by student silence or misbehavior. Another outcome is aggression, the bullying of other students, and physical confrontations which lead to further isolation (Shor, 1999). Often, aggressive students have not learned how to trust or to deal with

their own emotions, leading them to challenge structural norms or boundaries. As educators, it is our duty to hear their pleas for help, for, at times, their teachers may be their only hope.

Recently, a contributor to the Huffington Post, Robbie Romu, wrote a blog titled, “I was a School Bully: Here is why I Terrorized my Classmates” (2021), which explains that he became a bully out of fear that other classmates would find out he was gay. At eleven years old, he changed from a smart, responsible student to a student who was always in trouble. He made it his objective to oppress the weaker children, and this negative behavior was noticed but never confronted. In his words, “What strikes me as most startling from those early days of bullying is that no one stopped to ask me what the hell was going on – not my parents, not my teachers, not the school principal. No one....But nobody took me aside and actually talked to me....But perhaps a kind and caring conversation with a trusted adult would have made a difference.” As an educator, and as a parent, it is unthinkable that no one took the time and effort to find out what was going on. Robbie didn’t have anyone to trust in, and the sensitive topic of homosexuality was never addressed. As a result, his adult life is full of regret and guilt. Community building would have helped Robbie find a safe and trusting place in which to voice his concerns.

A lack of emotional development leads to stunted emotional intelligence. Egocentrism follows, because the students continue to view the world through the narrow lens of self-interest. One consequence of egocentrism is ethnocentrism, which can easily lead to racism and occurs when students are unable to understand or value other cultures, instead remaining focused on their own cultures or looking at other cultures through their

own restrictive lens (Darder & Torres, 2004). Isolation and ostracism may follow, because the students do not feel a part of either language community. Antisocial behavior is a result of chronic stress, of a student crying out for help for a prolonged period of time. Some extreme consequences include reform school, dropping out of school, joining gangs, doing drugs, and committing crimes, all of which can lead to incarceration and low-paying, menial jobs that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. At times, students whose needs are neglected feel ostracized and will seek out the negative support systems which make them feel safe, such as joining gangs for safety and doing drugs to fill their emotional needs (Darder, 2009).

The issue of fear is not a hard one to confront, but, if the presence of fear in the classroom is improperly handled or not acknowledged, it can lead to student mistrust, thereby making other sensitive conversations, such as those about racism, homophobia, or misogyny, impossible. Even though it seems like high school is the time when some students drop out, many actually dropped out much earlier. Usually by third grade, students are able to figure out whether the positive rewards justify the effort spent on good behavior. The emotion of fear can only be overcome by trust; however, trust takes time.

The researcher once attended a presentation of a dissertation by another educator, and the emphasis of his dissertation was how science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) can be used to help disadvantaged, failing high school students and encourage them to remain in school and not drop out. I disagreed because by the time students reach high school, they are expected to have learned how to read, write, and make decisions. Sure, some students do drop out in high school, but often they do so

emotionally by the third or sixth grade. It is not by coincidence that it is in these grades that the students begin to learn a different curriculum. There is a need to identify these students by the third grade in order to have the different behavior established by sixth grade, because in high school, neither the teacher nor the student has time to deal with emotionally and academically stunted students. By the time they reach high school, the students should have learned how to read and write, take control of their own emotions, make conscious decisions, and actively mediate their own learning. For students who cannot read and write properly or make conscientious decisions by the time they reach high school, it is almost impossible to catch up, or even think about their options, such as STEM. Instead, we, as educators, must look at our students and get them ready for the academic life before middle school, because, once puberty is added to the mix of behavioral mismanagement, it is extra confusing for everyone, for it requires a certain level of emotional maturity.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Recommendations for future research***

This mixed methods research study was originally designed for high school English language learners. All the questions had been simplified in order to make participant understanding possible. Due to the COVID virus, the researcher was unable to carry out the original, site-based plan, so the setting and the participants changed. Instead of English language learners in high school, the participants were 6<sup>th</sup> grade dual immersion students and therefore had a higher level of proficiency overall than would an English learner-only group. Since the theoretical framework for this research study was second language acquisition, everything that is applicable to second language learners in

general also applies to English learners. However, ELLs do have additional needs. A repeat of the intended study, focusing on English learners specifically, is recommended, as well as a repeat of the study as carried out, focused on dual-immersion students, but under normal circumstances instead of during a shut-down. Other future research could include surveying or interviewing parents and teachers, or follow the original group of participant and survey them later in their academic life.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning was the mode of instruction at the time the survey was conducted, which made classroom and student observations impossible and limited contact with school personnel. Future research is therefore needed to determine what methods and practices were taking place in classrooms before recommendations for improvement can be made. This research could involve student interviews, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and school records.

This study's findings point to how important it is for students to feel emotionally safe and secure in their learning environment if they are to realize their potential. Creating this environment is a complicated process that begins when students reach school age and requires consistent effort and attention throughout the school day. It involves cultivating trust and empathy among students as well as between students and teachers and developing a sense of empowerment and shared responsibility in students.

Future research could focus on the extent to which teachers cultivate trust and empathy by providing students with critical pedagogy from a young age, introducing sensitive topics such as racism, gangs, drugs, and bullying, and teaching students how to engage in respectful dialogue. There are a number of picture books which can be used to bring light to many of these difficult topics. Luis J. Rodriguez and Eve Bunting, for

example, have written picture books that deal with racism, drugs, and bullying, and Patricia Polacco's books teach empathy for people who are different from ourselves. These books can be used from kindergarten to college. Rodriguez has also written powerful books for older readers, as have authors such as Victor Villaseñor, Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Richard Rodriguez.

Other aspects of developing trust and empathy on which future research could focus are planning lessons that target students with special needs, honor students, and everyone in between, so that all students can be included; grouping students into academic and gender heterogeneous groups, representing the different levels of academic and conversational language; and modeling empathy in all discussion, in all instruction, because students notice. Also, it is very important to allow ample time for meta-thought and meta-talk to happen and to teach students that this hesitancy is normal in the construction of a new language (Swain, 1998). If students are not sure they have permission to take this time, they are likely to become reluctant and even fearful.

Future research is also needed to determine the presence and success of practices aimed at empowering students and developing a sense of responsibility for others and for the community as a whole. One of these practices is to create teacher transparency by letting the students know what they are doing, what the goal is for the class, both short-term and long-term, and how to get there. Another is having students co-create behavior rules, group rules, and class rules as well as involving them in decisions about consequences and in repairing the community following violations. These practices serve to empower students and encourage the belief that the whole, the class, is stronger than the link, which is the individual student.

The quality of implementation of community circles should also be the focus of future research. Community circles are a foundational tool for building a safe and empowering community, but they must be implemented with the understanding that creating trust and gradually releasing responsibility to students are the goals. This process requires time and attention. By making time for community circles, the teacher creates opportunities to model critical reflection while establishing trust and encouraging conscientious and ongoing discussions (Allman, 1994).

Another avenue of future research could focus on the role of administrators. Teacher professional development in community building is a continuous process, and, as such, requires time, resources, planning, and funding. Often, administrators, even those who preach the importance of community building, do not allow for the necessary time to be taken away from instruction in the grade level standards. Professional development takes place throughout a teacher's career, and it differs from teacher training in that teacher training is a one-time event which, much like first aid training, may be required once every couple of years. At times, professional development involves unlearning what was taught in teacher training (hooks, 1994). In addition, administrators must ensure that all of the resources at the school's disposal, such as TRIBES, BEST, AVID, and Second Step, are coordinated and consistently implemented in order for instruction to be focused on clear, school-wide goals.

The lack of community building is evident throughout academia, and, as a result, participants for future studies can be found at any level of schooling: K-12, 4 years of college, or graduate school. Since emotions are a universal human trait, the survey questions used in this study can be used at different levels of language acquisition. The



role of emotion in learning should continue to be studied, with the emphasis on how trust or fear are associated with the learning process.

### ***Recommendations for future practice***

A final set of recommendations was offered by the participants. As part of this survey, in addition to the questions addressing the research questions, students were asked about their experience of and suggestions for distance learning. Five participants reported that their experience of community changed significantly as a result of the shift to distance learning. Four students experienced some change, and two experienced hardly any change. These findings are consistent with the other findings, that community is not working for all the students. The students also shared the following suggestions about how to include community in distance learning: have students work together (1), make sure to include everyone (1) and provide the support that is needed (1). They also suggested that community may be better served in small groups (2), such as in breakout rooms (2), and through facetime (2). Three students suggested sharing, and five students, the largest group, wanted community circle to be incorporated into distance learning.

### **Closing Remarks**

Merrill Swain's output hypothesis is easy to implement and assess, which should lead to its use by all second language teachers. Since one of the teacher's duties is a continuum of active research of their students and classes, this gives the teacher the ability to quickly analyze and respond to what is working and what is not. We must all remember that the acquisition of language is a process of social interaction, where talking should be expected and encouraged, so we, as educators, must find fun and innovative ways to make this happen. We must also keep in mind that learning a second language

requires time from both the student and the teacher, and the language instruction must be segmented in order not to overwhelm the students so that they can reach new heights and raise the level of their own zone of proximal development.

The school did meet some of their goals, even though the students did not reach their own potential. Something is working, and that something can be built upon. All the stakeholders should be proud of this, and the information revealed in this study can provide a pathway for improvement, while keeping in mind that learning a language should be fun.

Below is a blog the researcher wrote in 2018, using the Golden State Warriors as an example of what community is and what community is supposed to do: build trust.

During a recent professional basketball game, the Golden State Warriors, NBA champions for the past two years, were managed by the players. The coach made the substitutions and called the time-outs, while the players were involved in calling the plays. This sharing of decision-making at the professional basketball level is something unimaginable, if only because of what is at stake. Since NBA players make the most money out of any of the four major sports (basketball, baseball, football, or hockey), the consequences for tanking a game are huge, as is the responsibility of the team to provide their best product for their fans. We won.

After the game, head coach Steve Kerr was asked what gave him such a radical idea. His response was that, even though

the team was winning, they were in a lull and were not listening to him, so he tried a new approach, and it worked. Some players from the opposing team felt humiliated, as they saw the coaching move as an experiment on a lower-level opponent. A coach for the opposing team said that it did not concern him what the other team did, only what his team did.

All of this was not only radical, but an example of social innovation at the highest level. Steve Kerr's move was not only that of a coach trying to find new ways to motivate his players, it was also a reflection of the trust that he had that the players would step up and make the right decisions. This does not just happen, but, with time, shared experiences build trust. I am not privy to how the Warrior locker room is conducted, but I would bet that every player and coach in the Warriors organization feels comfortable voicing their opinion. Again, this takes time, because the nucleus of players have been together for longer than four years and have set an example, through their efforts, for the new players to follow.

In the educational field, the sharing of power and responsibility is an idea introduced by Paulo Freire that is often held up as an ideal but rarely modeled. As educators, we, like Kerr, must learn to trust the process that results from community building and the disruption of the traditional power dynamic. I am

also sure that Steve Kerr made the decision when he felt that his team was ready to handle that responsibility and load, not before. Likewise, the teacher who has become involved and immersed in community building is the best person to gauge whether the responsibility would be accepted constructively or turned into a fiasco and a circus.

We will never know how Kerr's coaching decision would have been received if we had lost the game, because we did not. We took a chance and, as a result, further built up the ties and bonds that make a community successful. Go Warriors!

We must all keep in mind what we learned as babies: that our parents or caretakers looked at us with patience, encouragement, joy, and love. Our first teachers, our parents, met our linguistic needs according to where we were at linguistically as babies. Can we, as educators, who may also be parents, provide anything less to our students? After all, as Vygotsky, Paolo Freire, Shor, and bell hooks gently remind us, teaching is an act of love.

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## APPENDIX A

### STUDENT SURVEY

#### In your classrooms, how often have you experienced...

	Never			Always	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Community circles?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Safe space to share openly?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Being made fun of?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Reluctance to share for fear of negative consequences?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Pressure to participate?	1	2	3	4	5

6. How much has your experience of community changed since the switch to distance learning?

Not at all.			A lot	
1	2	3	4	5

7. In what class(es) have you felt the most comfortable? Why? Please describe that experience?

8. How can we include community in distance learning?

9. What grade were you in when you started school in the U.S.?

10. What language did you learn at home before you started school?

#### When you started school in the U.S., how comfortable were you with...

	Not at all			Very	
	1	2	3	4	5
11. The textbooks and instruction in your second language?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Talking with your classmates in your second language?	1	2	3	4	5
13. When you started school, how easy was it for you to behave well?	1	2	3	4	5

#### This school year, how comfortable are you with...

	Not at all			Very	
	1	2	3	4	5
14. The textbooks and instruction in your second language?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Talking with your classmates in your second language?	1	2	3	4	5
16. This school year, how easy is it for you to behave well?	1	2	3	4	5

17. In what class(es) do you think you learned the most? Why? Please describe these experiences.

18. In what class(es) do you think you behaved the best? Why? Please describe these experiences.

## APPENDIX B

### SURVEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Pseudonym	Q1: CC/S	Q2: FS/S	Q3: MF	Q4: R	Q5: P	Q6: DL/N	Q7: MCC	Q8: DL/F	Q9: PK	Q10: L1	Q11: CALP/P	Q12: BICS/P	Q13: B/P	Q14: CALP/N	Q15: BICS/N	Q16: B/N	Q17: CLM	Q18: CBB	
A	3	4	3	2	3	3	FSS	I	K	Sp/E	5	5	4	5	5	4	RT, CC	CC	
B	2	2	1	1	4	5		FT	PK	E	5	1	5	5	1	5	RT	CC	
C	4		1	2	1	5	RT												
D	3	4	1	1	3	5		S	K	E	1	1	5	4	3	5	TS	TS	
E	4	4	2	2	4	3	LP	CCS	PK	E/J	4	5	3	4	5	3	SM,TS	CC	
F	4	4	1	4	2	4			K	E	5	3	3	5	5	5	RT		
G	4	3	2	3	2	2	FSS	FT	PK	E	4	5		5	4	3	SM	RT,C	
H	2	4	2	2	1	5	RF, RT	S	PK	E	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	CC	TS
I	4	3	4	1	1	3	RF	GW	PK	Sp	4	2	2	4	3	2	SM		
J	4	3	1	2	2	2	RT	CCS, GW	PK	E	2	2	4	4	4	4	3	SM,TS, RT	TS, C
K	5	3	3	4	5	4	RF, LP	GW	K	Sp	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	C	CC
L	4	3	3	4	3	4	AC	S	K	Sp	5	5	4	3	5	4	CC		
M	5	3	1	1	1	5	FSS, RT, RF	I	K	E	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	SM	RT
N	3	2	1	4	3	3	S	CCS	K	Sp	1	5	3	3	5	3	TS		

#### Key to Survey Questions and Answers

AC=able to concentrate	E=English	MCC=most comfortable class
C=comfortable	FT=facetime	PK=pre-kindergarten
CC=class control	FSS=feel safe sharing	RF=relationship w/friends
CBB=class w/best behavior	GW=group work	RT=relationship w/teacher
CCS=community circles	I=inclusion	S=sharing
CLM=class learned most	J=Japanese	Sp=Spanish
DL/F=distance learning/future	K=kindergarten	SM=subject matter
DL/P=distance learning/past	LP=less pressure	TS=teaching style
	MF=made fun	

## APPENDIX C

### PARENT PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Parents or Guardians:

My name is Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas, and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. I am sending this letter to explain why I would like for your child to participate in my research project. I am studying the impact of community building on second language acquisition and would like to see how students feel about their ability to learn and take risks in classes that use tools such as community circles to create a sense of community.

This week in science class, your child completed a survey about his or her experiences with classroom communities and language learning. If you and your child sign the permission forms, the information shared in the survey will be used anonymously to draw conclusions about the relationship between community building and language acquisition. Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary and will not affect his or her grades in any way. Your child may quit this study at any time by simply saying, "I do not wish to participate."

There are no known risks involved in this study, and your child will not receive any compensation for his or her participation. To protect your child's confidentiality, your child's name will not appear on any record sheets. The information obtained will not be shared with anyone, unless required by law. The records will be maintained by me and my faculty sponsor, Dr. Sedique Popal. If you have any questions, please contact me at (707) 974-2819 or email me at [cafernandez2@dons.usfca.edu](mailto:cafernandez2@dons.usfca.edu).

This letter will serve as a consent form for your child's participation and will be kept in the International and Multicultural Education Department at the University of San Francisco. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Popal, the faculty sponsor of this project, at (415) 422-2308 or at [popal@usfca.edu](mailto:popal@usfca.edu). If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant, you may contact the University of San Francisco IRB at [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu).

Please sign this form and return it using the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Sincerely yours,

*Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas*

Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas



**Statement of Consent**

I read the above consent form for the project entitled *The Role of Community Building in Second Language Acquisition in the Mainstream Classroom*, conducted by Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas of the University of San Francisco. The nature, demands, risk, and benefits of the project have been explained to me. I am aware that I have the opportunity to ask questions about this research. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue my child's participation at any time without penalty.

---

*Child's Name* (print clearly)

---

*Signature of Legal Guardian*

*Date*

Queridos Padres o Tutores:

Mi nombre es Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas, y yo soy estudiante doctoral de educación en la Universidad de San Francisco. Yo estoy mandando esta carta para explicar porque quiero que su estudiante participe en mi proyecto de investigación. Yo estoy estudiando el impacto de la construcción del sentido de comunidad a los estudiantes estudiando inglés como idioma segundo y quiero aprender como los estudiantes se sienten en sus habilidades de aprender y tomar riesgos en las clases que usan la ayuda de los círculos de comunidad para crear el sentido de comunidad.

Esta semana en la clase de ciencias, su hijo completó una encuesta sobre sus experiencias con las comunidades del aula y el aprendizaje de idiomas. Si usted y su hijo firman los formularios de permiso, la información compartida en la encuesta se utilizará de forma anónima para sacar conclusiones sobre la relación entre el cultivo de la comunidad escolar y el aprendizaje del lenguaje. La participación de su estudiante en estas investigaciones es completamente voluntario y no afectará las calificaciones de su estudiante en ninguna manera. Su estudiante puede parar de participar en ese estudio a cualquier tiempo simplemente diciendo "Yo no quiero participar."

Para proteger la identidad de su estudiante, el nombre de su estudiante no será escrito en ninguna parte de mis investigaciones. Su estudiante no tendrá ningunos peligros en esta investigación y no recibirá pago por su participación. La información obtenida no será compartida. La información obtenida solo será para mi profesor doctoral, Dr. Sedique Popal, y yo. Si usted tiene algunas preguntas, por favor póngase en contacto conmigo por el número (707) 974-2819 o por correo electrónico a cafernandez2@dons.usfca.edu.

Esta carta servirá como permiso para la participación de su estudiante y estará en el departamento International and Multicultural Educación en la Universidad de San Francisco. Si usted tiene otras preguntas sobre esta investigación, por favor póngase en contacto con mi profesor doctoral, Dr. Popal: (415) 422-2308 o popal@usfca.edu. Si usted tiene algunas preguntas sobre los derechos de su estudiante como participante, póngase en contacto con la Universidad de San Francisco IRB a IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Por favor, firme este formulario y devuelva la carta usando el sobre provisto.

Muchas gracias por su ayuda,

*Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas*

Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas

**Testamento de Consentida**

Yo he leído la forma de consentida del proyecto de investigación titulado *The Role of Community Building in Second Language Acquisition in the Mainstream Classroom*, conducido por Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas de la Universidad de San Francisco. Las demandas, los riesgos, y los beneficios de este proyecto me han sido explicados. Yo estoy consciente que tengo la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre este proyecto. Yo entiendo que mi estudiante puede discontinuar su participación en esta investigación sin penalidad.

---

*Nombre del estudiante (por favor escríbelo claramente)*

---

*Firma del padre o tutor legal*

*Fecha*

**APPENDIX D**  
**STUDENT ASSENT FORM**

Dear Student:

My name is Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas, and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. I am asking you for your permission to use your survey responses for my research.

Your participation in this study will not affect your grades in any way. You may skip any item you do not wish to respond to. There are no known risks involved in this study, and you will receive nothing for your participation. To protect your confidentiality, your responses will be anonymous and will not be shared with anyone unless required by law. The responses you make will be kept by my professor, Dr. Popal, and me. Neither your teacher nor your parents will be informed of the answers you provide.

If you have any question about this study, please contact me at (707)974-2819 or Dr. Popal at (415) 422-2308. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of San Francisco IRB at [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas*

Clemente A. Fernández Cárdenas

**Agreement**

I agree to participate in this research project and I have received a copy of this form.

---

*Student's Name (Please Print)*

---

*Student's Signature*

*Date*

I have explained to the above named individual the nature and purpose, benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research. I have answered all questions that have been raised and I have provided the participant with a copy of this form.

---

*Researcher*

*Date*