Beyond the Language Program Model: The Importance of Student Identity for the English Language Learner

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic dissertation study focuses on life in fourth grade classrooms, examining how sociocultural experiences and influences in the local learning environment impact native Spanish-speaking English language learners’ (ELL) identities, and subsequently how students perceive their schooling experience and language practices. Connections are made between their learning and experiences that occur in their classrooms and schools at large, specifically through language of instruction and schooling practices, and how ELLs identify themselves as individuals and members of society. This qualitative research looks at ELLs in transitional bilingual and dual language classroom contexts through the frameworks of sociocultural theory and language as a resource. Qualitative data (observations, interviews, focus groups, document analysis) was examined through discourse analysis. Findings suggest that naming a language instructional program is not enough, and educators must also consider instructional and curricular practices to best prepare ELLs in becoming productive members of society.

Index Words: English language learners (ELLs), sociocultural experiences, identity, dual language education, transitional bilingual education, schooling
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Framing this Study

Setting the Scene:  Considering the Past, Present, and Possible Futures

The population of new English language learners (ELL) in the United States (U.S.) has dramatically escalated in the past 10 years. According to the 2006 U.S. Census, 20.6% of students in grades 1-12 speak a language other than English at home, with 14.8% Spanish speakers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Nearly 8% of students enrolled in U.S. public schools are classified as ELLs, 77% of which are Spanish speakers (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). It is projected that by 2030, ELLs will comprise 40% of the U.S. school population (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Instruction for students who are not proficient in English has been a complex issue in the United States’ education system. Various instructional programs have been implemented in schools, ranging from teaching the children in their native language with increasing increments of English instruction, to using both English and native language instruction in equal proportions for those new to English as well as English dominant students, to English-only instruction. Throughout U.S. history, the use of native language instruction has been questioned, and many schools have moved primarily towards English-only instruction. Given the continuous growth of students new to English, school systems need to examine their instructional programs and practices to see how the needs of ELLs are being considered, neglected, and/or met.

Focusing on Latinos, the largest demographic amongst ELLs, recent educational history shows academic underachievement, measured by standardized tests and school assessments (Adams & Jones, 2006; Cummins, 2002; Gándara, 2000). Furthermore,
Latinos have a high school drop out rate of approximately 50%, with the majority attending urban public schools (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2007; Rodríguez, 2008a; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). It seems logical to question what is happening in the school systems, across U.S. society, and within specific cultural milieu that could be hindering achievement and fostering attrition.

Much of what is taking place in schools can be better understood through an examination of historical and current educational inequities, policies, and legislative decisions. Educational inequity has existed through the past several decades depriving equal learning opportunities for all children. This inequity often affected those not in the dominant group, a pattern that continues today. *Brown v. Board of Ed.*, (1954), a consolidation of five different cases involving similar legal issues, constituted the U.S. Supreme Court’s pronouncement that racially segregated schools provided unfit learning environments for African American children (347 U.S. 483; Oesterreich & Conway, 2009). In subsequent decades, while schools are not explicitly segregated, “minority” learners continue to experience unequal educational opportunities. Kozol (1991, 2005), working in large urban districts, exposed the continued existence of imbalanced learning conditions and de facto segregation. He examined schools in high poverty and affluent neighborhoods, revealing striking disparities. Public schools in high poverty areas—often with large minority student populations—were and remain under-resourced, faced with inadequate maintenance of the buildings and facilities. Because of these undesirable conditions, teacher retention generally has been low in urban public schools—many leave the district or profession, or due to budget constraints, schools lose teaching positions yearly (Kozol, 1991; Schneider, 2003). Consequently, classes become overcrowded, and
individualization to meet students’ needs becomes increasingly difficult. Conversely, students in more affluent public schools were exposed to the opposite. They received more individualized attention, had smaller class sizes, greater resources and updated technology, highly qualified and experienced teachers, and access to art, music, and other supplemental classes (Kozol, 1991).

Educational inequity for linguistically diverse students has also persisted. Policies regarding bilingual education have undergone drastic changes and created much political turmoil over time. Political leaders have wavered between support and opposition of native language instruction. Those opposed to native language use and instruction felt that it was subtracting from the United States’ melting pot—taking the position that if people wanted to hold onto their culture and language, they should return to their native country (Rothstein, 1998). The “sink or swim” idea, where children that developed strong English comprehension and fluency, both academically and socially, would succeed, or “swim,” while those who did not develop such strong English skills would fall increasingly behind, and thus “sink,” seemed to proliferate school policy and practice (Ovando, 2003; Rothstein, 1998). Although people thought this situation led more immigrant students to “swim,” in actuality more “sank.” Spring (2007) discussed this initial focus on English-only curriculum and through his historical analysis argued that anyone not of the “dominant” culture was “deculturalized” and forced to assimilate. Depriving students of native language instruction was one means of this “deculturalization.” Educators felt that learning English and speaking only English in schools was critical to those living in the United States.
Resistance to the English-only model grew. Non-native English speakers and advocates for multilingualism felt that English-only policies and practices led to a monoculture (Spring, 2007). In 1968, congressional policy began to challenge notions of English-only with the passing of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), or the Bilingual Education Act, to address the needs of students who primarily spoke a language other than English, providing instruction both through the native language and English. This law hoped to undermine English-only instruction and built upon home languages, cultures, and prior experiences, to allow for meaningful learning that was not contingent upon the urgency to learn English from the onset (Crawford, 1998; Ovando, 2003; Spring, 2007). Just a few years later in 1974, a landmark legal case, *Lau v. Nichols*, increased support for students whose primary language was not English. Chinese-speaking students filed a lawsuit against the San Francisco Unified School District for violating the rights of non-English speaking students, where approximately 1,800 out of 2,900 non-English speaking students of Chinese background were not given supplemental English instruction in school (Mills, 2003). As a result of this case, schools were required to follow the “Lau Guidelines” obligating them to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) services to help children overcome language barriers not faced by their native English speaking peers.

Legislative decisions and policies within the last decade or so have influenced educational professionals to return to more English-only type instruction. Such decisions were impacted by the passage of Proposition 227 in 1998, which mandated the end of bilingual (Spanish and English) education in California public schools for ELLs. This proposition was championed by a politician, businessman, and non-educator, who
organized and led the referendum reflecting the view that immigration must lead to assimilation, and language should be universal in the state of California (Citrin, Kiley, & Pearson, 2003; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Advocates of the proposition’s policy felt that native language instruction should be discarded, and claimed that bilingual education had pedagogically failed, as underachievement of Spanish-speaking ELLs was prevalent (Adams & Jones, 2006; Cummins, 2002; Gándara, 2000; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Halcón, 2001; Mora, 2002). As California is a state with a considerable and continuously growing native Spanish-speaking immigrant population, Proposition 227 hailed as a means of “solving” the language dilemma. Instead of welcoming the significant group into the society at large and seeing their linguistic knowledge as a resource, the regulation of language of instruction was an “attempt to shape the cultural and linguistic integration of the growing population of immigrants through the public schools” (Mora, 2002, p. 35). Ron Unz, the leader behind Proposition 227, continued to advocate for “English-only” instruction in schools. He moved on to target Arizona, Colorado, and Massachusetts—he was successful in Arizona and Massachusetts (Citrin, Kiley, & Pearson, 2003; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Hamilton & Krashen, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Salinas, 2006).

More recently, another legislative decision that explains movement toward English-only instruction was Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Title III was devised to increase accountability of schools in addressing new English language learners’ needs. Its main goals were for these students to achieve English proficiency, expand English academic competency, and meet the state’s academic content standards and benchmarks (Cobb & Rallis, 2005; Durán, 2008; Miller, 2003). There is no obvious reason to doubt the good intentions of the goals outlined for ELLs within
NCLB, as such policies actually took notice of ELLs. Prior to NCLB, this subgroup had been neglected or ignored because of lack of performance accountability. However, despite the intended benefits of NCLB for ELLs, students learning English as an additional language were instead facing numerous challenges, some of which were created by the accountability measures used in implementing NCLB policies. Because each state’s standardized test was in English and was the measure of “success” for schools, many schools with large ELL populations implemented English-only instruction. The logic was that if academic content were taught in English to ELLs from the start, more students would be proficient in English by the time they were tested. Accordingly, more students would then pass the test, and the students and the school would be considered “successful” (Cobb & Rallis, 2005; Crawford, 2008b; Durán, 2008; Tinajero, 2005). The pressure of raising scores detracts from instruction focusing on the needs of ELLs, such as teaching to their language level, or being taught with a curriculum that is relevant to their linguistic or cultural background.

Strong emphasis on standardized test results through NCLB seriously altered instruction and curriculum for all students (Cobb & Rallis, 2005; Crawford, 2008b; Lipman, 2004). Teachers resorted to “teaching to the test” to foster higher student performance on examinations, while veering away from important concepts and skills which may better prepare a student for the world, a career, and enhance critical thinking skills. Under such a regime, learning is based on memorization and recall, with little emphasis on questioning and critical thinking development. There is a tremendous amount of material to get through before the examination, so students are learning a majority of content at the surface, often through skill and drill (Kozol, 2005; Lipman,
2004). This narrowing of the curriculum and stress on short-term test results especially affects ELLs, as it has undercut acknowledged best teaching practices to meet their needs and maximize achievement, disheartened dedicated educators, and pressured schools to discard programs that have proven successful for ELLs over the long term (Crawford, 2008b).

Policies and decisions not only impact programming and instructional practices—they also impact society’s beliefs and (mis)understandings about language learning and language learners. A common vocalized concern with bilingual programs is the overuse of native language instruction. The fear is if there is excessive use of Spanish or other native language for instruction, students will not develop the English academic skills needed to succeed in schools or the dominant society (Baker, 1998; Cummins, 1996, 2002; Gort, 2005; Salinas, 2006). However, the excessive use of native language instruction, with little to no English instruction, is not part of any language model, and epitomizes incorrect implementation of a language instructional program. Bilingual programs are designed and required to include ESL instruction as a component, and reaching English proficiency, while maintaining and developing the first language, is always a goal (Cummins, 1996, 2002; Soltero, 2004).

A prevailing view is that immigrants that do not learn English immediately “are destined to an unbreakable cycle of poverty” (Galindo, 2004, p. 240). Immersion supporters point out that immigrants want to learn English and are aware that doing so is necessary to improve their lives and lifestyles, and “the sooner this is accomplished, the better” (Galindo, 2004, p. 240). In many instances, parents do have a choice of what language of instruction they want for their children, and often times are convinced that
English-only is best, believing that their children will learn English faster and achieve more (Padilla et al., 1991). Many do not want their children to be confronted with discrimination because of their English proficiency, or face challenges they themselves had, and put them in an English-only classroom to eliminate these obstacles (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). Supporters believe that if learning English is so critical to success in the United States, then it makes sense to start this learning process as soon as children begin school.

Historical and current debates involving schooling for new English learners demands close examination of what informs instructional practices, how instruction actually unfolds, and how students are consequently affected or influenced. Fallacies regarding effective language and literacy acquisition have prevailed. These beliefs seem to move away from prioritizing the students’ needs and best interests. Beyond having political and societal importance, instructional decisions and methodology preference directly affect students’ emotional health and educational success (Genesee & Riches, 2006). Legislators’ concerns and motivations may overshadow the understanding that students’ identities and educational outcomes are tightly linked to their schooling experiences. Educators may not realize the life-long implications of their work. Teacher decisions and practices in the classroom help shape their students’ identities, as students are profoundly affected by their respective learning experiences.

Theoretical Frameworks

**Understanding language learning/learners: The need for a sociocultural lens.**

Given that schools do not exist in isolation, the experiences of students, teachers, and administrators, or educational stakeholders, are dependent upon and connected to
situations that occur not only within classrooms but also beyond the school setting, as noted by the history of diverse thinking and practices about language learning and the impact on school-based instructional practices. While it is key to consider student academic achievement or test performance, it is even more important to consider how schools and the surrounding society shape who children become. Sociocultural theory is a helpful tool for understanding the relationships between learning and becoming, as well as between individual and society. In other words, what occurs socially and culturally both within and outside of school impacts students’ identities—including how students see themselves and are seen by others, which can have a significant impact on students’ academic engagement and achievement.

While a person in the United States spends a significant portion of his/her childhood and adolescence in a school setting, approximately 80% of a student’s time is spent outside school, thus these in and out of school experiences together influence identity (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). As a sociocultural theorist, Vygotsky (1978, 1986) posited that although biological factors are important in early development, social factors in the cultural, historical and institutional settings strongly shape who individuals are and how they think (Bryzzheva, 2002; Diaz & Flores, 2001; Lantolf, 2000). Identity is not singular—rather identities are in fact multiple and fluid, continuously changing depending on social practices, encounters, and experiences. The human mind, from the sociocultural perspective, is mediated by people’s use of tools and signs as they engage in activity with one another to change and make sense of the world. Over time, tools and signs are continuously developed as they are used in mediating our communication and relationships with others (Byrnes, 2006; Lantolf, 2000). Individuals use tools for both
thinking and communicating, and to make sense of who they are as well as who they are becoming. How tools and signs, specifically language, impact identity development will be unpacked further in the review of the literature. Here, I explain how sociocultural theory impacts our understandings of language learning and language learners. First, it helps us see language learning as a larger enterprise involving the use of tools to mediate relations with others to both communicate and develop as people (Vygotsky, 1986). This is quite different than merely learning vocabulary lists, or memorizing sounds and words. Secondly, language learning from a sociocultural perspective includes texts, stretches of language in use, the context, and the experiences that influence what an individual says, believes and understands. Third, language is developed through experiences (i.e. interactions with others in the classrooms, in the world) where meaning is distilled from our experiences and encounters in social and cultural situations. Through social use, knowledge of language’s structure and function is developed (Donato, 2000). In a classroom setting, language is used as students make meaning from what they are saying and hearing based on the experiences occurring in the local environment. Fourth, language is learned by engaging in social activities, where material signs like gestures, facial expressions, and sounds are then mediated; these external interactions then become internalized as psychological processes, ways of thinking and modes of learning (Kramsch, 2000).

Sociocultural theory offers a means to understand how identity and language are intertwined, emphasizing the significance of social experiences in who an individual becomes. Because language learning exceeds the speaking and knowledge of “words” or grammar in isolation, it seems imperative to examine how sociocultural experiences
impact a language learner. Drawing upon these understandings, this study focuses on life in intermediate elementary classrooms, examining how sociocultural experiences and influences in the local learning environment and larger social worlds impact students’ identities, and subsequently how students view their schooling experience and language practices. Specifically, the study focuses on students learning English as an additional language, and their perceptions of their schooling and native language practices. A link is made between their learning and social experiences which occur in their classroom and school, and how they identify themselves as individuals and members of society at large.

**Making visible my perspective toward language learning/learners: Language as a resource.** As a researcher, I not only believe that sociocultural theory is helpful in understanding identity formation but perspectives on language learning and social positioning are also helpful when making sense of social identities offered, taken up, or assigned to people. Because language development and use is such a significant aspect of one’s identity, it is necessary to expound the perspective taken in this study. I view the native language as an asset and students should be positioned in a way that highlights this identity component in a positive light. One stance on language learning that supports my thoughts in designing this study is the *language as a resource* perspective. This perspective is drawn from Ruíz’s (1984) work where he discussed three orientations toward language and its role in society: *language as a problem, language as a right*, and *language as a resource*. The language as a problem orientation views speaking other languages as an obstacle or hindrance to success in the dominant society. If an individual primarily speaks a language other than English, the goal is to teach English to facilitate quick assimilation into the dominant society. Supporters of this viewpoint believe that
“multilingualism leads to a lack of social cohesiveness,” and takes away from social and political consensus and national unity (Ruiz, 1984, p. 21). The language as a right orientation views the speaking of another language as a right; accordingly those individuals should be free from discrimination when doing so. The language as a resource orientation views speaking another language as an asset to an individual that contributes to, not detracts from society. From this orientation, Ruiz (1984) identified the benefits of speaking another language. It gives subordinate languages a more significant and positive societal status, relieves tension amongst minority and majority communities, and increases the importance of and gives a role to non-English languages in our nation.

Ruiz further explains the language as a resource perspective noting that the potential benefits of bi- and multilingualism are seen and accepted into society. Multilingualism can enhance leadership roles in politics and society and improve conceptual skills in science and reading. Most importantly, those groups that speak a primary language other than English will gain societal importance and presence as their knowledge of another language can provide a source of expertise (Ruiz, 1984). The language as a resource orientation is apparent in numerous studies cited in the literature and is the perspective taken in the design of this study, as linguistically diverse ELLs are viewed as assets to their school and learning communities. Schooling experiences should contribute to positive identity development, and their knowledge of another language is a resource to the classroom and school community, rather than something students are asked to leave behind as they walk through school doors. Students should feel that their knowledge of another language adds to their intelligence and sense of self rather than causing feelings of inferiority. From this perspective, a student’s primary language is
used and built upon in the classroom, and there would be “a greater emphasis on academic achievement, rather than merely acquiring English” (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 150).

Exploring the Significance of This Study: A Window into My Experiences

The issue of language and culture is of personal significance. I was born to Indian immigrants who chose to come to the United States for increased educational opportunities. Due to societal influences and pressures to assimilate, my parents quickly believed that in order to be successful, their children needed to learn English. They made English development a top priority, neglecting our native tongue, Kannada, as a result. My two siblings and myself grew up learning and speaking only English, and although we were exposed to Kannada when my parents conversed with each other or with friends, I never took the time or effort to acquire the language. I did not grow up realizing that Kannada was a resource and I would actually benefit from knowing two languages. Numerous visits to India as a child and adolescent left me confused and uncomfortable, as I did not understand my grandmothers and several other relatives. These same relatives would try to learn words and phrases in English in attempt to bridge the language gap, but I never tried to learn Kannada to increase relations. I found myself connecting with my English-speaking grandfathers and cousins. My parents began to regret their actions of not teaching us our language, and started using Kannada phrases and sentences around the house, or speaking to us in only Kannada, with the hope that we would acquire the language. But resistance and adolescent defiance barred this from ever happening before leaving home for college and becoming further immersed in English dominant contexts.
Schooling environments did not nurture this personal aspect and opportunity. Beyond language, I did not develop an appreciation for my Indian culture. I grew up embarrassed that I did not look like my White classmates, eat the same foods for dinner, or engage in similar family activities. Even more so, I felt ashamed that my parents looked different and spoke with an accent. Teachers and peers did not embrace this important aspect of my self and instead provided me with strategies around becoming more “American.” The only times teachers welcomed my ethnic heritage into the classroom was around Diwali, the Hindu new year (often times discussed when learning about all winter holidays), or in few social studies lessons when learning about Asian countries and customs. During these units, my teachers often invited my mother into our classrooms to present on some aspect of “being Indian.”

The gap between my parents and myself continued to widen until college, where exposure to Indian peers helped me develop an appreciation for my Indian culture and desire to learn my parents’ first language. Unfortunately, as an adult I have not yet learned Kannada, but can speak proficient Spanish. I learned Spanish in high school and college where taking on a “foreign” language was then valued and at times required. As a part of this language learning experience I spent two summer months as a foreign exchange student in Spain. Spanish was my strongest academic subject and teachers praised me for my language development. As I got older, I was frustrated that I was able to learn Spanish successfully and without much difficulty, but did not make the time or effort to learn Kannada. I questioned my teachers; why was I applauded for learning Spanish so well, but never encouraged or expected to learn my home language? These personal experiences have fueled my passion for issues of language learning. I think it is
critical to pay close attention to the schooling experiences for today’s linguistically and culturally diverse youth—attending to how their languages can be resources for learning, as no student should feel ashamed to be who they are. Students should not feel pressured to change in response to the dominant culture or society.

This issue bears further significance because of my prior professional experience as a transitional-bilingual teacher at Park Elementary School, one of the schools featured in this study. I taught third grade Spanish-speaking ELLs with an English-only curriculum. These students were placed in kindergarten through second grade classrooms with both English and Spanish instruction. My purpose was to transition them to a full day of English instruction. I questioned whether my students were ready for the drastic change, but continued to instruct as mandated by the school’s administration. During my years as a transitional-bilingual teacher, I continued to think about and observe some disconnections between what the students could read and what they comprehended. Many struggled with inferential thinking and predicting skills. Open-ended questions were quite difficult for several of my students. I started thinking that this was because of the quick switch to English-only, the sudden abandonment of instruction in their native language and rich thinking using the language they knew best. Additionally, many students seemed caught in the middle of languages. They could not speak Spanish or English well, and had difficulty communicating with some family members. How was I really connecting to and embracing their culture if students were not able to bring that aspect of their identity into the classroom? In the fall of 2006, while this question weighed heavy on my mind, the school began English immersion in all eight-kindergarten classes (four classes were previously taught in Spanish and English).
began to wonder if administrators were considering the short and long term cultural, social and academic implications language of instruction had on their ELL population. I increasingly became concerned with this administrative decision, motivating me to research and explore this issue further.

I left the classroom and Park School in 2007 and became an induction coach, where I mentored beginning teachers in challenging-to-staff urban public schools. In my two years of coaching, I worked with four novice educators in schools with large Spanish-speaking ELL student populations. These schools also implemented transitional bilingual programs, with all English instruction beginning in third grade. While these schools were different from Park, many of the same issues occurred. My concerns continued to develop as I observed similar patterns in teaching and learning. Teachers were required to use English-only curricula, and gaps persisted in student comprehension and thinking. Understanding seemed superficial, and teachers struggled to develop students’ critical thinking skills with the curricular mandates.

Beyond my coaching experience with teachers of ELLs, exposure to the remaining classrooms and schools was extremely eye opening. Because of low standardized test scores, administrators required teachers to implement particular language arts and mathematics programs. Little flexibility in instruction was permitted, as teachers had to follow a tightly monitored time-line. For example, if a first grade teacher taught a lesson on single digit addition, the identical lesson and activity would be taught in the neighboring first grade classroom at the very same moment. This did not allow teachers to differentiate to meet the students’ needs and levels, nor did it permit for instructing beyond content coverage. Any teacher, regardless of experience level, was
not provided a space for creativity, modifications to meet the needs of his/her learners, nor incorporating teacher or student voice into their curriculum. Students were expected to behave one particular way—being quiet, listening to the teacher, sitting still in their seats, responding only when spoken to, overall representing a statue. Those who deviated from this norm received consequences in efforts to transform them into the “desirable” and “successful” student.

Ironically, as I was increasingly exposed to such school and classroom environments, I as a coach received consistent and thorough training on what “best practice” looked like, all content and pedagogy that I was not seeing in my assigned schools. While beginning teachers desired to instruct in a certain way and build classroom communities around the development of student voice and critical thinking skills, it became nearly impossible to do so because of administrative demands and curricular constraints. This led me to further reading and exploration of the ways in which instructional mandates were permeating schools in widespread ways due to high-stakes testing and accountability. I began to think more about the effect this had on all urban public school students and how this impacted their future opportunities. These questions and trepidations surrounding language instructional programs and mandates inspired me even more so to conduct this research study. While I wanted to focus on Spanish-speaking ELLs and language of instruction, I also was motivated to investigate how public schools’ responses to high-stakes testing and accountability influence students’ identities.
Moving from Experiences and Passions to Formal Research: Framing the Research Questions

Using sociocultural theory as a lens, as well as the perspective of language as a resource and my own experiences, I began to frame research questions for my dissertation study. While there are a plethora of first languages spoken by ELLs, this study focuses on native Spanish-speaking Latino students. This group is no longer a language “minority” group because of the rapidly rising Spanish-speaking population in the United States. The purpose of this research study is to examine native Spanish-speaking English language learners in a dual language and transitional bilingual setting, investigating the impact of language of instruction on school/life perceptions and identity. Thinking about how identity formation is contingent upon social experiences, how certain members of society are viewed, and how this may impact their identity, this study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the understandings of schooling, language practices, and language learning in one transitional bilingual and one dual language context?

2. In what ways do language instructional practices impact the identity(ies) of fourth grade Spanish-speaking English language learners?

To pursue these questions I immersed myself in two schools, spending time with young learners and teachers alike—observing, interviewing, note taking, transcribing, reading and thinking about how and what students were (and were not) learning and who they were becoming. In the chapters that follow I first explore the literature that informs my thinking and grounds this study. I then explain my methodology—both my theoretical orientations that shape my perspective as a researcher and the actual steps
taken during my efforts to better understand key issues of learning and identity. Findings of the study are explicated, focusing on school and participant portraits and case studies. Finally, the study concludes with discussion and implications for teaching and learning in today’s society.
Chapter Two:

What Research to Date Says About English Language Learners and Issues of Schooling, Language Learning, Practices, and Identities

Definitions of Terms

**Defining relevant terms.** Before synthesizing the literature, a number of terms must be defined and explained in the context of this review. There are multiple ways to refer to a student learning English as an additional language. The term *English Language Learner (ELL)* or new *English Learner* is a student whose native, first language is one other than English. Often, in legislative contexts, *Limited English Proficient (LEP)* is a term to reference the same students (Mora, 2002; Nero, 2005). *Language Minority* is often used in the field to refer to students who come from homes where English is not the primary spoken language (Cummins, 1981a; Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2003). *Linguistically Diverse* is a more appropriate term, as Spanish-speaking ELLs, for example, are not a minority in numbers in public schools, as this figure is consistently increasing. *Native English Speaker (NES)* refers to a non-English language learner whose first language is English (Mora, 2002). *L1* is an individual’s first, native language (Spanish in this literature review and study), also referred to as *home language*, while *L2* is the second language (English in this context) (Cummins 1981b, 2000; Mora, 2002).

**Examining terms used.** Referring to an ELL as LEP has a negative connotation, that it is a deficit for a child to not speak primarily English. This term is aligned with the language as a problem orientation and connects speaking another language to societal obstacles that can be overcome by the learning of English (Cummins, 2000; Ruiz, 1984). This term does not build on the assets that a child can bring to a school or social setting.
because s/he speaks a language other than English. Ruíz’s language as a resource orientation is applicable to the asset perspective, as students who speak another language can be viewed as resourceful and beneficial to a society (Cummins, 2000; Ruíz, 1984). Because of this, the term ELLs will be used throughout this literature review to describe students who speak another primary language and are learning English. However, the term is not meant to label children or students, as there are many other aspects beyond being a learner of English, to the individual’s identity. Additionally, students who do primarily speak a language other than English may be learning English as their second, third, or fourth language. In this literature review, for the purpose of flow and cohesion, I will use the term English language learner (ELL) to refer to one that is learning English as a second or additional language, acknowledging that s/he may already know more than one language.

In this review of literature, identity and language will be examined—specifically how language influences the ways in which people view and define themselves and are viewed and defined by others. The intended and actual purposes of schooling will then be explored, making explicit connections between the role of schools and identity. In addition to the role language (i.e. English, Spanish, Hindi, etc.) plays in identity construction, language learning and acquisition influences an individual, and several aspects will be explored and unpacked. While research highlights complexities of the language learning and acquisition process and key terms are used to describe instructional models, actual use in schools is inconsistent. Hence, I will then provide an overview of language instructional programs. This literature review will conclude with the role of the
teacher, and how expectations and educators’ professional knowledge shape the identity of students learning English as an additional language.

**Identity and Language**

**Understanding identity.** Identity is an expansive concept—it can refer to the way one sees the self and is seen by others; who a person thinks they are; and a sense of self that develops over the course of the individual’s life (Cavazos-Rehg & DeLucia-Waack, 2009; DaSilva-Iddings & Katz, 2007; Levinson, 2001; Reyes & Vallone, 2007). Levinson (2001) further defines identity as “the sense of self that the subject shares with other members of some collective group or organization” (p. 342). A person’s identity construction is strongly influenced by several factors such as home and family life, schooling, and society at large. The individual alone does not have control over the construction of the self. The identities of children that speak a language other than English may be molded by their perception of others’ acceptance or rejection of their native language and culture, or the treatment in a social or educational setting (Cavazos-Rehg & DeLucia-Waack, 2009; Nero, 2005; Walqui, 2006). Thus, school experiences impact students’ identities, including new ELLs.

Identities are formed and informed by language and other semiotic tools in use with surrounding social contexts (Bryzzheva, 2002; Cummins, 2000; Díaz & Flores, 2001; Holquist, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986; Wink & Putney, 2002). Since schools are specific social contexts alive with diverse interactions, schooling experiences influence how learners perceive themselves or are perceived and positioned by others. Children who initially learn their non-English native language through their family may come to see their home language and/or connections with home as a disadvantage to school
success. The ways they are engaged in language learning influences who they become. If they are taught in the first language (L1), they can continue to develop as capable communicators and thinkers, as well as come to see themselves as a “Spanish language speaker” and perhaps other identities like “successful student,” or “intelligent person.” Identities can be expanded (or constricted) with the language learning experiences in school contexts. Before exploring language identity and the connection to the schooling experience, the concepts of language as a tool, dialogism, and their impact on identity construction will be addressed.

**Constructing identity through mediation of tools.** Vygotsky (1978, 1986) emphasized individuals’ use of tools and signs to mediate thoughts, actions, and relations between each other and the world. Material tools, such as writing or gestures, control processes in nature, while psychological tools, or signs, influence cognitive processes and behaviors and internally transform natural human abilities into higher mental functions (Byrnes, 2006; Kozulin, 1986; Lantolf, 2000; Robbins, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). The transformation occurs through “mediated activity” which includes both material and psychological tools in which “mediate a human’s own psychological processes”—and other individuals (Robbins, 2001, p. 35). As children develop they eventually gain control over the mediation practices made available by their culture for social interaction and thinking purposes. Individuals are initially controlled by the objects in their environment, then by others in the environment, and finally they have control over their own social and cognitive activities (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1986). For instance in the school context, imagine Carlos, a Spanish language speaker new to English, enrolls in a third grade classroom of English speakers. In a few short weeks, Carlos is able to use
English words and phrases such as “cool,” “I want more candy, please,” or “I like story time.” Carlos learns conversational and social aspects of English based on his classroom observations of what is occurring in his environment, as well as through his interactions with classmates. He uses the tool of language and social behaviors and practices of others to aid in his development of social English, picking up what is socially and contextually expected and acceptable. How Carlos uses language and how others perceive his language use positions him as “an accepted friend,” “a marginalized other,” “speaker of a language other than English,” and so forth.

Language in particular is a complex tool that is intimately tied to identity construction. On the interpsychological plane, children use language to communicate and share cultural meanings, while on the intrapsychological plane, children are learning and developing cognitively (Donato, 2000). Through their sociocultural experiences and use of tools, individuals make sense of who they are and what their identities are. Further, Vygotsky (1986) described thought development as determined by language: “The development of logic in the child is a direct function of his socialized speech” (p. 94). In other words, language is not only vital to an individual’s communication with others, but is also necessary for thinking. Language and thinking have a reciprocal relationship, as language informs thought, and thought comes to be through language (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1986; Wink & Putney, 2002).

In the school context, as “students learn and use new language, the process impacts their thinking, and vice versa. It is through the fusion of thinking, speaking, and our experience that we construct our knowledge” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 43). When considering children in their schooling context, who they are as students comprises more
than what they are saying and how they are communicating; it is also important to view students as thinkers—students are more than knowledge receptacles. This is especially relevant to new English learners, as they may be communicating using English, but engaged in rich thinking and comprehension in another language. For example, if a teacher calls on an ELL and the student does not answer right away, it is highly possible that s/he is thinking in the native language before translating the answer to spoken English, or following the thinking but not yet prepared to respond in English.

**Developing identity through dialogism.** Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism is essential to understanding the role language plays in the construction of an individual’s identity(ies). According to Holquist (1999, 2002), Bakhtin asserted that language is bigger than just words, sounds, or utterances, and that the meaning of language emanates the dialogue that occurs between our self and the “other.” Each utterance plays an important role in dialogue and is always understood in reference to other utterances. In other words, one utterance is like an answer or response to another utterance that precedes it. Dialogue consists of an utterance, a reply, and a “relation” between the two, where the meaning lies within the “relation” and how the exchange is interpreted; “nothing is anything in itself” (Holquist, 2002, p. 38). Meaning is made from the exchange of utterances between individuals. Thus, dialogue depends on context including place, participants, history of interactions up until a moment in time, etc. Bakhtin also emphasized that because meaning is relative and contingent on the relation between two individuals, it is the position of the observer that is essential. “Bakhtin’s observer is an active participant in the relation of simultaneity… reality is always experienced, not just perceived, and further that it is experienced from a particular
position” (Holquist, 1999, p. 100). In the law of placement, meaning is made from dialogue and depends on the position of the individual. “Everything is perceived from a unique position in existence; the meaning of whatever is observed is shaped by the place from which it is perceived… Nothing can be perceived except against the perspective of something else” (Holquist, 2002, pp. 21-22). For example, imagine an elementary classroom, where the teacher asks Daniela, a Spanish-speaking ELL, a question about a story that the class has just read.

T: Daniela, what is the setting in the story?
D: Setting? (pause)
T: El lugar?
D: Tiene lugar en una escuela.

The utterances in the above example, such as “setting?” or the pause, could be interpreted in different ways depending on the context. “Setting?” and the way it was spoken could have meant that Daniela did not know what the setting in the story actually was, or that she did not understand the English word “setting.” The teacher’s “el lugar” utterance was a response to help Daniela, and to determine whether she did not understand the English word or the concept of story “setting.” The teacher’s utterance also lets Daniela know that it was okay to respond in Spanish. In terms of the law of placement, at first, Daniela is positioned as a student who was to answer a question in English. However, the teacher’s response to Daniela positioned her as a student who could rely on her L1 to help her understand concepts in the L2. Because the teacher placed the student in a role where she could rely on her perspective and experience, dialogue was able to occur in the classroom.

What we say and the meaning that is dialogically constructed, impacts how we think about ourselves and who we become. Dialogue in a classroom with students and
teachers serves as a means of social learning and development (Bryzzheva, 2002; Toohey, 2000). In this context, the student’s language practices are a result of the dialogue that occurs within, that between teacher and student, student and student, and student and larger cultural milieu. Thinking back to the earlier example where the teacher allowed Daniela to use her L1, the student was placed in a position of significance, and felt that she could contribute to classroom dialogue. Students in the classroom that do not understand Spanish may feel uninvolved in the dialogue because they do not comprehend the interaction. However, even if they do not understand the actual words, they are realizing that the Spanish language and speakers are valued in their classroom; it is okay to think and speak in a language other than English. Conversely, if the dialogue between the teacher and student is one where the teacher has the obvious power, this may cause the student to feel controlled and less significant, or disempowered, and will impact the sense of self accordingly. Imagine that instead of the teacher allowing Daniela to do her thinking and responding in her L1, the teacher used her power to shape normative practices into acceptance of English-only responses. Daniela, unable to respond yet in English, likely would not see herself as a successful contributor to the classroom community, and other students might see her as one that lacks knowledge.

Dialogically constructed meaning is also applicable to the spoken interactions amongst students. The meaning made from the social and dialogical encounters in the classroom is tightly linked to identity formation. In a classroom with students learning English as an additional language, this dialogue and positioning of the “other” is
imperative to a positive student identity formation. If teachers position ELLs in a place of inferiority, dialogue may dissolve, and monologue will instead be present.

Dialogic prose is in opposition to the monologic word which renders mute the word of the other that resides in the word of the self and hence reproduces the fixed antinomies of subject and object… In the monologic novel, characters are denied a voice, they are objectified, and fall silent. (Beasley-Murray, 2007, p. 93, p. 121)

In other words, ELLs who engage in dialogue with teachers or students who view their first language as a deficit eventually “fall silent,” and dialogue will no longer be present.

A learning environment that perceives an ELL from a deficit perspective and enforces English monolingualism as the official discourse is not conducive to dialogism. In the most radical form, official language “resists communication, does not recognize otherness, abhors difference, and aims for a single collective self,” while privileging oneness and being “monologic” (Holquist, 2002, p. 52). Classroom power structures where it is evident that the language of dominance has power over another cause students who are learning English to repress their native language and consequently leads to oppression, which has detrimental effects on identity.

Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia is also relevant when working to understand and study student identities. Heteroglossia refers to the simultaneity of dialogues, where the subject is surrounded by the innumerable responses that could be made at any point, but “any of which must be framed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousands available” (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 219; Holquist, 1999). Students are exposed to their teachers, classmates, family, neighborhood, playground, etc. and they are at the center of numerous discourses. Their identities are shaped by how students make sense of the competing structures around them. Suppose Daniela, where she was able to
use her native language to think and speak in one classroom, attends another classroom for math instruction. In this math classroom, students are discouraged from using their L1 to help them think and problem solve. In fact, the teacher punishes students when the L1 is heard. At the same time, her parents encourage her to be a “good student” and learn English. How would Daniela deal with these competing discourses, and how does this influence who she becomes as an individual?

**Linking language, dialogism, and the shaping of cultural identities.** While multiple identities are formed through social experiences, interactions, and dialogue, one’s cultural identity and how it is influenced by language practices and other sociocultural factors is relevant to this study.

**Definitions and transmission of culture.** Culture, as defined by Nieto and Bode (2008), “consists of the values, traditions, worldview, and social and political relationships created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, or other shared identity” (p. 171). A child is not born with a culture, as it is a learned concept. Children learning English as an additional language have a particularly complex cultural identity as they are exposed to practices in their home, social, and school environments that may be dissimilar from one another (Cummins, 1981a). Mead (as cited in Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003) described the concept of cultural transmission as how children learn practices and develop their cultural identity is based on influence from traditional and dominant societal figures. Cultural values and practices can be learned from the older, more experienced community or family members, through individuals from the dominant
society, and/or through practices learned and enacted by individuals from both immediate and surrounding social worlds.

**Development of culture and language.** Cummins (1981a) and Wong Fillmore (1991b) discussed how students’ attitudes and opinions towards their L1 and L2 and people who speak each language are closely linked to cultural identity. Children who refuse to speak their L1 may reject their family culture because they want to be like the majority of students in school; they may identify more with the dominant culture, thus assimilation. Assimilation is when individuals no longer identify with their original cultural group and take on the behaviors and practices of another culture—usually the dominant one (Cummins, 1981a; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Spring, 2007). Wong Fillmore (1991b) found parallels amongst students’ motivation to learn English and the loss of speaking their native language. Cavazos-Rehg and DeLucia-Waack (2009) concluded similar findings in their study of ethnic identity and acculturation of self-esteem in Latino students, as students who were in traditional, English instructional programs had higher levels of assimilation, and reported less Spanish language use outside of the classroom than students in bilingual programs. ELLs may also reject the dominant language and identify more so with their home culture. If students feel a greater sense of belonging to their home culture, then they will choose to identify more with the L1 and become resistant to the dominant culture; if they feel more connected to the dominant culture and the L2, they will identify with this group, and may abandon some or all aspects of their home culture. Students also may have difficulty identifying with both cultures and languages, which negatively affects the identity and feelings of self-worth. It is also possible that students embrace both languages and cultures,
exemplifying acculturation or biculturalism. As students are developing their identities and senses of self, they may experience all four situations, with social experiences driving the students’ perceptions and attitudes, and they may even develop multiple identities because of the various social contexts in their life (Cummins, 1981a; Trueba, 2002).

**The power of English and culture.** The ubiquitous belief that English is the “language of power” influences cultural identity. The conviction that knowledge of English is critical to success and social mobility is increasingly pervasive (Janks, 2010). Countries all over the globe, such as China and South Africa, now require schooling in English as early as primary grades. This practice prioritizes English over other languages. Who has access to English is another aspect that portrays the power of English. Janks (2010) discussed the *access paradox*, where those who have access to English are at an advantage, as they learn the language that affords them “linguistic capital,” while those who do not have access to English are precluded from upward social and economic mobility (p. 140). However, access and intense desire to learn English makes the power known and often “devalues” the native language.

Janks (2010) further argues that English has “symbolic power” (p. 142). While the power of English it is not explicitly revealed, the societal role the language plays is hegemonic, where hegemony can be explained as a “system of ideas and social practices that helps maintain the domination of corporate and upper-class interest over those of the rest of the population” (Sehr, 1997, p. 17). English-only instruction, for example, reveals this symbolic power, as it exemplifies the dominant role of English and the power the language represents in society (DaSilva-Iddings & Katz, 2007; Janks, 2010).
Deculturalization and schooling. Spring’s (2007) work posited that an English-only curriculum “deculturalizes” and requires assimilation. Depriving students of native language instruction exemplifies “deculturalization,” and particularly for Mexican students, English-only instruction “strips away Mexican values and culture” by replacing the use of Spanish with English (p. 96). Several scholars (Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991b; Valdés, 2001) revealed “deculturalization” in their research. Valenzuela (1999), in her study of high school students, found that Mexican students felt unsupported by most teachers, and their knowledge of the Spanish language and possession of foreign cultural values and aspects of identification (such as names and behaviors) were viewed as “barriers” to success. Curriculum and instruction, which Valenzuela (1999) labeled as “subtractive,” were not culturally relevant to the Mexican students, and emphasized the speaking of English and beliefs of the dominant culture as the norm. To achieve the school’s idea of “success,” students were forced to abandon their cultural identity and replace it with aspects from the “privileged” culture.

Olsen’s (1997) ethnographic study of a high school with a large immigrant student population examined both student and teacher/administrator experiences and perspectives. Findings revealed the intense pressure students felt to become “Americanized.” “The role of the school in Americanizing immigrants and addressing issues of national origin is viewed as a matter of taking non-English speaking students and making them fluent English speakers” (Olsen, 1997, p. 91). As a result of the pressure to learn English as quickly as possible, a loss and/or abandonment of home language resulted, and the “language in which they can express themselves, the language through which they can understand the world becomes banished” (p. 92).
Deculturalization may be increasing as a result of pressure that many immigrants and/or linguistically diverse groups may feel to assimilate to the dominant culture. In the last couple decades, newcomers to the United States are assimilating more rapidly than ever before; after 15 years in the U.S., 75% of Latino immigrants are speaking English daily, and 70% of their children become dominant or monolingual in English (Crawford, 1992). Speaking a language other than English is considered “un-American” to some. Because linguistically diverse groups experience discrimination and their native language is not honored in dominant settings, parents of ELLs may opt for English instruction in schools. Spring’s (2007) definition of educational assimilation is a program “designed to absorb and integrate cultures into the dominant culture. American schools have primarily used assimilation programs to integrate immigrant groups into mainstream American culture” (p. 8). Historically, ELLs have been punished for using their L1 in schools, and experienced emotional instability and discord consequently; children and families learned that it was necessary to abandon the home culture and language, and assimilate to the established norm (Crawford, 1992; Cummins, 1981a; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Spring, 2007). Some have fought for their cultural rights but have encountered much opposition from the dominant culture. Presently, this struggle continues, as those not of the “majority”—Latino ELLs in this case—receive a societal message that forces them to assimilate to gain social mobility, or encounter a large barrier that prevents them from societal and economic success (Crawford, 1992; Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002; Halcón, 2001; Mora, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). Several studies (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999) revealed this pressure to assimilate felt
by both teachers and students. Students recognized the importance of learning English to obtain societal mobility, but consequently lost their home language.

Available language, perceptions of schooling, and culture. A specific aspect of one’s cultural identity that is important to this study is the notion of academic identity and perceptions of schooling. This concept speaks to how students see themselves as learners and capable and intelligent contributors to the school environment (Toohey, 2000). Available language in the classroom shapes students’ schooling perceptions, which consequently impacts cultural identity. If an English-only curricular perspective, or little to no L1 is used in the classroom, anxiety or tension can emerge between teachers and students. Students may feel that their teacher is insensitive toward their cultural identity, since language is a significant component of culture (DaSilva-Iddings & Katz, 2007; Ortiz & Sumaryono, 2004). Instruction that ignores the students’ native language and cultural identities that are not validated in the classroom and school community pushes students to form new identities—ones that do not connect to home language and culture. DaSilva-Iddings and Katz (2007) found that disconnects between home and school culture and practices produced students that were often misunderstood and misinterpreted—this created distance between teachers and students. Ortiz and Sumaryono (2004) further noted the importance of this “validation” in the classroom between teachers and ELLs.

By limiting native language use in the classroom, children take home a message that speaking their L1 is not important and may become unnecessary if they progress in their social English skills. English-only interferes with how children would comfortably speak both at home and school (Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002; Padilla et al.,
Children may eventually refuse to use their home language in any context as a result of the message learned at school, even with family members who only speak the L1. Wong Fillmore (1991b) investigated this concept of “subtractive bilingualism.” Her research focused on L1 loss in students that were instructed to develop both academic and social English. She found significant L1 loss, even when Spanish was spoken within students’ homes, as students felt the need and demand to learn English. Abandoning the L1 creates tension or distance amongst family members. “Students’ cultural identities are systematically derogated and diminished,” as Spanish fluency is “construed as a ‘barrier’ that needs to be overcome” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 173).

While “subtractive” schooling negatively impacts cultural identity, additive programs, those that view the knowledge of other languages as an asset, can minimize this risk. The inclusion of the L1 in instruction and the positive attitude toward the home culture and language has quite the opposite impact. Two-way immersion and maintenance bilingual programs, which are designed to honor, involve and maintain the use of L1 instruction, aid in positive cultural identity construction, as students are exposed to affirmative opinions about their L1 (Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004a, 2004b; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Soltero, 2004). Instruction that is inclusive of home culture and does not elicit shame regarding the L1 establishes a greater sense of self-worth and self-esteem, and can foster an identity that encompasses aspects of both cultures.

As is evident in the reviewed literature, identity and language are interwoven. In order to think about how students see themselves as learners and potential contributors to school, one must consider what schooling means and how such notions of schooling
come into being. For some, schooling is synonymous with education, where the goals are related to forming citizens prepared to participate in a democratic society. For others, schooling is a practice of social reproduction. Ideally, learning institutions provide equal opportunity for all students to achieve success. However, it is likely that different purposes of schooling pertain to varying social, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and/or cultural groups, resulting in programmatic choice and instructional enactments in schools. The next section examines these purposes of schooling, providing deeper understanding behind the decisions and perceptions of appropriate language instruction for ELLs, and how these shape identity.

The Purpose of Schooling

Students learning English as an additional language may be set up for failure and continuous marginalization in U.S. public schools, as teaching them in an environment that ignores a major part of their home culture does not prepare them for a future equitable to their native English-speaking (NES) peers. If schooling does not aim to meet their needs, teach them as individuals contributing to their learning environment, and provide them learning experiences that will help them become successful societal members post-schooling, they will not receive the same opportunities as NESs. It is important to think about the role of the institution of schooling to make sense of this phenomenon. Some scholars (Dewey, 1916/2007; Goodman, 1992; Gutmann, 1987) believed that schools should provide a democratic education, while others (Anyon, 1981; Bordieu, 1986; MacLeod, 1987/1995) highlighted that this is far from what is actually occurring in the school system. A closer look at these dichotomous rationales will now be examined.
Identifying democracy as the purpose of schooling. Schooling is an important means of preparing students to become citizens in a democratic society. Dewey (1916/2007) defined a democratic society as one that “makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of different forms of associated life” (p. 76). A democratic society is one where policies aim to meet the best interest of all individuals rather than a select dominant group. All citizens are treated fairly (not necessarily equal), have a voice, and have influence on decision making, and have access to opportunity, regardless of socioeconomic status (SES), race, ethnicity, gender, etc. (Apple & Beane, 2007; Goodman, 1992; Sehr, 1997).

A democratic education gives voice to students—students are taught to think critically and to question the “status quo.” They are given the opportunity to learn about topics of interest and relevance, and dig deep and analyze particular concepts. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents work together for a common goal or mission. They rely on each other’s expertise of the students and the curriculum when making decisions, for the purpose of educating and preparing students to become democratic citizens. A democratic education is “best viewed as a shared trust of parents, citizens, students, teachers, and public officials,” where all involved parties have rights, responsibilities, and autonomy (Gutmann, 1987, p. 288; O’Brien, 2006).

Further, a participatory approach to learning is a significant component of a democratic classroom, where teacher is a facilitator of students as they collectively work to address relevant challenges and problems. A reciprocal relationship exists between teacher and students, and an inquiry approach to learning keeps all members engaged in
their education. “A democratic curriculum invites young people to shed the passive role of knowledge consumers and assume the active role of ‘meaning makers’” (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 17). Students should be given the opportunity to speak up, to challenge or question what is told to them, and to think about ways to solve community problems. Responding to open ended questions, where there is more than one correct or teacher desired answer, should be typical, and disagreement and debate is the norm.

The relationship between teachers and students should not be one where the teacher is in control of all learned information, and students are passive recipients. Freire’s (1970/2000) banking concept of education explains this teacher-student relationship. Teachers are distributors of information, where “knowledge” is deposited into students’ minds. Students do not exercise higher order thinking in response to these “deposits” and instead memorize and repeat content. Cazden’s (2001) studies on classroom discourse expanded on this “banking concept.” She described the pervasive Initiation, student Response, and teacher Evaluation (IRE) or teacher Feedback (IRF) discourse pattern, and focused on teacher questioning. In this discourse model, a teacher asks students a question, s/he calls on a student to provide a particular response, s/he evaluates the answer, and the pattern is continual.

In recent years, demands for learners have evolved and expanded due to technology and increased knowledge requirements for the job force. According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2011) and Darling-Hammond (2010), a learner in the 21st Century needs to be educated to build relationships with others to engage in collaborative problem solving in a culturally diverse society using various resources, design and share information for “global communities to meet a variety of
purposes,” be self-evaluative to ensure growth and improvement, communicate effectively in different contexts, and “create, critique, analyze and evaluate” texts. Therefore, the purpose of schooling today needs to include support in the classroom to best prepare students for this era.

Schooling should provide an education for all students to reach their academic goals and be challenged to work to their potential and attend to who they are becoming as people and citizens. The classroom should be a starting point for students to initiate “ideological and social change” (Sehr, 1997, p. 25). Relevant curriculum and instruction should develop a transformative attitude in students to change situations they find problematic. Students should view their school setting as a “forum for cultural politics that reflect, mediate, and potentially transform the societal order within which they exist” (Sehr, 1997, p. 2).

According to this line of thinking the purpose of schooling should be to prepare students to be active participants in a democratic society. Despite this purpose and ideal teacher and student role, schools do not always provide such a democratic learning experience. This inconsistency began several decades ago, leading to suspicions that perhaps schooling had another function. Schooling and stakeholders involved may be maintaining the status quo, varying schooling experiences for students in different subgroups.

**Understanding social reproduction as a purpose of schooling.** Scholars such as Anyon (1981), Bordieu (1986), Bowles and Gintis (1976), MacLeod (1987/1995) and Willis (1977) studied the institution of schooling and the role it plays in social reproduction. Their work (as well as others) suggested that schooling structures are not
set up to provide democratic learning experiences and to teach students that they can achieve anything they set their mind to. Social reproduction theory posits that schooling is a mechanism for maintaining social class structures, and reveals barriers to social mobility (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; MacLeod, 1987/1995). While reproduction does not occur exclusively through schooling, it is a significant site, as certain beliefs and understandings are developed in the earlier years of life. Students of different socioeconomic statuses are educated for the purpose of upholding existent divisions. A hidden curriculum teaches students of lower social classes in a different way than students of higher socioeconomic status; students in lower groups are educated in ways that do not allow them to achieve the same post-schooling opportunities as those in higher social groups.

Social reproduction in schooling occurs through various means: instructional methods, curriculum, reward systems, and positions of authority (Anyon, 1981; Bordieu, 1986; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Instruction that is mechanical and focuses on rote skills does not prepare students to equally compete for employment post-schooling, while methods that develop deeper, critical thinking do. Curriculum that superficially covers content, while that which embodies a vast array of information and perspectives, also prepares individuals for different societal positions. For example, Anyon (1981) studied school knowledge in elementary schools of varied social classes, revealing different uses and practices of curriculum. Her findings supported this notion of social reproduction, as students in working class, middle class, or affluent areas experienced curriculum and instruction in distinct ways. Students’ thinking about themselves and their post-schooling opportunities were influenced by the curricular content they learned, instructional
methods, and their teachers’ role in emphasizing “active use of concepts and ideas” versus mechanics or rote behavior (Anyon, 1981, p. 35). Bowles and Gintis (1976) claimed that authority and reward systems in schooling also contributed to social reproduction. If teachers and administrators have authority over their students in a way that is controlling and almost demeaning, students believe that their societal role is to behave in similar ways. Often times, such authoritarianism exists in schools with lower or working class students, while the opposite occurs in middle class or affluent schools. Further, grades, competition amongst students, and rewards (those that evoke extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation) in schools instigate and exacerbate societal divisions, where these practices also differ in schools depending on socioeconomic status (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; MacLeod, 1987/1995). Some schooling practices are structured to keep lower class students in similar positions as their working class caretakers, and middle and elite students in managerial or professional positions similar to that of their parents.

Studies conducted by MacLeod (1987/1995) and Willis (1977) exemplified the influence schooling experiences and class distinctions have on students. Participants in both studies recognized these hidden agendas of their schooling, and perceptions of their post-schooling success correlated to their social class. Students in middle class neighborhoods believed they had social mobility and could achieve higher education and employment opportunities, while those in working class communities felt that they were restricted and did not have these same aspirations.

Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of cultural capital is also relevant to theories of social reproduction, and is defined as cultural knowledge and background that is passed down from one generation to the next. Students of higher classes possess different cultural
capital as that of students in lower classes, such as language, knowledge, vocabulary and travel experiences. It is the cultural capital of the upper classes that leads to increased societal success, and schools in these communities build on this to better prepare students for post-schooling opportunities. Bordieu (1986) believed that social class groups continuously pass on cultural capital, and schooling validates the process through instructional practices and embedding particular beliefs into students.

An example of social reproduction and relevance to ELLs can be understood through an English-only instructional program—this limits ELLs’ future opportunities. ELLs are among several groups of children being deprived of proper, effective curriculum in public schools. Often times, English immersion instruction places all ELLs in one classroom, where their NES peers receive a different curriculum. These curricula focus more on survival skills, and are low on academic content (Oakes, 2005; Lipman, 2004; Mitchell, 2005; Valdés, 2001; Vang, 2006). Material that does not comport with state standards may be taught, failing to prepare students for “success” within the school; the opposite may instead occur, where instruction is guided by the content on standardized tests.

Students learning English in schools are frequently instructed with mechanistic methods, using scripted English reading and math curricula, taught mostly through drill and rote memorization, rather than being encouraged to develop critical thinking skills. This phenomenon was evident in Gándara and Contreras’ (2009), Valdés’ (2001), and Valenzuela’s (1999) studies of adolescent ELL students. Furthermore, ELLs in these studies were isolated and instructed in classrooms with only other English learners, thus not being exposed to native English speakers. They lacked peer “models” of appropriate
language use, which is a critical tool in gaining proficiency. This segregation can also be referred to as “cultural tracking” as Valenzuela (1999) identified in her study. “These divisions encourage U.S.-born youth to nurture a false sense of superiority and to equate the ESL program and, by extension, Mexican immigrants and the Spanish language, with second-class status” (p. 180). By not providing ELLs with the same academic rigor and social schooling experiences as non-ELLs, their access to higher education and various career opportunities is considerably limited. Olsen (1997) also encountered similar findings in her study of high school students. Students learning English as an additional language at Madison High School were limited in their exposure to academically rigorous curriculum. Many of the ELLs had a shorter schedule of academic content classes, and had more study halls, and other non-academic electives than their non-ELL peers. Students and teachers viewed “sheltered English” classes as watered down and significantly less difficult (Olsen, 1997). Such curricular implementation prepares students for working class, vocational jobs, ones that do not require a high level of education, as opposed to the theoretically endless opportunities native English speakers have (Mitchell, 2005; Oakes, 2005; Valdés, 2001; Vang, 2006). Because ELL students are often perceived to be “non-college bound,” the corollary is that there is no need to implement strong academic curriculum (Mitchell, 2005; Vang, 2006). Teaching what they need to know to merely “survive” within the dominant culture is the main objective. The “hidden curriculum” that ELLs receive systematically sets them apart from other students, impeding their education and limiting potential (Vang, 2006).

Connecting the purpose of schooling and discourse models. The concepts of “Discourse models” and situational meanings (Foucault, 1980; Gee, 2005) are relevant in
thinking about the purpose of schooling and identity formation. “Discourse models” (sometimes referred to as cultural models or figured worlds) are defined as “theories that people hold, often unconsciously, and use to make sense of the world and their experiences in it” (Gee, 2005, p. 61). Social settings such as religious institutions or schools, ascribe to particular “Discourse models,” while norms and understandings are developed as a result of participation in the social practices. These adapted and accepted practices are often invisible to those who belong to any given group or community (Janks, 2010). “Discourse models” of school teach students to act a certain way. Because of the beliefs and practices that are already in place, involved members absorb this way of thinking, becoming compliant to the prescribed way of thinking and behaving and not challenging the “status quo.”

Who students and teachers become in the classroom exceeds personal choice, as situational meanings have weight. The situational meaning of language and culture in schools influences students’ reflections on identities. If a deficit perspective of non-dominant cultures and languages is the Discourse model, students develop parallel thoughts. They recognize the power of English and may devalue their own linguistic and cultural background. This occurs without realization, as the pervasive beliefs are impalpably embedded into norms and beliefs.

Students or teachers may develop or lack a sense of agency regarding when and where they can exert power or influence in the classroom. Agency is an individual’s ability to react, think, and endure a constraining and challenging situation, acting as a social agent (DaSilva-Iddings and Katz, 2007; Levinson, 2001). Levinson (2001) studied identity formation and this influence on student agency. In his study, students that were
aware of dominant discourses in their school setting and had high “aspirations” to resist conformity and the social influences and expectations, utilized their sense of agency to help them in the process. They became agents of change through this resistance, and achieved beyond what was expected of them in their learning environment. Locke Davidson (1996) also researched minority adolescent students’ agency and their resistance or compliance to school norms, practices, and expectations. She identified practices within schooling that had serious impact on student identity, and how the students’ prior knowledge or beliefs about where they saw themselves post-schooling influenced their behavior and attitudes toward these schooling expectations and practices (Locke Davidson, 1996). Both Levinson (2001) and Locke Davidson (1996) portrayed the relationship of student agency with the creation and reproduction of social inequalities and sociocultural differences, challenging the established Discourse models. In other words, if students are taught in a setting that does not honor their native language and home culture, their sense of agency can help to resist the dominant expectation. However, if the students are offered the identity of an English language speaker in the classroom because of the English-only curriculum, the students may also have little agency to resist the dominant expectation.

**Making connections between understandings of schooling and understandings of self.** Beyond social reproduction, students’ awareness of the purposes of schooling influences their thinking and who they become. The distinction between education and schooling is important, as the former represents the information and content that students actually learn and acquire, while the latter signifies indoctrination into dominant norms. School contexts and discourse structures themselves
contribute to the shaping of these norms and students’ perceptions of schooling, as some aspects of which were prevalent in the discussion on cultural identity—namely that school is a place for particular cultural ways of being (i.e. quiet, compliant, English-speaking). Levinson’s (2001) study of identity found that student aspiration, defined as an “evolving commitment to a life course,” in school influenced identity, and that both result from the “meanings that students make in schools” (p. 326). Identities and aspirations develop together as a part of the schooling experience and process. If students feel motivated in their academic setting, feel that they are accepted and welcomed into the classroom community, and do not experience confusion about who they are, feelings of self-worth and positive perceptions of schooling result. Further, academic achievement increases, as students feel engaged and connected to their learning.

Students who have affirmative cultural identities (i.e. experiences that match and/or are validated inside of their school experience) often feel safe in the classroom, perceive schooling in a positive angle, and are likely to be higher achieving, resulting from a particular school discourse structure. Previous research has identified the connection between increased self-validation and worth to academic success (Cavazos-Rehg & DeLucia-Waack, 2009; Levinson, 2001; Ortiz & Sumaryono, 2004; Rubinstein-Avila, 2006; Yoon, 2007). For example, in Yoon’s (2007) study of teachers of ELLs, positive attitudes towards school and higher academic performance were closely related to pedagogy in the classroom that connected to the ELLs’ prior knowledge, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Research by Cavazos-Rehg and DeLucia-Waack (2009) and DaSilva-Iddings and Katz (2007) uncovered similar findings in their respective studies of
high school Latino students and second grade Latino ELLs. The use of native language instruction, creating a discourse model that considers the L1 an asset, increased academic performance and the researchers found notable correlation between this success, and an increased sense of self worth and self-esteem. Both noted that a strong ethnic identity contributed to overall “wellness.” Confidence and self-esteem resulting from higher academic performance influences schooling perceptions and heightens post-schooling opportunities.

Students’ understandings of school discourse structures and norms can also be understood through the positioning theory, which explores influences of schooling perceptions and senses of self. This theory describes how people place themselves and others in positions of social context (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Yoon, 2008). Teachers place themselves and students in certain positions, which affects their practices and students’ learning experiences. How teachers position themselves guides the way they act and what they believe their role to be, and what a teacher says or does can impact their students’ learning and identities (Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2008). Without realizing, teachers may position their students in a way that emits high or low expectations, and consequently limits or expands academic success and opportunities. Mr. Brown in Yoon’s (2008) study felt that ELLs should be treated similarly to non-ELLs, and viewed himself and monolingual English speakers as “models” for the ELLs. He often times expected a shared knowledge of American popular culture. Yoon found Mr. Brown’s English learners to be noticeably uncomfortable, quiet, and passive while in his classroom. Because the teacher was positioning himself and the native English-speaking (NES) students in a dominant role, the ELLs became “powerless” and inferior.
The prevalent purpose of schooling in the nation’s school system has influenced ELLs and their exposure to language. An education that contributes to social reproduction does not set up students for success. What is best for the multiple needs of new English learners is overlooked when particular policies that perpetuate the status quo have been put in place. Schooling affects the process of learning a language, as people take on words in various ways, which consequently shapes their experiences. Despite influences of schooling, it is important to understand how people assume languages, and what opportunities and conditions lead to successful language development. Different components and theories of language learning will be examined in the next section, with a specific focus on how second language is developed and the role the first language plays in this acquisition. Lastly, the section concludes with connections between language acquisition, instruction, and identity.

**Language Learning**

**Learning versus acquiring language.** Humans are born with the potential to take on language skills and practices. This process is referred to as *language learning* for some, and *language acquisition* for others (Halliday, 1978; Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964; Krashen, 1981; Krashen, 1982). While essential arguments and ideas are tied to choices in terminology, it is important to understand the thinking and concepts behind the “learning” and “acquisition” of language. Babies hear sounds around them, and imitate common sounds or words. With time, they process these words, and make sense of the use in appropriate situations.

Learning takes place more readily if the language is encountered in active use than if it is seen or heard only as a set of disembodied utterances or exercises. But quantity of experience alone is not the only factor which determines the rate of
learning; the rate at which this experience is taken in is also important. (Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964, p. 181)

Lessons should be repeated frequently, with some reinforcement, while also providing meaningful, active engagement, where learners feel connected to what they are hearing and experiencing. They should be contextually connected, or else learning may not occur. Motivation also increases language learning, as an individual who has reason to want to learn and use a language will do so more effectively (Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964).

In learning an additional language, Halliday stressed three crucial aspects and subconscious dimensions of language learning: *learning language, learning through language, and learning about language* (Anderson, 2004; Matthiessen, 2006). When learning language, an individual actively investigates the language and creates a language system, often through interactions with others (Anderson, 2004; Matthiessen, 2006). The “construction process” focuses on oral and written symbol systems that represent the meanings and functions of our language (Anderson, 2004, p. 94). Learning through language is connected to the learner’s use of context and understandings of his/her self and the world to gain further understanding and make meaning of the language, often via the symbol system. Here a learner receives genuine feedback as they attempt to make meaning and communicate their thinking. It is necessary to engage in multiple authentic opportunities of language use. Learning about language is when the learner develops awareness of the forms and functions of the language (Anderson, 2004; Matthiessen, 2006). In schools today, learning about language is emphasized, as teachers stress the importance of phonemes and discrete (often decontextualized) parts of language (Anderson, 2004). However, when teaching ELLs, it is important to learn through
language to prevent potential academic failure (such as learning content only on a superficial level, or the inability to develop necessary cognitive skills because of the lack of contextual connection) and expand students’ language development.

Halliday (1978) criticized the term “language acquisition” because to him it suggested that language was a “commodity to be acquired.” He viewed this term as denoting that there was a gap to be filled if a child did not learn the commodity of language substantially. Halliday thus preferred the term “language learning or “development.” There are varying perspectives of how language is learned or developed and Halliday (1978) spoke of these as the nativist and environmentalist approaches to language learning. The nativist view of language learning supports the idea that “there is a specific language-learning faculty, distinct from other faculties, and this provides the human infant with a readymade and rather detailed blueprint of the structure of language” (Halliday, 1978, p. 16). Following this theory, humans are born with the ability to acquire language. The environmentalist, or behaviorist, view holds that individuals (children) learn language through what they hear around them in their environment, through imitation, reinforcement and repetition (Halliday, 1978; Soltero, 2004). The interactionist perspective is a combination of nativist and behaviorist, in that the child is born with the ability to acquire language, while also learning language through conditioning (Soltero, 2004). In other words, children are born ready with the ability to learn language, but this is also influenced by social encounters and situations.

Krashen’s theory of language development explained that language is attained through subconscious natural acquisition rather than conscious learning (Haworth et al., 2006; Krashen, 1981, 1982). Language acquisition, according to Krashen (1981, 1982),
involves considerable interaction through natural communication, where individuals speaking are more concerned with the messages they are conveying and comprehending, rather than the actual words and sounds used. Much like the concept of dialogism, we develop language through time and use in social situations in anticipation of others’ responses. Krashen (1981) viewed language learning as more structured on “rules,” and “error correction,” and acknowledged that language correction occurs through natural communication rather than through constant correction. His Monitor Theory hypothesis expanded on the idea of acquisition in that our fluency is based on what we have “picked up” through communication and interaction with others; when “formal” language is spoken, an individual self-corrects through the use of a “monitor” (p. 3). “Overusers” of monitors fixate excessively on the grammatical aspect of language, thus learning, while “underusers” of monitors are dependent on what is “picked up” (p. 3). Ideal language development involves learning as a complement to acquisition, using monitors when it is appropriate and necessary, and not letting the correctional aspect intrude with effective communication (Krashen, 1981).

When it comes to learning a second language, Krashen (1981, 1982) believed that acquisition led to more communicative ability in the L2 than simply “learning.” Through language learning, an individual may develop language skills, utterances, and appear to be speaking the L2, but there may be a void in the communicative ability. Through the use of the already learned and acquired L1, the L2 is acquired through social and communicative means, versus explicit, technical L2 instruction. Comprehensible input is important, where the second language can only make sense to the individual through contextual familiarity. In the classroom context, when conditions are most similar to the
students’ naturalistic environment, L2 acquisition is most successful, as students have access to meaningful language through comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982). At times when an individual does not easily acquire language, the affective filter may activate. When learning conditions are not optimal, where there is a lack of motivation in the learner, or the individual does not relate to or connect to speakers of the new language, a filter operates to hinder the language acquisition process (Delpit, 2006; Krashen, 1982). Constant correction when speaking the L2 triggers this affective filter, and decreases the learner’s potential to acquire language effectively. If a teacher constantly corrects ELLs’ use of the new language in a classroom, students eventually fall silent (Delpit, 2006).

Halliday (1978) and Krashen’s (1981, 1982) theories of language learning and acquisition are put into practice if the circumstances in a school or classroom setting are appropriate to enable success. Cambourne’s Conditions for Learning (2000) aligns with the theorists’ thoughts on language learning and acquisition in the classroom. In his study of teachers, he identified eight conditions essential for optimal learning. These conditions were Immersion, Demonstration, Engagement, Expectations, Approximation, Condition, Use, and Response. While all conditions are essential for second language learning, Immersion, Demonstration, and Use are particularly relevant to this study. Immersion is when a learner has multiple opportunities to learn a concept through various means, demonstration is when another person models so that the learner understands the thinking behind a new concept or idea as well as when peers or others in the community offer examples or models of language in use, and Use is when the learner has multiple authentic chances to apply the developing skill and process the information in meaningful ways (Cambourne, 2000). Research on oral language by Saunders and O’Brien (2006)
further explored conditions of language use. In a classroom setting, it is important to give ELLs ample time to use language through varied means. Engagement in activities, partner work, and cooperative grouping with time to converse or help each other through the use of language is essential. It is even more important to offer language choice to the students (Saunders & O’Brien, 2006). If these conditions for learning are appropriately created and applied, optimal language learning occurs.

It is important to note that while Halliday and Krashen may be at odds in their definitions of language learning versus acquisition, they actually hold similar underlying beliefs. Halliday’s language learning, and Krashen’s acquisition both exceed sounds and utterances in isolation, and highlight the combination of these sounds and words linked to context and meaning (Halliday, 1978; Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964; Krashen, 1981, 1982). Both scholars emphasized the individual’s need to derive meaning out of language and relate new material to experiences in order to learn or acquire language. Also, both noted the importance of use and time when developing language.

**Applying language learning and acquisition to instruction.** With informed understandings of language learning, methods of instruction and instructional practices for ELLs can be critically examined through language learning and acquisition. It is essential for students to engage in meaningful language learning through authentic practices, and less tedious memorization and repetition. Some methods in schools preclude meaningful language acquisition. The grammar-translation method, for example, focuses on rules, facts of language, use of unrelated sentences, literary texts and vocabulary for translation, and grammar (Valdés, 2001). “The teacher is expected to present rules and correct errors” (p. 23). The audiolingual method focuses on oral
language and involves instruction that focuses on a stimulus, response, and reinforcement (Valdés, 2001). In this method, language learning occurs through memorization, repetition, and drills. “Teachers are seen as models of language who conduct drills, teach dialogues, and direct choral response” (p. 24). The *communicative* method views the goal of language learning to be for the purpose of communicating, through engagement in activities involving meaningful tasks and discussion (Valdés, 2001). Teachers are viewed as facilitators and participants in student-teacher communication. The *natural* approach views language as a “vehicle for communicating meanings and messages” (p. 24). Krashen’s (1981, 1982) acquisition research supports this method of language instruction, as classroom activities revolve around the processing of comprehensible input. “Teachers are expected to provide input and to create a supportive classroom environment” (Valdés, 2001, p. 24). Methods such as the communicative or natural approach teach ELLs through cognitively stimulating means that involve problem-solving, inquiry based learning, and scaffolding, which contribute to higher achievement and longer academic success (Collier, 1995; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Valdés, 2001; Walqui, 2006). In contrast, direct instruction methods, such as grammar-translation or audiolingual, that are mechanistic, drill and skill based—where students are seen as passive receptacles of information—can negatively impact achievement of ELLs (Costigan & Crocco, 2006; Freire, 1970/2000; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Valdés, 2001). They consequently are not led towards successful schooling experiences and high achievement.

In Valdés’ (2001) study of Latino immigrant middle school students, ESL instruction was characterized by grammar-translation or audiolingual methodology.
Students spent most of their class time involved in memorization based activities, repeating other people's sentences and words (i.e. meaningless for the speaker), or searching for scripted answers in a textbook, all activities that filled up the class period and kept students busy and quiet. Students were not provided with the learning opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills, or the “proficiencies they would need to succeed in other classes” (p. 147). In her findings, Valdés (2001) connected the learning environment and instructional methods to student success, as her four focus participants continued to struggle with some aspect of English or academics after the school year and in the three subsequent years.

**Examining language acquisition models.** Thomas and Collier, adopting Krashen’s theory of language acquisition developed a Prism Model of language acquisition in schooling (see Figure 2.1). This model helps to understand the holistic nature of language learning, where the learner relies on multiple sign or cueing systems to make sense of their situations, allowing them to effectively communicate. The prism model includes four components of language acquisition which are *language development, cognitive development, academic development* and *sociocultural processes*. Language development involves reading, writing, and vocabulary expansion and use across the four language domains: “phonology, vocabulary, morphology/syntax, semantics, pragmatics, paralinguistics, and discourse” (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 124). Cognitive development refers to using the language to think critically and solve problems. Academic development involves the acquiring of knowledge and information across the content areas. Sociocultural processes involve the social and cultural experiences in the school, home, and community and may involve students’ “self-esteem,
Figure 2.1 Prism Model of Language Acquisition (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003)

anxiety, or other affective factors” (Collier, 1995; Freeman & Freeman, 2006; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). The four components work together in the student’s acquisition of language and language identity, where social and cultural experiences are integral to Language, Academic, and Cognitive development. A lack of support in one or more of the areas may have a considerable negative impact.

Another explanation that links language learning and identity is Wong-Fillmore’s (1991a) *Components to Second-Language Learning* which include,

- learners who realize that they need to learn the target language and are motivated to do so,
- speakers of the target language who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it, and
- a social setting which brings learners and target language speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible. (p. 52-53)

Similar to Thomas and Collier’s model, the components work together to make language learning successful. Without these three aspects, language learning may not be as effective.

**Understanding the importance of native language skills in second language and literacy development.** There is an abundance of theoretical and empirical research regarding first and second language acquisition. Most research reveals a positive
correlation between the use of native language in the classroom/school setting and ELL academic achievement. Contrary to past and current societal beliefs and “myths,” the native language does not interfere with development of the second language (Crawford, 1998, 2008a; Cummins, 1981b; Gort, 2005; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Riches & Genesee, 2006; Samway & McKeon, 1999). English immersion advocates claim that the L1 interferes with the learning of English, and native language instruction impedes with “time on task” in schooling. “Time on task” in the classroom refers to English instruction, implying that instruction in students’ primary languages is wasted time (Cummins, 1996, 2000; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989). This belief is likely to stem from the Balance Effect Theory, where it is assumed that the human brain only has so much linguistic capacity, so people who speak two languages would develop lower levels of proficiency in each language compared to monolingual speakers (Cummins, 1981a).

This theory also posits that there are two separate sets of linguistic abilities in the brain, and stimulation of one part or language, decreases the ability in the other; therefore, teaching an ELL in the L1, would reduce the function and capabilities of the L2. In reality, it is probable that a student learning English as a second language will acquire the L2 at a faster rate with a higher academic L1 proficiency level, as the child works with both languages and builds upon the L1 to develop proficiency in the L2 (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1981a, 1981b, 1996, 2000; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Riches & Genesee, 2006).

There is also much research regarding native language instruction and its link to literacy development. August, Carlo, Proctor, and Snow (2005) emphasized that cross-linguistic transfer, where students’ literacy skills smoothly transfer from their L1 to L2, can only occur if they have well developed L1 literacy skills. Rubenstein-Avila (2006)
also supported this in her research on effective instruction for middle school ELLs, and further emphasized that instead of abandoning students’ biculturalism and bilingualism, these “funds of knowledge” should help in the development of academic English and add to their overall learning experiences. Students with stronger developed literacy skills in their L1 will have more success with the acquisition of L2 literacy skills (Cummins, 1981b, 1993, 1996, 2000; Riches & Genesee, 2006). Cummins’ (1981b, 1993, 2000) interdependence theory supports this process of the development of the second language relying on the academic competency in the first language at the time when intense L2 instruction begins. Further supporting this process, the threshold hypothesis suggests that there are threshold levels of linguistic competence that bilingual children must achieve in both of their languages for two reasons: to avoid cognitive disadvantages and to allow the benefits of bilingualism to influence cognitive functioning (Cummins, 1981b, 1993, 2000). Students who are learning English as an additional language need to have well-developed academic skills in the language of instruction or it is likely that they will not progress because of inability to grasp the content. Thus, if they did not develop strong academic proficiency in their L1 before receiving L2 instruction, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to catch up. Cummins’ Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), as cited in Freeman and Freeman (2006) further describes this process of learning, as “what we know in one language is accessible in a second language once we acquire a sufficient level of the second language” (p. 9).

**Differentiating between conversational and academic English.** When learning an additional language, the individual may develop certain aspects of language faster than others. For example, students may converse socially about a particular subject before
they grasp a similar concept academically. Within schools, this difference between levels of acquired language is often discussed in terms of conversational versus academic English. English immersion advocates claim that students who do not primarily speak English learn social English rapidly and thus do not need instruction in their native language. Students may seem to be “fluent” in English based on basic conversation and comprehension skills, and removed from a supportive language program before reaching academic proficiency (Cummins, 2000; Freeman & Freeman, 2006; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). Immersion critics say an ELL who is socially fluent in English does not necessarily equate with an academically proficient student. Cummins (1981b, 1996, 2000) refers to conversational language as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), which comprise conversational skills in social, habitual situations, and interactions. An ELL may develop these skills in as little as one to two years, indicating strong conversational English skills. Although it may seem that ELLs have acquired a substantial amount of English, it takes between four to nine years (through schooling) to develop academic English proficiency, where the individual is able to succeed in school (August, Carlo, Proctor, & Snow, 2005; Collier, 1989, 1995; Cummins, 1981b, 1996, 2000; Rubenstein-Avila, 2006). Cummins’ (1981b, 1996, 2000) notion of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) describes language skills beyond conversational and “survival.” CALP includes academic reading, writing, listening, comprehension, and speaking skills across content areas, which lead to success within and beyond schooling. ELLs who experience schooling exclusively in a L2 medium may take 7-10 years to reach the academic levels of their native English-speaking (NES) peers, while those who
have received bilingual instruction take four to seven years to reach or even surpass NES peers in academic proficiency (Collier, 1989, 1995; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002).

However, not all researchers agree with Cummins’ concept of BICS and CALP. Some language and literacy researchers (Anderson, 2004; Aukerman, 2007; Edelsky, 1996; Pray, 2005) argued that the distinction between BICS and CALP is not that marked and instead asserted that both concepts are intertwined. The notion of CALP promotes a deficit theory, which makes it seem that ELL academic failure is attributed to inadequately developed CALP, rather than inapt schooling and instruction (Edelsky, 1996). Also, the BICS/CALP distinction does not place enough emphasis on making meaning of academic language, as to make language meaningful, both socially and academically, speakers must make sense of what they and others are saying. Language should not be decontextualized, as it should always be in context (Aukerman, 2007).

Cazden (2001) noted the importance of “reconceptualization” in bringing students closer to academic language, meaning that in order for students to learn new academic content, relevant language must be presented through comprehensible means. Teachers should listen to students’ voices, making meaning from and validating their ideas. These “voices” and teacher responses provide “a scaffold and an opportunity to move development forward” towards academic language (Anderson, 2004, p. 96).

Critics challenge the idea that if children do not understand a concept it is because their CALP is not developed yet, and more time is needed for this development before further comprehension can occur. It is instead, through socially meaningful participation that children appropriate the language they need in order to fulfill a range of purposes, both academic and nonacademic. Children draw upon the linguistic resources that they already know—even,
especially, ones that are not ‘academic’—and recontextualize and transform them into new contexts. (Aukerman, 2007, p. 632)

In other words, students use words and concepts that they are already familiar with and apply them to new linguistic and academic situations to further develop their cognitive ability. In a classroom, the responsibility falls on the teacher to utilize and build upon the existing knowledge and experiences of the students to aid in cognitive and academic development. CALP-oriented instruction, guided from the teacher’s theoretical stance toward language learning, moves away from linguistic activities that are contextually familiar to the learners, and toward potentially unfamiliar, abstract academic language use (Cummins, 2000). Students consequently may struggle to make meaning out of the required language use. Teaching a second language is not a matter of applying new, abstract, words into context, but rather, finding ways that a particular child’s current context might aid in making sense of the new language (Aukerman, 2007).

**Becoming bilingual: The role and benefits of first languages when adding additional languages.** If educators take what is known about learning and acquiring additional language into account when working with young ELLs, it is possible to aid in that child’s growth as a bilingual person. Thinking about how individuals learn and acquire first and second languages, the teacher has the ability to afford the opportunity for students learning English to become fluent and literate in more than one language. Bilingualism, where the individual has high levels of social and academic competency in two languages, has benefits for all individuals. Some of these advantages are cognitive flexibility, metacognition, metalinguistic awareness, concept formation, and creativity (Cummins, 1981a, 1996, 2000; Padilla et al., 1991; Rueda, 1987). ELLs who receive substantial instruction in their L1 and English often match or outperform NES students
on reading and mathematics assessments, mostly because of their increased analysis and
deciphering of language input (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1981b).

Beyond assessments, bilingual students attain higher success in the classroom and
throughout their schooling experience. Genesee and Riches (2006), Lindholm-Leary and
Borsato (2006), and Reyes and Vallone (2007) found a positive relationship between
bilingual development and academic achievement, as both academic and cultural identity
develop together in a non-conflicting manner. Conversely, research by Walker (1987)
and Lindholm-Leary and Borsato (2006) revealed high percentages of underachieving
Latino learners in English-only settings. Programs that immerse the student in English,
result in a loss over time of the first language, inadequate development of the second
language, poor academic achievement, a large high school dropout rate, and psychosocial
distress (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Krashen, 1998; Lenters, 2004; Padilla et al., 1991).
Students who speak two or more languages have been noted to have higher Grade Point
Averages than their monolingual peers (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Additionally, there
are “psychosocial” benefits, especially with linguistically diverse learners, as they
develop feelings of pride because their language is accepted and precludes any stigma
(Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Padilla et al., 1991). Lenters (2004) further pointed out the
enormous benefits of bilingualism, such as “cognitive flexibility,” strong language skills,
and a high IQ.

Bilingualism leads to social, cultural, and occupational advantages. Speaking
more than one language allows individuals to communicate with different cultural or
ethnic groups (Paneque, 2006). Individuals can travel for personal, academic, or
occupational purposes, increasing their experiences and exposure to various cultures.
Further, Paneque (2006) discussed the contribution of bilingualism to increased creative thinking and memory, and the potential economic advantages. Bilingual children and adults are able to solve problems using a multitude of solutions. Speaking multiple languages can increase employment opportunities, as it enhances marketability for certain jobs requiring multilingualism. A person with knowledge of two or more languages possesses societal power and status, and in some countries, bi- or multilingualism is a requirement (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The process of learning a L2 depends heavily on the development of the L1. Although research supports this, the fundamental connection between the two languages is not necessarily easily or regularly transferred to practices in many school classrooms. And, as noted in this review of literature, how languages are positioned as (un)useful, or (un)acceptable has consequences, both academically as well as who one becomes as a person. The relationship between what is known about language learning (in all its complexity) and what classroom instruction ought to look like has resulted in the design of a range of instructional programs for students who primarily speak a language other than English. Considering how an individual acquires a second language, how sociocultural contexts shape the actual practices in any given school or classroom space, and the ways in which multiple aspects of identity are influenced by social factors, language instructional programs may or may not be meeting the best interest and needs of students. Some program models cater to the developmental language needs of the child, while others are implemented in response to misconceptions or constraints placed on educational stakeholders.
Language Instructional Programs

**Overview of programs.** In an effort to meet the needs of new ELLs, various program models have been designed and used—including *English as a second language (ESL)*, *maintenance bilingual education or developmental bilingual education (DBE)*, *transitional bilingual education (TBE)*, *two-way immersion (TWI)*, or *dual language*, and *structured English immersion (SEI)*, or *English-only* (Cummins, 1996; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004a, 2004b; Ovando, 2003; Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 1999). ESL programs often involve “pull-out,” where students receive specific periods of instruction aimed at the development of English language skills, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and communication rather than on academic subjects, or through integration within the content areas (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005; Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 1999). Maintenance bilingual education, or developmental bilingual education, initially teaches new English language learners in their native language, and as the years continue, English is gradually added. These programs aim to build students’ knowledge of the academic content areas while being “culturally responsive” and honoring students’ home language and culture (Cummins, 2000; Ovando, Collier & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004). Structured English immersion or English-only programs begin instruction in all academic content areas in English, and little or no native language support is provided for the students (Hofstetter, 2004; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004). Transitional bilingual programs provide some instruction in language skills and on academic subjects in the native language. As the students progress in English, the program model reduces L1 instruction, aiming to quickly move the ELLs into general education classes (Hofstetter 2004; Ochoa
Two-way immersion (TWI) or dual language programs ideally place equal numbers of NESs and ELLs in the same classroom and academically teach in both languages to encourage all children to become bilingual and biliterate (Freeman & Freeman, 2006; Lopez & Tashakkori, 2004a, 2004b; Soltero, 2004). The most prevalent programs in United States’ public schools are structured English immersion or English-only, transitional bilingual education, and dual language/two-way immersion.

**Structured English immersion/English-only programs.** SEI as an instructional program for students learning English is becoming more widespread in U.S. public schools. It is a legislative mandate in California, Massachusetts, Arizona and several other states. The components of an SEI classroom are the use of English for up to 90% of the time, taught at an appropriate level for the students (Baker, 1998; Clark, 2009; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991). Instructional modifications are made to ensure that the ELLs’ academic needs and levels are met (Clark, 2009). This is often done through “sheltered English,” where the instructional delivery is slowed or watered down so the students will understand what they are learning (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Valdés, 2001). Additionally, students may be grouped according to their English proficiency level (Clark, 2009). Students receive English instruction across the content areas, with little to no L1 support. If a student is in need of native language instruction, this is limited to one year, as advocates claim that this time frame is substantial enough to aid in the transition (Baker, 1998; Cummins, 2000). However, according to many scholars (Adams & Jones, 2006; Gándara, 2000; Mitchell, 2005; Mora, 2002; Salinas, 2006) one year of native language support is highly unrealistic, as ELLs need
significantly more L1 instruction to ease their transition to English-only settings. Although some instructional content may be taught at a slower pace, students are expected to learn the English content fairly rapidly, and are assessed through English standardized and classroom measures. Advocates of English-only instruction reveal a logical connection between the learning of English and immersion in an academic setting (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). Some research uncovers an increase in reading performance of those students learning English as a second language in English immersion programs (August, Carlo, Proctor, & Snow, 2005; Black, 2005; Lenters, 2004). However, many of these studies emphasized the growth in English phonics and decoding, not as much comprehension and inferential thinking (August, Carlo, Proctor, & Snow, 2005). Further, the academic gains may be visible in earlier grades, but quickly decline once grade level instruction increases in cognitive difficulty, creating an achievement disparity between ELLs and non-ELLs (Collier, 1995; Hofstetter, 2004). Literacy progress and direct instruction that emphasizes rote decoding, simple comprehension, with an absence of deeper critical thinking, will not allow this sub group to academically exceed beyond their counterparts.

**Transitional bilingual education programs.** Transitional bilingual programs offer instruction in both the native language and English in earlier grades, with English instruction increasing each year. The use of native language instruction builds an academic foundation while students are acquiring English, working towards the goal of functioning at grade level in a mainstream English medium classroom (Hofstetter, 2004; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004). Transitional bilingual education can be early or late-exit meaning that in the former, ELLs are mainstreamed into a general
education classroom once reaching English proficiency through an examination, after one to three years of bilingual instruction, and in the latter program, the use of native language is continued for a couple years beyond achievement of English proficiency for the purpose of continuing to develop the students’ L1 literacy skills. However, both programs share the goal of moving students into an English general education classroom (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004). Early-exit transitional bilingual programs are commonly used in the United States as the use of native language instruction is temporarily used to support students in increasing their rate of English acquisition.

**Two-way immersion/dual language programs.** Two-way immersion or dual language programs teach both students who are learning English as an additional language and students who speak English as their first language in both English and the ELLs’ L1, with the goal of developing bilingualism within the two fairly equal groups of students. In the United States, it is common for dual language programs to include native English and Spanish-speaking students in one classroom (Howard & Christian, 2002). Thus, beyond teaching ELLs and non-ELLs literacy skills in English and Spanish, they are exposed to a powerful, multicultural curriculum. Students learn the value and importance of speaking two languages, and language minority students may feel empowered as a result. Students learn the same grade level academic content taught in other schools in two languages rather than one. Students in TWI programs have shown comparable, if not higher, academic achievement (Howard & Christian, 2002; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; Serrano & Howard, 2007). Some dual language programs follow the 90-10 model, with 90% minority language reading instruction and 10% English reading
instruction starting in earlier grades, with increased amounts of English instruction beginning in second or third grade (Freeman & Freeman, 2006; Howard & Christian, 2002; Serrano & Howard, 2007; Wiese, 2004). By fourth grade it is usually an even split between instruction in both languages. Other TWI programs follow the 50-50 model, with 50% English and Spanish instruction starting in kindergarten.

Characteristics of an ideal TWI program include integrating schooling with English speaking and target language students learning academic content through both languages, administration, teachers, parents and students sharing a common vision that speaking two languages is empowering and beneficial to society, an equal status of both languages, a strong home and community connection to the school, and ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators on language acquisition and literacy (Collier, 1995; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Howard & Christian, 2002; Serrano & Howard, 2007; Wiese, 2004). Additionally, because a dual language program develops bilingualism, and thoroughly teaches literacy skills in two languages, students experience cognitive advantages as a result.

**Goals of programs.** All programs can be connected to theories of language learning as well as categorized in terms of additive or subtractive goals, where additive programs aim to develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism in ELL students, while subtractive programs aim to develop language fluency and literacy in English, moving away from the native language (Cummins, 1996, 2000; Soltero, 2004). Additive programs place the native language at a high, honored status, while subtractive programs view the first language as a barrier and of low status and importance. Maintenance or developmental bilingual programs, and dual language or TWI programs are additive.
They support ELLs’ L1 while developing English language academic skills and viewing bilingualism as an asset; a significant goal of bilingual programs is to develop English academic proficiency, and become bilingual and biliterate. On the other hand, ESL, TBE, and SEI are subtractive programs, as students are taught for the purpose of moving into an English general education classroom, without maintenance of the native language, thus viewing knowledge of their L1 as a deficit; the goal of these programs is for students to become English monolingual and monoliterate (Cummins, 1996, 2000; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004).

While it seems that additive language programs aim to best meet the cognitive and linguistic needs of students learning English, school districts’ program choice and use is influenced by societal and political factors far beyond what is best for the students. Quite a few issues have impacted instructional modifications and programs, and several researchers revealed grounds on why English-only instruction is socially and academically injurious for students who primarily speak a language other than English. Considering what we know about the serious impact educators and administrators’ decisions and actions have on students’ post-schooling opportunities, teachers’ expectations, perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of language learning and learners must be examined. The focus will now shift from instructional programs to the role the teacher plays in instructing English language learners. These ideologies and behaviors have remarkable influence on students’ learning and identity formation. Although teachers may feel that they have no control over the school or district’s policies and must do what is expected, the implications of their perceptions and behaviors significantly correlate to the students as individuals and learners.
The Teacher’s Expectations and Knowledge

Perceptions and expectations of language learning and the learner.

Negative perceptions and low expectations of ELLs. Teachers’ practices and attitudes regarding ELLs have a strong influence on students’ identities, their perceptions of school, and subsequently how they perform and engage (or disengage) as learners and people. Although teachers may have the best intentions for their students, the impact of decisions, often unknown or unseen, may be academically and emotionally harmful to students. Studies (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008; Gersten, 1999; Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2007, 2008) revealed that educators often felt frustrated by teaching ELLs, felt unequipped to appropriately teach them, received insufficient professional development, viewed students’ L1 as a deficit to classroom instruction, believed that they should not be viewed or taught differently from native English-speakers (NES), or felt that they were a nuisance to teach. Reeves (2009) found similar trends in her interviews of teachers; students learning English were viewed the same as NESs, where few instructional modifications were believed to be necessary.

Yet a great deal of teacher frustration has been observed when ELL achievement does not match that of the non-ELLs. Mrs. Taylor, a teacher in Yoon’s (2008) study, perceived her role as that of teaching the ELLs English. Her teacher-centric instruction permitted little student interaction, differentiation, or individualized attention. She believed that students’ first language explained their insufficient progress in her class. Also the students, when in Mrs. Taylor’s class, seemed “invisible” to the researcher. Several other teachers across studies felt that their role as teacher was to develop ELLs’ English language needs, and often felt perturbed when students were not learning English
fast enough (Gersten, 1999; Olsen, 1997; Reeves, 2009; Yoon, 2007, 2008). It was a common trend, as in Olsen’s (1997) study, for teachers to overlook social or emotional needs in their thoughts on what was most vital in teaching new English learners; teachers instead felt that an equal education did not involve instructional modifications that varied from instruction for NESs. This deficit view—that the students’ knowledge of an alternate primary language and developing English skills is a disadvantage to their learning and their role in the classroom—contributes to poor student identity (Gersten, 1999; Olsen, 1997; Yoon, 2008).

In addition to teachers’ outlooks of new English language learners, expectations also matter. Low expectations of students were apparent in Gersten’s (1999) study involving teachers of ELLs. Teachers focused literacy instruction on language, basic comprehension, grammar and spelling. Activities were simple for the students. Educators in Gersten’s study felt that students could not achieve more because of challenging home and community circumstances. Michael, one of the teacher participants, felt that his ELLs were unmotivated, which contributed to low performance on school activities. This perception that students cannot meet high academic expectations, are only capable of basic skills, are passive learners, and are not able to develop higher order cognitive skills, sets ELLs up for failure, basic or below average achievement, and is not conducive to the development of complex language and conceptual skills (Gersten, 1999; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003).

Positive perceptions and high expectations of ELLs. Despite the abundance of research revealing teachers’ negative perceptions and low expectations of students learning English as an additional language, some teachers of ELLs have expressed high
hopes for student performance and regard for the students’ first language. Yoon (2007), in her study of classroom teachers’ understanding of ELL students, focused on the practices and perceptions of one teacher, Mrs. Young. Mrs. Young embraced her students’ knowledge of their native language, welcomed their experiences and prior knowledge into the classroom, and acknowledged that their learning needs were different from the NESs. She did not connect any negative feelings or low expectations to this awareness. She also facilitated a caring and supportive learning environment, where her students learning English were not isolated and had active roles in the classroom. Mrs. Young differentiated her instruction in attempt to meet all students’ needs and levels. Because she did not speak the first language of her ELLs, she reached out for support when necessary. In comparison to other observations in the same study, Yoon found it obvious that the learners of English had an active role in this classroom and felt included in the community. Mrs. Young positioned her ELLs in one of empowerment and “resourcefulness” rather than “powerlessness” (Yoon, 2007).

In Valenzuela’s (1999) study, Ms. Martinez, a Spanish language teacher, instructed to build upon and enhance the Spanish language knowledge that some students already had. Instead of teaching basic skills, Ms. Martinez believed in educating through an additive approach, connecting to the students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and had high expectations for their performance. Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, this teacher was in the minority in her beliefs and expectations of the students as several other teachers felt the opposite.

Ladson-Billings (1994) in her work with teachers also found connections between high expectations for students and increased student performance. Two teachers, Ms.
Lewis and Ms. Devereaux, pushed their students, regardless of what previous teachers said about particular students, to reach their utmost potential. Students who were previously failing, or were grade levels behind, caught up to classmates, and showed signs of increased social and emotional confidence and self-esteem at school.

**Knowledge of effective pedagogy, language learning and the learner.**

Research reveals a connection between the teachers’ knowledge and student academic and social success (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Nieto, 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2008). It is essential for teachers to develop several aspects of knowledge. If teachers have a strong academic and verbal ability, knowledge of subject matter and of teaching and learning, students’ school performance increases (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005). Specifically, knowledge of learners is vital for success of teachers and students, where teachers should understand how children develop and learn, and acquire and use first and second languages (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Nieto, 2002). Teachers should also be familiar with the curriculum, the skills they want their students to learn, and the social purposes of schooling, and how these all influence their instruction. Lastly, Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LePage (2005) emphasized the importance of understanding how to teach diverse learners, and “optimize learning for all students” (p. 35). Nieto (2002) went deeper to include awareness of immigration history, language policies and practices (past and present), knowledge of the history and experiences of people who live in the neighborhood (historically and presently), the ability to develop collaborative relationships with colleagues, and the ability to effectively communicate with parents/caretakers.
Multicultural and culturally relevant teaching. Teachers must understand what is meant by multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) or culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), and how they take such understandings into consideration when designing curriculum and making instructional decisions. Multicultural education is an expansive concept, a reform movement, a process, and incorporates the idea that all students regardless of racial and ethnic groups, socioeconomic statuses, linguistic backgrounds, disabilities, sexual orientation etc., have equal opportunities to receive a high quality education (Banks & Banks, 2005; Janks, 2010; Nieto, 2002). Such pedagogy creates decreased feelings of alienation in a classroom and/or school setting. A multicultural approach to teaching exceeds superficial content coverage of “Heroes and Holidays,” where teachers expose students to different holidays, foods, ethnic clothing, or prominent African American or Latino figures during Black History or Latino Heritage Month (Banks and Banks, 2005; Nieto, 2002). Multicultural education must include non-dominant historical perspectives and integrate non-dominant groups into the curriculum. Culturally relevant pedagogy uses student culture to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture, while maintaining their culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). The negative effects are brought about, for example, by the absence or slanting of one’s history, culture, or background in the curriculum. In Ladson-Billings’ (1994) research, teachers with knowledge of culturally relevant teaching made strong connections between what they were teaching and their students’ backgrounds and experiences, and consequently proved to be more effective educators as measured through students’ academic performance and social improvements. It is vital to connect instruction to
children’s prior knowledge and experiences in order for students to be empowered and in control of their learning (Cummins et al., 2005; DaSilva-Iddings & Katz, 2007; Sehr, 1997). Home language, for example, is an important aspect of a student’s prior knowledge, thus instruction must embrace rather than ignore cultural background. Educators should “explicitly teach in a way that fosters transfer of concepts and skills from the student’s home language to English” (Cavazos-Rehg & DeLucia-Waack, 2009; Cummins et al., 2005, p. 38; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ortiz & Sumaryono, 2004; Yoon, 2007).

Educators must also have the knowledge of “building bridges” between themselves and students in order to gain access to academic language (Anderson, 2004). Students with linguistically diverse backgrounds should be viewed as assets to classrooms, and teachers must reach out and find ways to bridge the gap. The bridge must “begin with the child” (p. 93). Building upon prior knowledge and experiences is imperative and Anderson (2004) viewed conversation with students as the “tool” for language learning and “developing communicative competence with academic language in our classrooms” (p. 100). Anderson further differentiated between eliciting and extending, and mere questioning. A teacher’s efforts at eliciting and extending language from the students is vital to academic success, as the student feels valued in the learning environment.

Teacher ideology. Beyond multiculturalism and culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers should possess “political and ideological clarity” (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001). Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) and Rodríguez (2008b) interviewed both in and pre-service teachers in their studies, and connected teacher ideology to student
performance. Teacher ideology has significant impact on resisting or enabling the social inequality in the classroom and school. Teachers should have knowledge and awareness of sociopolitical and economic factors that influence students’ lives, and must realize that they have the ability to be transformative in their teaching (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001; Rodriguez, 2008b). Despite the thoughts and behaviors distributed as norms by the dominant society, teachers should teach to help their students reach academic and social success. Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) interviewed educators of Latino high school students regarding their ideologies of teaching. The four educators shared the ideological beliefs of “rejection of meritocratic explanations of the existing social order, assimilationist orientation and deficit views of Latino students, and romanticized views of White middle-class culture” (p. 54). Teachers and administrators felt that their Latino students reached high levels of academic and social success because of the beliefs that they and their students could be “change agents,” by “equalizing the unequal playing field” (p. 63).

**Essential functions and content that educators need to know.** With the number of students who are learning English as an additional language constantly rising, it becomes increasingly imperative that educators are knowledgeable and informed on how to teach sub-groups effectively. Wong Fillmore and Snow (2002) identified five functions that educators must have when teaching students who speak a primary language other than English. Although many of their findings overlap with what teachers of all students need to know, it is imperative to focus on functions specific to ELLs. Teachers must be effective “communicators” to their students. If they understand the linguistics, language acquisition, and the origin of common mistakes that may be made when
students are learning English, they will foster effective communication and interaction between themselves and the students. Teachers must also be “educators” and know how to support the development of the L2 in students (Nieto, 2002; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). With an understanding of language development, appropriate materials and activities can be selected to meet the learning needs of ELLs. The third function is “teacher as evaluator.” While teachers do need to assess students on their knowledge and academic growth, it is important to avoid biases and judgments when doing so. While flexible homogenous small grouping is effective, it is important to not “globally track” students based on perceived academic ability or language level (Nieto, 2002; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Tracking impacts student motivation, identity, and achievement. The fourth function is “teacher as educated human being,” where teachers should have knowledge and understandings of language structure and the complexity of the English language, as well as language instructional best practices for acquisition and policies concerning language learners (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). The fifth function is “teacher as agent of socialization.” As previously discussed, social factors influence student identity. Teachers play a significant role in the lives of students and play the role as a “cultural mediator” between students and the school (Nieto, 2002; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Respect for students’ home language and culture, and familiarity with language acquisition, offer ELLs a learning experience that provides them with the tools necessary to succeed in school and beyond. Nieto (2002) developed this essential knowledge to include fluency in at least one non-English language, and the familiarity of the “conceptual and theoretical basis for bilingual education” (p. 209).
Beyond the crucial functions of a teacher, Wong Fillmore and Snow (2002) identified the indispensable content knowledge for teachers of ELLs. Classroom teachers must know the basics and details of oral language. They also need to know the key components of spoken language as phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, and discourses. Teachers should understand regularities and irregularities of the English language to support student learning (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Vocabulary instruction should be taught in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the students. Also, academic English must be understood and portrayed in a way that provides students the understanding of the importance of learning and speaking academic English, while continuing to value the students’ L1 (Delpit, 2006; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Teachers need to have solid understanding and pedagogical knowledge of written language. Because written English surpasses the difficulty and complexity of oral English, it is important to provide support and appropriate instructional strategies around the development of written language (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2002).

Expanding on teacher knowledge of content and curriculum, Nieto (1977, 2002) emphasized the importance of teachers as curricular decision makers as instruction must meet the linguistically diverse learning needs of ELLs. Teachers should be trained to meet these needs of ELLs, focus beyond language instruction, and address the student’s emotional, cultural and social well being (Jacobson, 2006; Nieto, 1977, 2002; Nieto & Bode, 2008). Fewer mandates regarding correct methodologies should be placed on teachers, and instead they should have freedom to make curricular decisions that aim to meet the needs of ELLs and relate to their environment and experiences (Jacobson, 2006; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). Family and community can also be a part of the
learning environment and curriculum, allowing the students’ home identities to be present in the classroom to make them feel important and empowered, rather than marginalized, in the school environment (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008; DaSilva-Iddings & Katz, 2007). Chen, Kyle, and McIntyre’s (2008) and DaSilva-Iddings and Katz’s (2007) research found that connection between the home, community and school identities are imperative to both teacher and student success. Students in their studies performed well academically, had increased school involvement, and had positive attitudes towards schooling as a result of teachers’ deliberate efforts to connect to students’ homes and communities.

Wong Fillmore and Snow (2002) concluded with listing appropriate and necessary teacher education coursework that prepares educators and provides the vital knowledge needed to succeed in teaching ELLs. Through this preparation, students will receive an education that is more equitable to their NES peers, and they will be able to achieve more with less risk of negatively shaped identities and school outlooks.

Finally, Nieto (1977, 2002) and Rodríguez (2008b) also emphasized the importance of teachers having a “critical consciousness,” where they develop an awareness that problems and social realities do not exist in isolation, but rather originate from the actions and decisions of other people. It is necessary to acknowledge the societal issues, inequities, and marginalization that many minority groups experience, be realistic rather than idealistic, and bring these issues into the curriculum as learning points. The absence of the aforementioned aspects of a school environment and curriculum, will likely contribute to teacher difficulty in instructing and facilitating the learning of ELLs to reach their utmost potential as learners.
Pulling it all Together: How Work to Date Informs this Research

Throughout the reviewed literature, several empirical and theoretical studies examined the experiences of students learning English as an additional language. However, while research on language acquisition focused on elementary age students, as early language development in schooling was discussed, most of the research on identity and educational achievement looked at high school, adolescent age students. There is a void in literature regarding intermediate elementary student identities, experiences and attitudes towards schooling. While adolescence is a critical time period, the years that lead up to middle school are just as impressionable, as perceptions of the self and society are greatly affected by these earlier years. Therefore, the upcoming chapters explore this time in a student’s life. This study examines the relationship between language of instruction and teacher understandings, perceptions, and practices on fourth grade children, examining how they impact the multiple facets of identity. The research also considers the impact language of instruction has on student identity and perceptions of schooling. In the next section, the methods of data collection and analysis are explained, providing specifics on what contributed to findings and implications.
Chapter Three

Exploring Life in Schools: A Plan for Understanding

Data collection and analysis in this study focused on life and experiences of students and teachers in two classrooms. Given my interest in the ways curriculum was enacted, the ways in which teaching and learning transpired in real time, and how such activity impacted the lives of teachers and learners, a qualitative design best suited my research interests.

As an ethnographic researcher I collected data in a place where people were “engaging in natural behavior,” and shared and participated in the experiences of my subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 3). My data was “thick,” as my focus on an aspect of my participants’ “culture” provided me with “series of interpretations of life, of common-sense understandings, that were complex and difficult to separate from each other” (p. 28).

This study was also phenomenological as I focused on how people described experiences and what these meant to them (Schram, 2006, p. 98). Phenomenologists emphasize “subjective aspects of people’s behavior,” and “gain entry into the conceptual world of their subjects in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 23). Thus a phenomenological approach facilitates “gaining entry” into the student participants’ lives, listening to perceptions of teachers and students who are new to English regarding learning environments and experiences, their language practices, and their identities.

Three phases enabled the investigation and exploration of the following research questions:
1. What are the understandings of schooling, language practices, and language learning in one transitional bilingual and one dual language context?

2. In what ways do language instructional practices impact the identity(ies) of fourth grade Spanish-speaking English language learners?

**Data Collection Phases and Tasks**

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the three phases of this study and what transpired in each phase. Subsequent sections further illustrate how this study was carried out attending to site and participant selection, data collection practices and how I made sense of the collected data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1 Data Collection Phases</th>
<th>Phase One: Participant Selection</th>
<th>Phase Two: Getting to Know the Teaching and Learning Context</th>
<th>Phase Three: Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Met with school administration/ staff to determine participating classroom teacher(s)</td>
<td>• Observed students during instruction, work time, and social time (lunch and free time/recess if applicable), interactions with peers, roles in classroom • Focused on behavior, personality, perceived confidence and language practices</td>
<td>• Conducted 2 Focus Group discussions/Group Interviews with students from each classroom-Used Student Interview Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Selected 1-4th grade class from each school</td>
<td>Observed students’ and teachers’ behaviors and interactions</td>
<td>• Interviewed students individually-face to face (Once for 20-40 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observed 4th grade classrooms in both schools • Focused on students and teachers</td>
<td>Observed teachers-focusing on instruction and interactions with students</td>
<td>• Interviewed teachers-face to face (2 times for 40 minutes)-Used Teacher Interview Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data:</td>
<td>• Observation field notes</td>
<td>Built rapport/trust by engaging in informal interactions with teachers and students</td>
<td>Data: • Field notes • Transcripts • Student and Teacher Artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data: • Observation field notes • Audio recordings of classroom interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase one: Site/participant selection.** This study took place in the 2009-10 academic-year in a large urban context in the Midwest region of the United States. More
specifically, data collection occurred in two urban public elementary schools, referred to by the pseudonyms of Park Elementary and Field Elementary. During that academic year, there were 2081 students enrolled at Park, where 99.3% were low-income students. Forty-one percent were Spanish-speaking English language learners. The largest proportion of students at Park was Latino (97.9%). The school’s vision statement noted that they set high expectations for students and worked to challenge students to be successful academically and socially. Web-based information stated Park’s mission was accomplished through a demanding, hands-on curriculum and academic and extracurricular activities that met the needs and interests of all students, while also developing critical thinking skills. Additionally, the vision included an emphasis on multiculturalism and the use of a transitional bilingual education (TBE) program to meet the needs of English language learners.

I chose Park Elementary School because of my previous employment. The relationship I have with the administration and current teachers provided access to carry out this research. During my tenure at Park, I remember the principal at the time, a monolingual English-speaking white male, frowned upon teachers’ use of Spanish instruction, even to students who were new to the United States. My own teaching experiences along with situations I observed unfold at Park School, further motivated me to select this school as a site. I wanted to explore how the decision to remove native language instruction from the early elementary curriculum impacted students. The principal has since retired, and a new principal, a bilingual Puerto Rican woman, has assumed the role. With the new school leader, I was curious to see if the school culture had changed, and instruction had returned to the principles of a TBE model.
Through conversation with school staff and administrators, one fourth grade teacher and classroom was selected for data collection. The classroom was an English-only setting, where the ELLs had been in TBE classrooms in preceding grades. Along with the classroom teacher, six ELL students were participants, ranging in academic and language level, and selection was based on the teacher’s recommendation and parental consent. The classroom teacher, referred to as Mrs. Palma, as all names in this study are pseudonyms, was a native English speaker, who learned Spanish as a second language. During this first data collection phase I observed the classroom, students, and teacher, focusing on the learning environment as a whole, to get a feel of the site. I captured the data through field notes.

Field Elementary was also an urban public elementary school, with 372 students in the 2009-10 school year—98.4% were low income and 57.5% were Spanish-speaking ELLs with Latinos making up 97.8% of the student population. The school’s mission, posted on the Internet, highlighted an emphasis on development of students’ academic and social skills and the use of a dual language instructional program in English and Spanish. The web-based information also stated the school aimed to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in all students by the conclusion of eighth grade. Additionally, the mission stated that Field teachers used conflict resolution to solve problems and address disagreements amongst students, and also stressed community involvement and partnerships with several local organizations.

Field was a selected site because of existent partnerships. While I did not know anybody and was not familiar with the school community, my doctoral advisor collaborated with Field in previous school years. Because it was a dual language school...
with a mission to develop bilingualism in all students, it seemed like an appropriate setting, as the mission differed from that of Park. With the exception of population size, the demographics of both schools were similar. Although I intended to select one teacher through conversation with and recommendation from school staff and administrators, I ultimately selected two different teachers. The same fourth grade class split their day between two teachers, spending the morning with a teacher, Ms. Natalie Alonso, who provided Spanish instruction and the afternoon with a teacher, Ms. Cynthia Keller, who provided English instruction. Eight students learning English as a second language were participants, with selection based on advice from the classroom teacher and parental consent. The students also ranged in academic and linguistic levels.

The fourth grade participants at Field were part of a dual language program where mathematics and social studies instruction occurred in Spanish, and language arts and science in English. Most of the participants have attended Field and been exposed to a dual language education since kindergarten or first grade. I spent time observing during this early phase getting a feel of the classroom environments as a whole, talking to students and teachers during lunch and recess, and I captured data through field notes.

I secured permission to conduct this research both from the University Institutional Review Board and the school district. Because my participants in both sites were children, I sought parental consent through an informative cover letter, (see Appendix A) and signed forms granting my permission to interview and observe the children. The forms were written in both English and Spanish (see Appendix B). I also had the teacher participants sign a consent form for my observations and interviews (see Appendix C).
Phases two and three: Getting to know the context and collecting data. I used various methods of data collection. This was to ensure validity of my findings through triangulation, as well as to provide me with a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena that I studied (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Carspecken, 1996). Observations were one method of data collection in this study. I, as Creswell (2003) explains, took “field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site,” and recorded the activities in a “semi-structured” way (p. 188). Audio recordings of classroom instruction contributed to the data collected during observations, as the “meaning and context” were captured and supplemented field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 111). Although audio recordings were extremely helpful when walking away from the site, as it reinforced what was observed, it did not capture the situation to the same degree as field notes, as these included “sights, smells, impressions, and extra remarks” that recordings preclude (p. 111). I aimed to write field notes that were unbiased with the use of low-inference vocabulary (Carspecken, 1996). I recorded verbatim language and dialogue, and tried not to use my opinion to describe behavior, tone, and body language. My field notes were, as Bogdan and Biklen (2003) say, “descriptive” and “reflective” (p. 113). Descriptive field notes included dialogue, depictions of activities, behaviors, and physical details of the space and people.

In the earlier days of data collection, my field notes were actually more biased than I intended. Each day after leaving the site, I read over my observation notes and discovered that I was somewhat judgmental and evaluative at moments. Instead of including what I did see, I frequently took note of instructional patterns or occurrences that I did not see. For example, I wrote down: “The teacher did not use any Spanish in
her instruction,” or “The teacher did not model the lesson, or use enough visuals to ensure student comprehension.” I attributed this obstacle to current and past occupations as a supervisor and coach, as I have observed novice and pre-service teachers for the past four years. Because the positions involved evaluating and then helping teachers improve and change practice, extensive training and experience resulted in observations with a focus on classroom and learning environment, curricular materials, and methods of instruction. Professional notes included missing aspects in the classroom or patterns that were not evident in a teacher’s instructional delivery. Making this shift to an ethnographic participant observer, where it was most effective to take descriptive notes on what I actually observed rather than what was not seen, was difficult, but with deliberate efforts, I was able to re-focus my observations. Within a few days, my field notes were richer with significantly less bias capturing what was happening in such a way that if there had been another researcher observing, it was likely that our notes would align.

I observed all students during classroom instruction, small group work with peers and teachers, and during lunch and recess, and did so at different times of the day for situational and contextual variety (Carspecken, 1996). I focused my observations of the new English learners on classroom behavior and conduct, personality in the classroom, participation in activities and lessons, language practices, language use, and perceived classroom confidence. I also noted the students’ interactions with the teacher during large and small group instruction, and the interactions with peers in the classroom, lunchroom, and playground. Observations of the teachers focused on their whole and small group instruction, instructional practices and methods of delivery, curricular
materials and lesson content, questions posed, language use, and interactions with their students during work and social time. These observation foci addressed my research questions involving the impact of instructional practices on ELL identities.

Interviews and focus groups were also methods of data collection. I conducted both semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with the student participants, and as Brenner (2006), Creswell (2003) and Carspecken (1996) deem effective, asked semi-structured, open-ended questions that were intended to extract perspectives, outlooks and opinions from the participants. I began with big questions “working down to details,” using an interview protocol to help guide my questioning and our conversations. During focus group discussions/interviews, I alternated Spanish and English in my questioning and conversations. Each focus group session was 20-30 minutes, and I conducted two sessions per school. During one-on-one interviews, I gave the student participants the option of English or Spanish for both my questioning and their responses. I interviewed each student, using an interview protocol (see Appendix D), once for approximately 30-40 minutes. I met with students in a quiet, non-distracting space, the library at Park and a small office adjacent to the fourth grade classrooms at Field. Interview questions elicited responses on how language of instruction in the classroom influenced the children’s thoughts on their identity—who they were as individuals. Also the questions focused on the participants' opinions and attitudes about their learning environment and school experiences, and their language practices in and out of school. Students were asked how they perceived their teacher(s) thoughts/opinions on language and schooling. Further, conversations with the students gave me some idea of their confidence, both within and outside the classroom. Because my findings were
contingent on the responses of children, I was thoughtful in my questioning. I asked students questions about their lives and experiences that allowed them to respond by telling a story. Such questions were: “If I were to listen or watch you on the playground, in the lunchroom, or classroom, what would I see and/or hear?” “What would your teacher say about you? How would she describe you?” “What would a videotape of you in your classroom/home look like?”

I also interviewed the selected teacher participants at both schools twice for 40-minutes each session. Questions and conversations, also guided by an interview protocol (see Appendix E), helped unpack teachers’ beliefs and understandings of teaching and language learning. I asked about the schools’ versus the teachers’ beliefs on language learning, and how the teacher was aware of what the school beliefs were. Interviews revealed teachers’ thoughts on instructional approaches and language use. I also asked why certain practices were apparent during instructional observations, and what instructional approaches the teachers believed their language learners needed to succeed. I gained understanding of what teacher participants believed their role was in their students’ language learning, and to the language learners themselves. Further, my interviews with teachers involved reflection on the students, both ELLs and non-ELLs. We discussed the teacher perceptions of the student participants as learners and as individuals (personality, behavior, etc.). I compared these responses to how the students perceived themselves as learners and individuals, and looked for correlation between teacher and student thinking: Are students’ responses influenced by teacher expectations?
During the interview process, I kept in mind Carspecken’s (1996) essentials to interviewing. I used “bland encouragements,” such as nodding, smiling, and words like “right” or “interesting.” I also used “low-inference paraphrasing” to keep the interviewees on topic and the conversation focused. “Nonleading leads” also helped me understand more details on a subject or situation and indicated my interest and attention through phrases such as “tell me more,” or “why do you feel that way.” “Active listening” of course was practiced in order to ensure trust and openness between the participants and myself. Overall, interviews and focus group discussions addressed my research questions regarding educator and student outlooks and understandings of schooling and language learning/practices, as well as gaining understanding of student identities.

Furthermore, some artifact collection and analysis was a method of data collection. Artifacts included teacher lessons, lesson materials (i.e. handouts, graphic organizers), and student work. As Creswell describes, this enabled me to “obtain the language and words of participants” (2003, p. 187). For example, rather than using the student work to get a feel of the academic level of the students, I used the work as a conversation piece with the participants. I asked students how they perceived their work performance, which helped me address my research question regarding identity and perceptions on schooling. Students shared their graded assessments and class work with me. This helped initiate conversation about teacher expectations of student performance, and students’ self-perceptions of their academic performance. Further, using student work as a discussion starter helped me gain understanding of their confidence, peer
communication style (if they chose to work with peers or ask for help), and academic language practices.

Teacher lesson plans and blank student activities were also used during interviews. This helped me understand lesson implementation, and we discussed thoughts behind lesson design, particularly what the purposes were of created lessons. Looking at student work and assignment tasks helped me gain clarity on what skills the teachers intended to teach their students and what areas of focus were of utmost importance.

**Construction of Primary Records**

Through my observations and interviews (both in the focus group and individual interviews), I constructed primary records. Such records were audio recordings, field notes taken during observations, transcripts of interviews, and student and teacher artifacts (student work, activities, or lesson plans). The information collected during observations was, as Carspecken (1996) describes, “monological” because I was “speaking alone when writing the primary record,” and described my participants from the “perspective of an uninvolved observer” (p. 42). I produced “thick” records of classroom interactions, activities, and occurrences in my field notes. I captured student and teacher speech, dialogue, movements, and body language, as well as took note of time, context, and situations (Carspecken, 1996). In my notes, I made occasional “observer comments,” “OC,” when I found it necessary to explain my thinking or perspective, or add detail to an occurrence.

**Transcribing.** I transcribed the audio-recorded teacher/student interviews and focus groups. These records were dialogical, as the data represented my interactions and
conversations with students and teachers. Data is generated *with* people rather than solely *about* them (Carspecken, 1996). Transcriptions of Spanish interviews proved to be quite challenging. While I engaged in conversation with students and understood everything, I had difficulty comprehending student responses verbatim. Because I am not academically literate in Spanish, I had to transcribe to my best ability and paraphrase when absolutely necessary. While this was an obstacle, I did not consider it a limitation to the study, as comprehension and meaning were unaffected, and relationships between the students and researcher did not suffer.

**Rereading of primary records.** Once constructing primary records, I read and reread them and began to take note of initial trends in the data. I looked for connections and/or links between what I was observing in the classroom and what a student revealed in an interview or focus group. I also noted disconnections between the same, or amongst teacher observation and interview responses. Once reviewing the records and noting trends, I created themes in the data. There were numerous specific themes at first, but through coding, these were collapsed into overarching themes in the data. With multiple readings, I identified critical moments in the data, which helped me consolidate and reorganize codes into larger themes.

**Coding Data**

After noting trends and themes in the primary records, I created a coding scheme accordingly. I began with low-level coding, noting more objective trends in the records (Carspecken, 1996). I then developed high-level codes, which were “dependent on greater amounts of abstraction” (p. 148). The coding scheme connected to my research questions, focusing on the correlation between language instructional practices and ELL
identity and participant perceptions. Six language and schooling umbrella codes with subcategories emerged from student observations, focus groups and interviews, and six codes around teaching and language learning were evident in teacher observations and interviews. The codes were categorized in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 as the following:

### Table 3.2 Student Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling</th>
<th>Language Learning and Practices</th>
<th>Language Perceptions</th>
<th>Language Preferences</th>
<th>Perceptions of Teachers</th>
<th>Cultural Models and Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Climate/Culture</td>
<td>Reflections on Language Learning</td>
<td>Feelings/Opinions</td>
<td>Preference of speaking English</td>
<td>Teacher expectations of students</td>
<td>Social pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>Reflections on Language Learning</td>
<td>Perceptions of own language practices/use</td>
<td>Preference of speaking Spanish</td>
<td>Teachers’ language practices and beliefs</td>
<td>Pop culture/media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Reflections, Opinions</td>
<td>Physical Space or Time/Comfort where/when</td>
<td>Perceptions of others’ language practices/use</td>
<td>No differential preference</td>
<td>How teachers make students feel</td>
<td>“American Dream”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Schooling</td>
<td>Consequences of Language Loss</td>
<td>Perceptions of being bilingual and monolingual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Familial Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of a “good” student</td>
<td>Results of being Bilingual/Biliterate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being “Mexican”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.3 Teacher Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does student thinking reflect teacher thinking?</th>
<th>Expectations for Students</th>
<th>Language Use/Practices</th>
<th>Language Perceptions</th>
<th>Relationship to and Understanding of School’s mission</th>
<th>Provided Space for Students to Speak L1 and/or L2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

After creating tables with the collapsed codes, I entered appropriate transcript and field note excerpts into each coding category, first by individual participant and then all participants. This action enabled me to get a big picture of what thinking and perceptions were dominant, what overlapped between school sites, and where distinctions could be made. Further, this process allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of what and how sociocultural experiences’ influenced students’ and teachers’ beliefs and understandings.
Making Further Sense of the Data

**Discourse analysis.** Discourse analysis involves asking questions about how language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language (Gee, 2005, p. 110). Questions were asked about building tasks, which are, “building significance, activities, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and significance for sign systems and knowledge” (p. 111). This means of analysis was used on selected interactive sequences identified within the data so that implicit meanings were articulated and coded.

Specifics of discourse analysis that were relevant to my data were Gee’s notion of cultural, or “Discourse models” and situational meanings (2005). People ascribe to various “Discourse models” depending on the context, and hold these theories without acknowledgement to make sense of the world or context they are in (Gee, 2005). Because the two schools served as a “Discourse model,” where particular norms and practices were developed and enabled, and people understood that there were particular ways to conduct themselves, student and teacher beliefs and understandings were accordingly influenced. I took note of this during data analysis, looking for phrases or actions that supported the school’s “Discourse model.”

Further, discourse analysis involves noticing response tone, time, and language. When transcribing, such aspects were noted. For example, a student or teacher answering a question in a particular tone of voice, responding with some or no hesitation, or speaking in English when the question was posed in Spanish, were all aspects of data that were documented.
Identity claims. After placing data into categorical codes, I began to write narratives of teacher and student participants, hoping that identity claims would emerge. Narratives included information about each participant based on interview and focus group conversations, and observational data. When each narrative was complete, they were reread and identity claims became increasingly evident. Fifteen identity claims were articulated across 14 students and three teachers.

Students and teachers were then plotted into these salient identity categories and were sorted by school. I looked for patterns based on these codes, which areas had more representation from Park versus Field and which were balanced. Concentrating on which students were sorted into particular identity categories, I selected four students per school as focal cases that represented different identity codes. Student narratives were then expanded, inserting transcript excerpts to exemplify points.

School portraits. After narratives of participants were complete, I shifted focus to the sites, where I wrote detailed school portraits of both Park and Field. These were inspired by rich observational findings, while occasionally supported by transcript data or casual and interview conversations with teachers or students. School portraits helped develop deep understanding of the culture and belief systems in place at each site, and helped myself as the researcher make relevant connections between the “places” and “people” data components.

Validity

In a qualitative study, it is essential to ensure validity in findings. Creswell (2003) identified eight strategies to increase validity. These are triangulation, member-checking, using rich, thick descriptions in findings, clarifying bias, presenting negative
or discrepant information, spending prolonged time in the field, using peer debriefing, and using an external auditor to review the project. By collecting data through different sources, observations, focus groups, interviews, and some document analysis, I increased validity through triangulation. Individual student interviews involved member-checking because I asked students if what they said and what I interpreted from focus group discussions were accurate. Also, I did identity and clarify my bias in note taking and analysis influenced by my professional life. Prolonged time in the field also applied to this study, as I visited each school 1-2 days per week over 10 weeks. While I originally planned to spend another month or two in the schools, logistical barriers prevented this from happening. And lastly, I used peer debriefing, where throughout my research collection and analysis process I conferred with my advisor as a means of further validating.

Limitations of Data Collection and Analysis

As with all qualitative studies, several limitations are worth considering which may have impacted findings in this ethnographic study. First, timing of data collection may have influenced classroom and instructional observations. Because approval to enter both sites was not granted until April 2010, data collection occurred in the last 10 weeks of the school year. Further, state standardized testing had also concluded in previous weeks. Some claim it is common to be less rigid in routines and instruction toward the end of the school year. Furthermore, it is possible teachers in both sites were not as detail oriented in their planning and instructional delivery as in the beginning of the year. For example, when a teacher states that she uses Spanish instruction as support when necessary, it is a possibility that Spanish instruction did occur at the beginning of the
school year, and felt that the end of the school year was a time when students did not need the L1 support. Similar things might be said about the use of manipulatives and hands-on activities that accompanied mathematics curricular programs. Maybe teachers did use the program materials earlier in the school year, and by the end of the year spent less time planning for math instruction and did not set up supplemental materials. Observed instruction could have also been influenced by my presence in the classroom. Perhaps teacher participants called on particular students or asked certain questions because there was an observer in their classrooms. It is human nature to act differently in the presence of a guest, especially considering I am an educator, when the guest is taking note of the occurrences in the classroom.

Another limitation involved time spent in data collection. Ten weeks, visiting each school 1-2 times per week, was only a snapshot into the lives and experiences of students and teachers at both sites. Increased time spent throughout an entire school year may have provided a more accurate picture of students’ identities and perceptions of schooling. It also would have been interesting to see the students evolve during the school year, as well as provided more thorough ethnographic data. This time constraint also may have influenced student responses. Perhaps students still viewed me as a teacher figure, thus skewing their responses to what they thought I would have wanted to hear, and were not 100% honest with revealing their feelings and emotions. Had I spent more time in the field, students may have developed more trust and recognized that I was not a teacher, and they could be free and open with their responses.

As a novice researcher, interview techniques and strategies may also have influenced my results. Interviewing children, making them feel comfortable, and
engaging in a meaningful dialogue, takes time and practice to develop necessary skills. While sources were consulted on effective interviewing strategies prior to study commencement, this is something that will continue to evolve with increased experience.

Teacher participant selection at Field School was another research constraint. Due to grade level placements, there was no other option but to observe two different teachers’ instruction, as there was not one teacher who provided dual language instruction in fourth or fifth grades. While it was a good research opportunity to follow the same group of students from one teacher to another, students spending the full school day in one classroom with one bilingual teacher may have strengthened this study. It would have been noteworthy to observe students and their interactions with one teacher as instruction varied between English and Spanish.

The next chapters detail findings of the study linked with the sociocultural experiences of teachers and students at each site and the impact on identity formation and perceptions of self, success, and learning.
Chapter Four:

Contexts, Beliefs, and Practices in Two Language Instructional Settings

This study sought to better understand the research questions: 1) What are the understandings of schooling, language practices, and language learning in one transitional bilingual and one dual language context? 2) In what ways do language instructional practices impact the identity(ies) of fourth grade Spanish-speaking English language learners? While research questions focus on schooling, language practices, language learning and identity, learning from and about the context was essential to building understandings of participants. Drawing from analyses of field notes and interview transcripts, the following portraits describe findings associated with schooling, language practices, and learning by looking holistically at the overall daily life in classrooms in which students and teachers spent their days. Observation field notes offered one window into the lives of participants whereas interview conversations revealed somewhat different stories as teachers and students shared their perspectives on teaching and learning in both schools. This chapter includes a descriptive portrait of Park School, focusing on life in one specific classroom, followed by parallel information for Field School. After data from each school is synthesized and discussed, a comparison of the two learning communities unpacks similarities and differences in practices, and participant understandings and beliefs.

Park Elementary School

I don’t want to speak Spanish. I only want to speak English and I only want my family to know English too… I don’t like Spanish. It’s because you like have to, like it’s weird talking Spanish and I only know more English than Spanish... I like English more and we go to school and we learn more English than Spanish.

-Marisol (A fourth grader at Park School)
Park Elementary School is a large, Midwestern urban public K-8 school, home to approximately 2081 students. Throughout my years of teaching at Park in 2003-2006, the administration cited the use of a transitional bilingual education (TBE) program. During this time, there were shifts towards English-only instruction or Sheltered English instruction, with some native language support when necessary (through Spanish-speaking teacher’s aides) in kindergarten.

As expected, my return to Park was nothing but hospitable. Because I left on good terms with the former principal (he had retired that same year) the new principal, Ms. Jimenez, welcomed my presence in her school. Entering the site in my role as researcher, early observations and conversations with teachers confirmed that mostly English instruction remained in kindergarten through second grades. Native language materials were available to the teachers, but they were to use an English-only reading and math curriculum. All teachers were asked to have Spanish materials available in the classrooms so that when the district evaluated the school during routine walk-through assessments, such materials would be present. According to Park teachers, they did not receive any professional development on the use of native language instruction, and were not required to note when and where native language instruction would occur in their weekly lesson plans. They went on to talk about native language instruction in time increments noting that at least 50 minutes of native language instruction was required and must be reflected on their time distribution sheets, a district required tool that illustrated how instructional minutes were used in the school day. They also noted that they must keep Spanish curricular materials in classrooms. Despite these requirements, the
administration did not expect teachers to implement Spanish instruction or use the materials.

Walking into the school, the building was very clean and the hallway walls were adorned with colorful bulletin boards with student work, motivational posters (such as “Read to Achieve”), and teacher/staff biographies. All student work posted was in English, as well as the posters. There was also a large rug hung on the wall with the English and Spanish Alphabets around the border. The language heard in the hallways by teachers and students was English. The students present were quiet, walking in straight lines divided by gender, while those occasional students who were talking or playing in the hallway were asked to stop by their teachers.

The climate in the office was welcoming. The clerk appeared approachable and helpful to those who asked her questions. She spoke both English and Spanish. Ms. Jimenez was very welcoming to me, as she said “good morning,” and asked if I needed anything, which could be because I was a former teacher of the school. She seemed excited that I would be present in the school conducting research, and offered any assistance along the way. Teachers and other school personnel in the hallways consistently greeted me and were pleasant natured.

When entering the fourth grade hallway, I anticipated similar warm greetings and reception. I looked forward to my time as a participant observer in Mrs. Palma’s classroom and hoped to get a detailed portrait of student and teacher life in this particular learning environment.

Mrs. Palma’s fourth grade classroom: Room 302. Luisa Palma, called Mrs. Palma at Park School, was in her ninth year of teaching. During her tenure she taught
second, third, and fourth grades. Most of her experience included teaching the
monolingual classes, with three years teaching transitional bilingual third grade using an
English-only curriculum. Luisa received an ESL endorsement in 2006. She was in her
eyear thirty, Puerto Rican by descent, and through conversations revealed that she spoke
proficient Spanish as her second language.

Table 4.1 Park Teacher Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Year at School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luisa Palma</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>English</td>
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</table>

While there were 32 students in room 302, this study focuses on four focal
students (see Table 4.2). As the selection process was described in the methods, the
students were a balanced representation of the group in terms of language proficiency
level, academic performance, and personalities. The four students were Edgar, Carlos,
Marisol, and Jorge. While general findings in this chapter include an overview of
students as a whole, Chapter Five will detail findings associated with focal students.

Table 4.2 Park Student Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Year at School</th>
<th>Year in ESL Program</th>
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<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1 (new to district)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The classroom environment. Mrs. Palma’s classroom was full of learning tools
and materials. Areas for different subjects and bins of materials and manipulatives were
clearly labeled. Small shelves for collected homework and class work were apparent,
along with “cubbies” labeled with student names for student possessions. The 32
students in her class sat in table clusters of five or six, and were grouped by
heterogeneous academic abilities. The environment was very colorful, with numerous
teacher and student created learning posters in English on the walls. Some examples of teacher or student made tools were: The daily and weekly schedules; classroom rules and consequences; days of the week (in English and Spanish); learning centers pocket chart, where student names are on cards and are moved daily from center to center; numerous math charts with information on multiplication facts, polygons, lines, place value, measurement, and other mathematic concepts; a student birthday chart; fact v. opinion T-chart; nouns; similes and other poetry elements; solar system poster; and a poster listing the scientific method. The classroom walls also had a “classroom helpers chart” posted, where students were assigned classroom responsibilities on a weekly basis.

There also were a few purchased English posters on manners, pre-fixes and suffixes, getting along, the U.S. Presidents, the seasons, and a few motivational posters on reading and doing homework. One poster in particular caught my eye: “Stay on Track and Train for the Test,” where there was a picture of a train on railroad tracks.

The classroom did have a library, organized by genre. Some genres in the library were Social Studies, Science, Friendship, Chapter Books, Fairly Tales, and Spanish Books. The basket labeled “Spanish Books” had two to three books that included Spanish texts.

Additionally, some aspects of the room were labeled in both English and Spanish. The directions (east, west, north, south) were written in both languages, along with different areas of the room, furniture, and other objects. When inquiring about the bilingual labeling, Mrs. Palma informed me that this was an administrative mandate and all rooms with ELLs had to be labeled in Spanish for walk-through purposes.
Outside of room 302 was a bulletin board with student work. There were 16 posted student essays about their favorite part of fourth grade. The essays had very few grammatical errors, and I noticed only 2 of the 11 ELLs in the class had their work represented. When I asked Mrs. Palma why only half were visible, she told me that she posted the best work because that is what the administration preferred. When I asked what she meant by the “best” work, she said “the work with least number of spelling or grammatical mistakes.”

Also posted outside the classroom was the instructional time distribution sheet. Monday through Friday between 1 and 1:55pm, listed “Math-Spanish Native Language Instruction.” Mrs. Palma explained that math instruction was not provided in the students’ native language, “but the administration wanted us to include that on our time distribution sheet.” Inside the room was a bulletin board with math worksheets completed by the students. The worksheet had multiplication story problems written in Spanish. When asked about mathematical resources, she explained that the administration gave her one grade level student math workbook in Spanish, and she was told to do a lesson in Spanish before an external walk-through. According to Mrs. Palma, the entire staff was instructed to implement a lesson in Spanish and post the evidence in the classroom. The worksheets did not have dates on them, and she explained that this was so the bulletin board would be ready for the walk-through.

Routines and procedures were clearly integrated in the classroom environment, as the schedule was very consistent, students were familiar with teacher expectations, such as lining up, passing out papers and lunch tickets, walking in the hallway, going to the washroom, and cleaning up between lessons. During my observations, Mrs. Palma rarely
reminded a student of a routine or procedure. The peer culture seemed positive in that I did not observe any negative interactions or teasing between students. From my observations, students were polite to one another (using terms such as “please” or “thank you”) and seemed respectful of each other’s spaces and properties. However, there was little allotted social time in the day, so it was difficult to hear a substantial amount of casual social conversation. Students ate lunch in the classroom, and were tightly monitored by an aide who did not allow much talking. “You only have 10 minutes to eat so no talking until you’re finished eating,” I overheard her say each day I was there. Students at Park did not have recess. Mrs. Palma tried to give her students free time in the classroom on Fridays, but this was not consistent, as many Fridays were spent catching up on incomplete work from the week, or passing back tests and student work.

Interactions and relationships between Mrs. Palma and her students appeared positive. She smiled often and seemed approachable to her students, although I did not observe many students come to their teacher with any questions or concerns. Affirmative words and phrases, such as “good job,” “great,” “yes,” “right,” or “nice job,” were said when students provided correct answers, and students spoke to their teacher with respect. Students and Mrs. Palma spoke in a calm manner, or sounded excited or eager when appropriate; participants did not raise their voices exhibiting anger or frustration during data collection. Mrs. Palma consistently initiated eye contact with students reciprocating less consistently. Teacher and student interactions were limited to instruction or curricular conversations. Very few social or casual conversations were observed amongst the two participant groups.
The curriculum and materials. Mrs. Palma followed the school-wide mandate and used purchased and pre-packaged/published curricular programs across most content areas: Reading (Scott Foresman Reading Street), Grammar, Spelling, Mathematics (Math Expressions), and Science (Scott Foresman). Social studies and writing curricula provided the teacher with more flexibility and teacher decision-making. Slight modifications and adaptations to packaged curriculum occasionally occurred. For example, the math program did not include manipulatives, but I discovered through conversation that Mrs. Palma supplemented the program with hands-on materials, such as base-10 blocks, clocks, and counting objects to help with multiplication and division concepts. She told me that the teachers in the fourth grade tried to align their curriculum and moved around in the basal reading series to integrate the content areas. For example, with a unit in the reading series about space and the solar system, with both fiction and non-fiction selections, the teachers taught about the solar system in science, used math word problems that involved space concepts when appropriate, assigned journal writing prompts about space (“I would or would not like to live on the moon”), read a chapter book to the class that involved space (Magic Tree House # 8: Midnight on the Moon), and took students on related field trips (a trip to the Planetarium).

Most lessons and activities observed involved the student use of workbooks that were included with each curricular program, and used in a typical sequence. For example, during math instruction, students almost always used their math workbooks with problems that corresponded to the daily lesson. Most reading extension activities observed (on days where students were not reading the story from the basal text) involved the student workbooks. Mrs. Palma did have learning centers at least 3-4 days a week,
where students were involved in an activity that did not always use the required workbooks. For example, in the “Math Center” students worked on an extension activity that involved the math concept learned at the time (e.g., 3-digit by 3-digit multiplication problems), or in the “Spelling Center,” students wrote a story using their spelling words, while in the “Computer Center” students did activities on a website that corresponded to something they were learning in a particular subject. In the “Library Center,” which students visited at least once per week, they exchanged books and independently read self-selected texts for 20-30 minutes. While students were involved in their center activities, Mrs. Palma pulled one to two leveled reading groups, where the students read a leveled book included in the Scott Foresman Reading Street series.

**Instruction.** Instruction in Room 302 was teacher-directed, with the use of visuals and modeling. Mrs. Palma frequently used visuals and demonstration when teaching across content areas. She referred to existing charts with learning topics outlined, used the overhead projector, and the whiteboard. For example with a math lesson, she modeled solving a few problems on her own on the overhead or whiteboard. The modeling included a demonstration of how to solve the math problems, using numbers and English mathematic vocabulary words. She then had one or two students, usually among the same few, solve some problems on their own in front of the class on the overhead or whiteboard, explaining their steps. Next, she assigned a workbook page from the Math Expressions activity book with math problems like those modeled and solved together as a class. Similar interactional patterns occurred when observing spelling and grammar lessons, where she went over some examples on the overhead or whiteboard, and the students completed a corresponding page in their workbooks. When
reviewing the answers, Mrs. Palma sometimes asked students to come up to overhead to fill in correct answers and sometimes had them say the answer from their seats. I also observed use of the LCD projector and laptop a few times, during both science and social studies instruction. She used the computer and projector to display websites on a certain content area (such as the Solar System). She also showed educational videos, and displayed pictures of certain curricular concepts (such as pictures of the planets, or the Illinois state flag and flower when studying states). In her interview, Mrs. Palma discussed the use of visuals and felt that it strengthened her teaching by providing examples to help students.

LP: I use lots [sic] of pictures, visuals, whenever I can, or are necessary. Lots [sic] of examples, um, uh, using computers, using the overhead projector, so they can see it, examples, or whatever.

In addition to visuals for teacher use, Mrs. Palma had the students create a poster for their state projects. Each student was assigned a state in the United States to gather information on and write an informational report. Along with the report, the students were asked to create a poster with images that provided information on the state (e.g., state flower, flag, bird, etc.). Students then presented their posters to the class upon completion.

Beyond visuals, Mrs. Palma frequently had students work in small groups or with partners across all content areas. For example during language arts, after reading the basal story together as a class, students worked with a partner to complete comprehension questions or a page in their reading workbooks. Sometimes the students chose a partner, and other times they worked with an assigned partner (either someone from their table or a previously assigned “reading buddy”). While students worked with partners or small
group members, Mrs. Palma walked around to ensure students were “on-task” and doing appropriate work. As already mentioned, she facilitated learning centers a few times per week, where students worked in small groups while Mrs. Palma led a reading group. Students were permitted to quietly ask peers questions, but activities called for independent completion.

The actual assignments given and tasks assigned by Mrs. Palma often times assessed recall, text-based concepts, or required memorization. For example, answers to reading comprehension questions could be found directly in the text (e.g., “Where did Neil and Buzz land the Eagle?”). Throughout my observations, I witnessed one higher order-thinking question regarding the story read in the basal (e.g., “Why do you think Michael Collins never wants to go back to the moon?”). During grammar lessons, students completed tasks such as adding in quotation marks in the correct places, capitalizing letters when appropriate, or circling prepositional phrases. During social studies time, students were learning the states and capitals in the United States, and were given weekly quizzes on sections of the U.S. where students were provided the state and called to write the corresponding capital. They also were given a blank map of a particular area and had to fill in the map with the appropriate state. In math, while sometimes solving story problems, assignments were separated by mathematical concept so all story problems elicited the same skill. For example, when reviewing multi-digit multiplication, students solved either computation multiplication problems, or if it was in a story problem format, they all used the same process to solve. On one particular day, Mrs. Palma wrote a few division problems on the board, and asked the students to create story problems that represented the equation: “Use these equations to create story
problems: \(48 \div 6\) and \(90 \div 10\).” Students seemed confused, as each student that Mrs. Palma called on stumbled on their words and exhibited difficulty forming corresponding story problems. After calling on three students who did not come up with a story problem, Mrs. Palma made up problems herself, wrote them on the board, and did not ask students to think of story problems afterwards: “Okay, just do these. Park School has 48 boxes of books. Ms. Jimenez wants to divide up the boxes of books among the 6 fourth grade classrooms. How many boxes of books will each classroom get?”

Writing instruction had more flexibility in terms of instructional pattern when compared to other subject areas, as there was no given curriculum to follow. Throughout my time in room 302, students were writing creative stories about anything they chose, making sure they were including quotes with correct usage of quotation marks. Upon completion, Mrs. Palma edited the stories, sometimes with the student beside her and others times on her own, and made spelling and grammatical corrections. Students then re-wrote their final drafts, and their teacher sent in the stories to be “published” and bound with a hard cover.

Mrs. Palma acknowledged that there was a difference in teaching ELLs and Native English Speakers (NES) and anticipated that her ELLs would be the first to be confused about something. Because of this, she said she frequently monitored their progress during whole and small group instruction. When talking about her ELLs’ needs, she said:

LP: And I think it is not so much different from if you were teaching native English-speakers except that you have to remember that they [ELLs] don’t understand. You can’t take for granted that they understand some of the things that other Native English learners would understand.
Throughout my observations, Mrs. Palma called on her students somewhat evenly. She asked questions from different students during each lesson, even if their hands were not raised. It seemed that she called on ELLs and non-ELLs proportionately, often alternating between the two student sub-groups. She frequently moved onto another student if one student did not get the answer correctly, giving the student little time to respond with a correct answer. The following pattern was prevalent: The teacher asked a question, a student responded, the teacher told the student if s/he was correct or not, and then another question was asked. Instruction was teacher-directed/teacher-centered. It was difficult for me to tell during my observation time if this is how Mrs. Palma believed teaching to be, or if it was a result of the school culture, norms, and/or expectations. Additionally, during whole or small group instruction, students did not ask questions. Mrs. Palma asked students several times throughout the day “Are there any questions?,” but during my time in room 302, not one student asked a question.

When discussing her instructional approach/practices, Mrs. Palma shared her orientation toward language learning and instruction indicating that her (and her administrators’) goal was for students to learn English. In terms of her administration’s stance she explained,

LP: I believe they [the school administrators] push English. I think they want you to (pauses)... I think they want you to I guess sort of try to see if they can push them into English as soon as possible, kind of...
AR: Right, right.
LP: Their belief is that the sooner you get them speaking and writing in English, the better they’re going to do in the future.
AR: Okay, so how are you made aware of these beliefs? What makes you think that?
LP: The curriculum, you know... Our curriculum supports making sure we uh (pauses), we do meet their needs, so we do have our ESL time and things like that, so umm I think they support that. And I mean basically everything, most of our texts being in English...
Mrs. Palma felt that she had to expose her ELLs to English vocabulary and if she did not do this, they would never hear English. If her ELLs were not exposed to English vocabulary at school, they would not learn the words through any other means. In talking about the importance of vocabulary, she said

LP: [With ELLs] I think you have to be very animated, umm, lots [sic] of examples, umm lots [sic] of guided, guidance through things, especially if it’s the first time [they have heard or seen a word]. I do like to use, I don’t like to dummy things down. I don’t think you should dummy it down, use smaller words all the time. You gotta [sic] use vocabulary. That’s the big thing is vocabulary. If they don’t hear it from you, they’re never going to hear it. So you might as well give them that, you know, those words, those vocabulary words, use those words in the classroom with them.

This vocabulary instruction, using dramatization or realia to ensure meaningful understandings of words, was not observed. And while the teacher did provide some wait time for student response and some modeling and guided practice, no explicit ESL instruction occurred during data collection.

She felt that “the more exposure to English they [her ELL students] get, the better,” and assumed that many “students go home to an all Spanish environment.” In terms of the use of other practices to support language learning, Luisa’s talk during interviews contradicted observational findings. She stated that she provided students several opportunities to speak socially with a partner or small group in order to practice and gain comfort in speaking English. When talking about the students involved in my study, especially Edgar and Marisol, Luisa thought they lacked prior knowledge in English, which held them back academically in her class. Specifically when discussing Edgar’s language progress she said,

LP: He came in not knowing a lot of English, but he’s improved like, dramatically. He’s improved a lot [in English]. Um, he wants to, he actually tries hard, probably a little more than Marisol I think. He tries a lot more,
puts more effort into his work. Um, but again, his prior knowledge in English, his English skills are just not there to help him out when he needs it. Like especially with writing or stuff like that, or comprehension.

While creating space for practicing English and building background knowledge was portrayed as important to Mrs. Palma, this was not evident during observations.

Mrs. Palma used English for all observed instruction. When learning vocabulary from a basal story, she did use the Spanish cognate “luna” to help students understand what “lunar” meant.

LP: See the word “lunar?” What Spanish word does that look like?
Several Students: Luna?
LP: Exactly. “Luna” means moon, right? So the word “lunar” has to do with the moon.

This was the only incident where I observed use of the Spanish language during whole group, small group, or one-on-one instruction by the teacher and students. Mrs. Palma also corrected English responses two times during observations. When providing a word that filled in a blank of a spelling sentence, Marisol, a student, said the word “steak,” pronouncing it as “steek.” Mrs. Palma corrected her and said “it’s steak” (emphasizing the long a sound). Another day, a student, Edgar, said the word “Venus” with a short e sound. The teacher again corrected his pronunciation and said, “No Edgar, it is “Veenus” (emphasizing the long e sound).

During non-instructional time, I heard Mrs. Palma speak English. One incident in particular reflected this as a student came up to Mrs. Palma and told her that she could not find her snack that was in her backpack. She expressed difficulty or confusion explaining to Mrs. Palma what the problem was. Mrs. Palma responded, “I’m not sure what you’re talking about, I don’t know what happened to your snack.” Mrs. Palma then turned to me and said, “Her English is so bad, I don’t understand her half the time.”
In contrast to my observations, Mrs. Palma stated during her interview that she used native language during instruction when necessary if a student seemed confused, and students could speak Spanish if they were unsure of what to say in English. However, she admitted to feeling slightly uncomfortable speaking Spanish to both her students and their parents, because she was not confident about her Spanish language skills. She believed that her students’ Spanish language dominance should not be an obstacle to learning, and felt that she supported them through this process of English development. When talking about this aspect she said,

LP: I think you got to give them a sense of potential. A sense that they are just as good as anybody else, kind of thing. That the language shouldn’t bring them down, or hold them back.

AR: Right. How do you deliver that message to them?

LP: Umm, by never making them feel bad about their Spanish or whatever. And the way they speak [English] or anything like that. Um, (long pause) I mean just try to give them the same kind of confidence that I would for any other kid, I guess.

**The students in Room 302.** The students in Mrs. Palma’s classroom, for the most part, seemed like they were enjoying themselves. Not all were open to talking to me, but some asked me questions regarding who I was, or why I was in their classroom. Others told me personal stories about their home or school lives, or showed me their work when I walked by them or sat at their table. Some, more than others, were eager to tell me jokes, or share their interests with me. For example, a group of students, who were not amongst my participants, frequently talked to me about the “pop” music they liked, (e.g., Justin Bieber, Jason Derulo, The Black Eyed Peas) or the television shows they watched (e.g., *iCarly, Phineas and Ferb*).

Students appeared eager to please Mrs. Palma as they followed the established routines and procedures, and helped keep each other on task to gain positive attention.
from their teacher. Through interviews and informal conversations with students, I learned that desirable student behavior included getting good grades, listening to the teacher, and answering questions when called on. Students knew that raising hands to speak was a rule, and that consequences were implemented when they spoke out of turn. While not all students raised their hands to participate during instruction, most looked at the teacher, following the expectations of the lesson. Students were motivated by the class reward system (getting points for a class party), or completion of class projects. Edgar and Jorge in particular seemed actively engaged in classroom activity. They signed up for extra activities, frequently raised hands to express interest in participation, and almost always looked at the teacher or classmates when speaking. They also completed lessons and activities without resistance. Through informal and interview conversations with students, I discovered that most liked to study for spelling tests or the recall based “states and capitals” quizzes. Occasionally, when students were not looking at the teacher, or were playing with their pencils or something on their desks, Mrs. Palma would say their names, asking them to pay attention. I frequently observed two students, Marisol and Carlos, looking elsewhere when the teacher was speaking or other students were answering questions, and they often times looked down, or played with items on their desks. Mrs. Palma sometimes called them out for not looking at her, and other times did not notice their perceived inattentiveness.

Students especially got excited when they had the opportunity to collaborate with peers, as they would frequently say “yes!” with enthusiasm when told by their teacher that they could work with a partner anywhere in the room. During these situations, students exhibited “appropriate” behavior, where they remained in the same areas, did not
get up to ask questions, and attempted completion of the requested task or assignment. When walking around during such moments, I noticed several groups or pairs, while filling in their worksheet or notebook paper, frequently had answers that were incorrect. The pattern I typically observed was one student completing the work and answering the questions/solving problems, while the other student(s) copied that student’s work.

Throughout my observations, I did not hear students use Spanish during instructional time or when working with partners/in small groups on assignments. Occasionally I would hear a Spanish phrase or two used during transitions (e.g., ¿Vamos a sentarnos aquí?) or a few words mixed with English words during social conversations at lunch. English was the dominant language of choice during the days I observed. Student interviews supported this observation, as all participants answered my questions in English, indicated that school was a place for speaking English, and said they rarely spoke Spanish when in the building or classroom. When discussing language practices in school Jorge, for example, said the following:

JV: I feel comfortable [when speaking English].
AR: How come?
JV: Because um, that’s the language most of the people here speak at Park and that’s the way of speaking now.
AR: Why do you think that’s the language most people here at Park speak?
JV: Um, because I don’t, I haven’t heard of a teacher here that is bilingual.

Students felt they could only use English in their classroom responses, even if they did not know or remember the correct words. Carlos, for example, explained his thinking on this topic during our interview conversation. He felt that language should be spoken structurally and grammatically correct, and if he was unsure of a word or pronunciation, he preferred not to say anything at all. Asking questions to Mrs. Palma or classmates was also not something that Carlos was comfortable doing, as he said the following:
AR: Is there ever a time when you're thinking and you want to answer a question and you don't know the word in English? Or do you always know the words in English?
CP: Sometimes I don't know the words in English.
AR: So what do you do when that happens?
CP: I don't raise my hand.
AR: Then what do you do? Do you ask how to say it? Do you ask a friend first? Or what do you do?
CP: I don't say it.
AR: You just say the word?
CP: No, I don't say it.
AR: Oh, you won't raise your hand because you don't know the word, right?
CP: Yeah.
AR: Okay, what you can do is you can usually ask someone at your table right? ‘I’m thinking of this word. I know it’s this in Spanish, but do you know what it is in English?’ I’m sure they would tell you, right?
CP: No, I don't know.
AR: Who do you think at the table would know the most Spanish and English?
CP: I don’t know.

English was seen in student journals or in creative writing assignments. Students selected English texts from the library during independent reading or centers. Although there were some Spanish language resources in the room and a few library books in Spanish, I observed students selecting and reading only English books. During independent reading, students read English chapter or picture books, several choosing such “popular” titles as *The Diary of the Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007) or *Harry Potter* (Rowling, 2000). This preference of English literature is supported by students’ desire to speak the language that teachers speak. All student participants indicated this in interviews, as they wanted to or felt that they had to speak only English in school because that is what Mrs. Palma and other teachers spoke. Also, there was no purpose in speaking or writing in Spanish because everything they were tested on was in English.

Student talk in Room 302 focused on the assigned tasks and usually occurred when students worked in small groups. Conversation focused on finding the correct
answers throughout all content areas. Trivial amount of social conversation existed, or talk around student lives, interests, and experiences. As previously noted, Mrs. Palma’s interview statements challenged observations, as she expressed that giving students time to speak socially was imperative for English development, and she incorporated this time in the classroom schedule.

**Summary of understandings and beliefs at Park School.** In efforts to make sense of data in light of research questions, the following codes emerged as useful ways to understand the beliefs and understandings that seemed to permeate school life at Park. Table 4.3 provides an overview of findings and subsequent sections present descriptions of trends within the codes of schooling, language practices, and language learning followed by narrative that unpacks further details of each code.

**Schooling.** Examining data from both students and teachers, similar understandings of the purpose of schooling and what constitutes appropriate behaviors and actions were quite consistent. All participants felt that the main purpose of schooling was to get work done, do it “right” (i.e. without conventional errors) and learn English. Students and Mrs. Palma placed importance on being nice to one another, treating others with respect, helping out with work when necessary, and using “kind” words. It was apparent that students defined successful as answering Mrs. Palma’s questions correctly, listening to the teacher, and receiving good grades. It was also known that raising your hand equals participation, but a successful student should not participate too much. Students knew that speaking out of turn was not the norm, and they would be disciplined as a result. The Initiation, student Response, teacher Evaluation (IRE) discourse model was prevalent throughout instructional observations, as the teacher asked questions,
Table 4.3 Understandings and Beliefs at Park School

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<th>Schooling</th>
<th>Language Practices</th>
<th>Language Learning</th>
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<td>School was a place for speaking English; no place for Spanish at school</td>
<td>School was not a place for speaking Spanish at school because it was not the “language of the school.”</td>
<td>Learning English in school leads to success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-centered discourse structure</td>
<td>Students only spoke Spanish at home, with families.</td>
<td>No desire to learn Spanish in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of school was to learn English</td>
<td>School goal was to teach English as soon as possible</td>
<td>Teacher’s goal was to target English language use and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is equated to getting good grades and schoolwork completion</td>
<td>Some students were forgetting Spanish because most of their day involved speaking English.</td>
<td>Schoolwork involved basic, recall questions and answers, and relied heavily on the use of prescribed curricular programs and materials, such as workbooks, across most content areas during both individual and partner/group work time. Group and partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

called on a student to respond, evaluated him/her by saying “right, or incorrect,” and then asked another question repeating the process. Students also did not feel comfortable participating if they were not 100% sure of the correct answer, and would rather sit quietly and unnoticed.

Interviews and observations consistently positioned the teacher, Mrs. Palma, as the authority figure and as the one in control of all classroom decisions. Students felt that they had to respect teachers, which meant they could not disagree with anything they said or did. The fourth graders interviewed said they liked coming to school, despite the lack of emotion attached to these claims. They made comments that alluded to fear or disappointment felt by themselves, parents or teachers, if they did not act a certain way, and wanted to please Mrs. Palma and other Park teachers and administrators.

Schoolwork involved basic, recall questions and answers, and relied heavily on the use of prescribed curricular programs and materials, such as workbooks, across most content areas during both individual and partner/group work time. Group and partner
collaboration focused on basal story comprehension questions and workbook activities. Students seemed excited and motivated by rote, memory-based activities, such as studying the United States’ states and capitals, or spelling tests.

Data revealed that practices at Park did not align with the definition of a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Program. While the district claimed the school was ascribing to such a program, using Spanish curricular materials in grades K-2, with some Spanish support in 3rd grade and above, this was not evident in observations and interviews. According to teachers at Park, administrators took such actions to alter the language of the curriculum because of pressure to increase state standardized test scores. The test was in all English and ELL students’ results were recently factored into the school’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Consequently this influenced administrators’ decisions. English instruction, with Spanish support used only when absolutely necessary, starting as early as kindergarten would help improve the school’s test scores, and maintains acceptable AYP. Teachers at Park were aware of this plan, as reasoning behind decisions were made transparent at faculty meetings, and had consequently put the required English curricular programs into practice. Through these meetings, educators were also coached on how to make their school appear as though they were indeed implementing a TBE program, through the use of bilingual labels, a bulletin board of student work in Spanish, and presence of some Spanish materials and resources in the classrooms. Instead of utilizing ELLs’ native language to develop English skills, Park teachers taught with English materials through required language arts, mathematics, and science curricular programs. Mrs. Palma specifically, relied heavily on curricular materials, as this was evident during observations. Instruction was teacher driven,
focused on superficial content coverage, and elicited basic recall information from students.

**Language practices.** Student participants spoke mostly English at school, both in academic and social contexts. They felt that because Mrs. Palma and most other teachers in the building spoke English, they should as well. Also, because instructional tools (workbooks, books, etc.) and tests were in English, students believed they should speak and understand the language well in order to succeed in school. They felt that Spanish had no place in their academic world, and did not connect their L1 to societal opportunities and success.

Most students spoke English with friends, in and out of school, but spoke Spanish with family at home. Student participants spoke English to help parents and other family members when in an English-dominant setting. During interviews and casual conversations, Carlos and Marisol alluded to feelings of shame or embarrassment when speaking Spanish; they wished that their families spoke English so they would not have to speak Spanish. Additionally, student participants felt that speaking Spanish would hold them back academically and they would get better jobs in the future if they spoke English well. All students preferred speaking English above Spanish, and felt stronger in English versus Spanish proficiency.

Mrs. Palma instructed in English, and said that she used Spanish if a student had trouble understanding a concept. She spoke English in social contexts. She also said that her Spanish-speaking skills were not fully developed, and thus did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish at school.


*Language learning.* Student participants and Mrs. Palma stated explicitly and implicitly that school was a place for learning English. All participants attributed academic success to English language knowledge and proficiency. According to students, Mrs. Palma used Spanish language instruction one time in the fall of 2009, when teaching a math lesson. Other than this isolated incident, all instruction attempted to develop their English, and it was not necessary to learn in Spanish.

Students (except for Carlos) felt that they learned English from their teachers at Park, and felt smarter as a result. Carlos said that he was born knowing English, so understood it upon starting school at Park in kindergarten. Students felt it was an important expectation to learn English because they were living in the United States. Marisol, Carlos, and Edgar admitted to Spanish language loss, as since so much of their day involved speaking and learning English, they consequently were forgetting Spanish.

Rich, thick data was collected at Park, which contributed to and enhanced my understandings of life in Mrs. Palma’s fourth grade classroom. Significant trends emerged regarding schooling, language practices and language learning. Park was a place for compliance and aimed to reproduce existing norms of schooling. Teachers and administrators deemed assimilation as a means to success, and students shared a common understanding of this objective. School was a space for speaking and learning English, without the use of the native language to bridge any gaps. Such findings strengthen the notion that sociocultural experiences in the learning environment impact students’ thinking and perceptions. Because I also was a participant observer at Field School, similar data collection processes occurred. The following reveals a portrait of Field, focusing on two teachers and their fourth grade students. Analysis of observation field
notes, focus groups and interviews helped conceptualize Field’s school discourse model, making sense of participants’ understandings and beliefs.

Field Elementary School

*We need to continue practicing our Spanish because that’s our language, the first language, the language of our parents, our language.*  
- David (A fourth grader at Field School)

Field Elementary School, home to approximately 400 students is a public K-8 school in a large Midwestern urban district. Whenever I came into the school, teachers in the hallways smiled and said “hello.” A mix of Spanish and English was heard from both teachers and students. Students in the hallways were separated by gender and walked in loosely structured lines. While walking in the hallway, students frequently turned to others to talk quietly. The walls outside the classrooms and office were adorned with posters or student work. Most student work posted on the first floor (the kindergarten through second grade rooms) was either in Spanish, or both English and Spanish. Several posters and signs, either teacher or student made, hung in the hallway, saying such phrases as “Ser Bilingüe es Nuestra Llave para el Futuro,” “Dual Language is Cool,” or “Biliteracy is our Future.” Several published bilingual poems were posted on the walls. Information sheets on upcoming events were posted, written in both Spanish and English. All informational and decorative/inspirational text that was on the walls or bulletin boards were in both languages. On both floors, Mexican flags were hung, along with a map of Mexico color-coded by different states in the country.

The climate in the office was welcoming. The clerks in the office were friendly and seemed approachable to others. Both were speaking Spanish upon my first visit. They introduced themselves using their first names. One clerk asked students in the
office what they needed and attended to their requests. I overheard students calling a clerk Mrs. Norma, rather than by her last name. The other clerk, Ms. Janet, asked me politely where I was going and gave me a visitor pass. She allowed me to go up to the classroom after I briefly checked in with the principal. The principal, Mrs. Silvia, was looking forward to my study findings and hoped that I would help reveal positive aspects of dual language instruction. Mrs. Silvia escorted me to the fourth grade classroom where I collected data. She introduced me to Natalie Alonso as Ms. Natalie. I then asked, "Do students call all of their teachers by their first name (so I would know what to call the teachers)?" She replied, “Yes, we are a first name school.”

Throughout my 10 weeks of observation, I frequently saw parents in the building either helping out in the classroom, or getting together for Parent Committee meetings. Additionally, there was a large assembly for Mother’s Day, where students performed and made artwork for their mothers, with hundreds of mothers and grandmothers in attendance. As an outsider looking in, it seemed apparent that the school valued parental involvement in student learning.

Several outside organizations and visitors came through the school during the time I spent there collecting data. For example, Terrence Roberts, a member of the Little Rock Nine, visited the school to speak to the middle school classes about racism and segregation—the eighth grade class had recently completed an extensive unit on the Civil Rights Movement. Because Mr. Roberts could not speak to the entire school, he stopped by each classroom and said “hello” with a brief introduction. A not-for-profit agency committed to bringing students backgrounds and cultures into the curriculum, visited the school weekly to help teachers integrate language arts and the culture of the students.
They aimed to use students’ personal stories to honor diversity and develop appreciation of differences and values. Each year, they selected a different grade level to work with throughout the entire year, this year being fifth grade. A local children’s hospital was also involved in the school. They chose one classroom, which coincidentally was the fourth grade class that I observed, where they assessed physical fitness levels. Students wore hear rate monitors and pedometers for one week in September and June. I was unclear on how the results were used.

Field’s dual language program featured Spanish instruction, while working to progressively develop English academic skills through the grades. By fourth grade, students received 50% English and 50% Spanish instruction. In the fourth grade class studied, the students had two teachers in two different classrooms. They spent the first half of the day with Ms. Natalie Alonso, where Spanish was the language of instruction for mathematics and social studies, and the second half of the school day with Ms. Cynthia Keller, where language arts and science instruction occurred in English. Through conversations with the literacy coach and dual language coordinator, I discovered that this division of subject areas was because of the learning styles of ELLs. In these discussions they told me that research supports native language instruction in math, developing number sense and mathematical language in Spanish, whereas ESL instruction is quite effective through hands-on science activities.

Because of the unique situation of having two teachers that instructed in different languages, and Field’s mission and commitment to dual language education, my time with the fourth graders was split between the two classrooms/teachers and four focal
students. The following offers a detailed description of the two fourth grade classrooms, teachers, and students.

**Inside the fourth grade classrooms.** Natalie Alonso, called Ms. Natalie at Field, was a fifth year teacher and had only taught at Field School. This was her first year teaching in only Spanish, as in previous years she taught half the day in English and half in Spanish. She taught both mathematics and social studies. Natalie was in her mid-30s and was Mexican American. She attended a dual language (English and Spanish) elementary school. While Spanish was her first language, Natalie learned both English and Spanish growing up, mostly through communication with older siblings and schooling. Natalie had her bilingual and ESL endorsements and was familiar with the processes of language learning and first and second language acquisition.

Ms. Cynthia Keller, called Ms. Cynthia at Field, was a white, monolingual English-speaking teacher in her mid-50s who taught at Field School for over 25 years. This was her first year back in the classroom in 20 years, as she taught technology, computers, and library prior to the 2009-2010 school year. She also received her ESL endorsement 10 years prior to this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Year at School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Alonso</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Keller</td>
<td>White, Caucasian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>25th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this chapter, students as a class were generally described. However, four focal students (see Table 4.5) were selected amongst the fourth graders. These students were Ana, David, Joanna, and Mariana and were a balanced representation of students in the class in terms of academic performance, English and Spanish language proficiency, and personality and behavior in the classroom. This section will focus on the big picture, life
in these fourth grade classrooms, while case study students’ ideas, thoughts and perceptions will be highlighted in the following chapter.

### Table 4.5 Field Student Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Year at School</th>
<th>Year in ESL Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Back and forth since KG</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariana</td>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Room 102: Ms. Natalie’s classroom environment.** Ms. Natalie’s classroom was print-rich and colorful. The walls were covered with student work, posters, charts, and labels. All written text was in Spanish. The classroom rules were posted along with the daily schedule and calendar. “Décor” on the classroom walls was organized by subject, with a wall for social studies charts and work, a wall above the classroom library with posted reading strategies, and a wall with math posters and learning tools. Teacher made charts included verb conjugations, important words to know, a math word wall, posters with math concepts and examples, a class job chart, a library checkout chart, and a student birthday graph. Other print posted in the room included a world map, a United States Presidents poster, a national park poster, standardized test math rubrics in Spanish, and charts from the *Everyday Math* series. The academic work posted was student made, such as student created story problems, showing division work, and writing a paragraph in Spanish on how the problem was solved. A group brainstorm that was likely created during a lesson was also posted. “Immigration” was featured in the center of the poster and students listed words, phrases, and other ideas that were related to the concept.

The 28 students in the class sat at desks arranged in heterogeneous ability level groups of five or six, each cluster named after a continent (in Spanish). According to participants, seating arrangements changed several times throughout the school year.
There were four computers in the back of the room, and a few tables, one used for guided reading, and others used for partner or small group collaboration.

The classroom library was in the back corner, where books were organized in bins labeled by genre. Looking through the library, most of the books were in English. However, through observations I heard Ms. Natalie tell students that each time they exchanged books in the classroom library, they had to choose at least one Spanish book.

The classroom environment seemed calm and predictable in that Ms. Natalie spoke in a medium, audible volume when teaching the whole group, students spoke quietly when working with partners or in small groups, so that they could be heard by group members but not classmates across the room, and procedures and expectations seemed established. For example, each morning students went to their coat hook, hung up their possessions and brought necessary materials back to their seats. They told me they were not supposed to return to the coatroom during the day. Students then read the directions on the white board at the front of the room to learn about their morning work. Morning work consisted of either a teacher-authored math problem written on the board, or a math problem copied from the Everyday Math series. Spanish songs were used for transitions, signaling when it was time to clean up materials or stop working and place attention on Ms. Natalie. Teacher led clapping reminded students to line up. She awarded individual or table points when students exhibited desirable behavior, such as looking at the teacher when ready, folding hands on their desks, standing in straight lines, or waiting in the hallway quietly during the washroom break. Once a week before lunch, Ms. Natalie led the class in a class meeting or “junta del salon,” in Spanish. These meetings were a time for making announcements, positive recognitions for each other
(such as thanking a classmate for helping out, or being nice to them), and allowed time for conflict resolution. Ms. Natalie asked if anyone had a problem that they needed assistance resolving. Students raised their hands and the teacher chose one problem to address for the day. Students sat at the front of the room, discussing their problem and possible solutions, while Ms. Natalie facilitated the process with steps that she read in a conflict mediation book.

Interactions between Ms. Natalie and her students seemed somewhat strict. She smiled occasionally, and used respectful words when speaking to her students. Most students responded to her when she asked questions or gave directions. Through casual conversations with students at lunch or recess, some shared their feelings about Ms. Natalie, saying that “she is mean because she takes away points for our party,” or “it is not fair when she punishes me because the students I sit with act bad.” Most teacher-student interaction involved instruction—very little social or casual conversations were observed.

**Room 102: Ms. Natalie’s curriculum and materials.** Ms. Natalie used the Everyday Math series in Spanish for all mathematics instruction. With the math curriculum, there were student activity books, along with an informational resource text. Students also had a homework workbook. I noticed plastic bins with math manipulatives that appeared to be a part of the math curriculum, but did not see use of the materials during observational time. There was not a set curriculum for social studies instruction, but there was occasional use of a social studies textbook published in 1990 called “Regions” or “Regiones.” Per observation, Ms. Natalie assigned certain passages in the text depending on what they were studying, where students read excerpts independently,
and wrote summaries or answered questions in Spanish. Through conversation with Ms. Natalie, I learned that she created most of the social studies units based on the grade level standards, the lives and cultures of her students, and used what she referred to as a “multicultural approach.”

**Room 102: Ms. Natalie’s instruction.** The sequence of instructional events in math was consistent and as follows: Students began with a warm-up problem or activity, which was self-directed. They read directions on the board or on a sheet of paper. Students worked individually or with a small group or partner at their tables. After 20 minutes or so, the teacher played music for students to stop working and look at and listen to their teacher. Ms. Natalie then asked students for the answers, sometimes solving the problems on the board, other times orally going over steps for solving. Next, Ms. Natalie assigned a page or two in the math activity book, wrote the page numbers on the board, and students worked with a partner (either assigned or student selected partners) to complete problems/activities. Students had the option to move around the room to work wherever they chose. Ms. Natalie then rotated between groups to monitor progress and provide any clarifying explanations or answer questions. After about 40 minutes, she played a song on the compact disc player to signal it was time to gather their materials and return to their seats. Ms. Natalie then went over the work by calling on students from their seats to provide explanations and answers. Occasionally, she collected the work and then assigned homework by writing it on the whiteboard.

Whole group instruction was teacher directed, where Ms. Natalie asked a question and students raised their hands to provide an answer followed by an oral assessment of their response as “good”, “right,” or “correct.” In some instances Ms. Natalie called on
students who were not raising their hands. However, during my observations, Ms. Natalie called on the same few students, those who usually knew the correct answers and seemed to be academically higher than other students. If a student did not answer a question correctly, she moved onto another academically “higher” student. The few times she called on students who were middle to lower performing, a higher performing student was subsequently asked to answer if the first student was incorrect.

At times, Ms. Natalie used visual aids to support teaching. Occasionally, I observed use of enlarged workbook pages that matched the ones students were working on, where the teacher filled in answers after the students completed the page. Other times, story problems were written on chart paper ahead of time, where the students answered the problems from their seats. While instructions and page numbers were frequently written on the large dry erase board at the front of the room, students did not come up to board to solve problems or explain their work. During observations, Ms. Natalie wrote on the board—the children did not.

Interview conversations differed from observational data in that Natalie said she emphasized the use of visuals, manipulatives, and extensive modeling when teaching her students, especially because she was developing their varied Spanish language skills. When talking about an ideal lesson and instruction that met her students ranging needs and levels, Natalie said the following:

NA: Well, obviously [I teach with] a lot of visuals, a lot of manipulatives. That’s why I like the curriculum with math because it allows them to learn the concept different ways. So, we do the visual, we do the partner work, we do the manipulatives, and we reinforce the skill later on if they don’t get it. So I mean, they get it a lot of different ways. And we have to make sure they get it in whatever way that helps them.
Social studies instruction varied during my observation time. Towards the latter half of my data collection I saw Mr. Stuart, the reading coach, facilitate guided reading groups while Ms. Natalie observed him. The trade books used for the students were of social studies content and were separate from the district preferred reading program, Reading Street. After a few days of observation, Ms. Natalie started facilitating guided reading groups, or “reading groups” as named by Ms. Natalie and the students, using different levels of social studies trade books and authentic literature. As previously mentioned, the occasional use of a textbook called “Regiones” was evident, but not during whole group instruction. When Ms. Natalie pulled reading groups, students used this textbook for independent work. Students completed other social studies related activities during this time, or independently read self-selected books. During independent reading, about half the students chose to read English books, while the other half chose Spanish texts. The same students consistently chose books of a particular language.

I observed one whole group social studies lesson on immigration, where Ms. Natalie read a picture book about a young girl that emigrated from Russia to New York. The follow up lesson was to have students share their own experience with immigration or provide any stories they have heard from family members. Students then worked with a small group to make a poster, listing words or phrases or drawing pictures that they associated with immigration. Students seemed engaged, as all were on task working with peers, and appeared eager to participate by coming up with words or phrases associated with immigration. They also were excited to share personal stories with classmates and Ms. Natalie.
Language practices in room 102 were fairly consistent. Ms. Natalie almost always spoke Spanish. There were two students she spoke English with, because of their limited knowledge of both social and academic Spanish. Each morning, as soon as the students were unpacked and settled in their seats, she had them “cambiar la boca” signaling that it was time to speak Spanish and put away their “English mouth.” On several occurrences a student asked or answered a question in English and Ms. Natalie said “en Español.” The student then had to repeat him/herself in Spanish. Ms. Natalie also reminded students occasionally throughout the morning to speak Spanish when working with partners or small groups.

Student language practices were also somewhat consistent. Most students spoke Spanish during teacher directed instruction, both whole and small group. The same few students consistently spoke English, and frequently were asked to repeat themselves in Spanish. When students worked with partners or with a student-led small group, there was more of a mix. During observations, the same 10 or so students spoke English, depending on whom they were grouped with, while the other 18 students consistently spoke Spanish with classmates. More English use was heard in hallway, lunchroom, and recess conversations than in room 102. The same 10 or so students spoke all English during social time, where the remaining students spoke a mix of Spanish and English, depending on whom they were socializing with.

When discussing language practices and dual language instruction, Ms. Natalie expressed her beliefs in teaching ELLs. She said her teaching aligns with the school’s mission for all students to become bilingual and biliterate. When talking about developing bilingualism in students Natalie said,
NA: Our students are being prepared for success. I think that if a student starts here in kindergarten through eighth grade, which ideally is the perfect setting, I think absolutely we prepare our students, because I think that the curriculum is designed that way. They build upon the skills that they are taught in the previous years, in Spanish and in English. So both languages continue across the curriculum.

She emphasized to her students that bilingualism would bring them success in the future and increase their opportunities. Helping her students develop both languages would lead to their success. It was important for her students to develop their Spanish, despite family and community pressures to learn English. When discussing her students’ perceptions on language she said,

NA: I see them, [her students] um, beginning to favor English and I think we spoke about this earlier.
AR: Right, you were saying that it’s the influence of family and society?
NA: Society, and um, for some reason, they’re beginning to equate success with English, and that may be from the, you know, the family’s perception, or even the community’s perception.

Because of this, she especially attempted to instill in her students a sense of pride for their culture and language, and hoped they recognized that it was important to continue developing their first language.

Beyond bilingualism and biliteracy, Natalie felt her students should be instructed in a way that honored their culture and exposed them to others. She believed in teaching through a multicultural education lens, and taught this through classroom community building and in the content area of social studies. When talking specifically about multiculturalism, she said the following:

NA: I really love the multiculturalism aspect of it [dual language instruction]. I think that’s very important. I think that with our students, in particular, that’s a challenge, because the population is 99% Mexican or of Mexican descent. Um, so we try to do that [expose them to other cultures] in a classroom and to show them the richness of the Spanish language that’s spoken all over the world, and the importance and history of it. To me, I
think that’s a great opportunity, and I wish that people understood that more, the value of it, and not just for society, but the global society.

The students in Ms. Natalie’s classroom. The fourth graders in Room 102 were very open to my presence—they asked me questions at lunch, drew pictures and wrote me poems. Trusting relationships developed fairly fast. Several students, such as Joanna and Mariana, were fascinated with my own cultural background, and asked many questions about my Indian ethnicity. Thus I believe they were themselves around me, in both academic and social situations. Several students in this class seemed socially advanced compared to my own experiences with 9 and 10-year olds. I observed several conversations about crushes, kissing, or teasing other students about “liking” another student, and boys and girls chasing each other on the playground. As the Soccer World Cup games were approaching, several students had player trading cards with members of the Mexican soccer teams. Many students seemed very excited about the approaching sporting tournament. Also, students were into pop music, both American artists, such as Justin Bieber or Jason Derulo, and Latin pop artists, such as Shakira and Prince Royce. Through conversations, I learned that students enjoyed reading similar book series, such as Diary of the Wimpy Kid (Kinney, 2007), and while some students read the English texts, several students read the Spanish translated versions. The students as a whole exhibited various personalities and behavior varied depending on the context.

In the classroom, most students were seemingly attentive while Ms. Natalie was teaching. They showed signs often associated with listening, such as looking at the teacher, folding their hands, and raising their hands to speak. They responded to the songs and clapping signals, and seemed to follow routines and procedures of the classroom. During work time, where they almost always worked with at least one other
student, this seemingly “on task” behavior was less present. Throughout my observations, students inconsistently knew what to do. Several seemed confused by the assignments or tasks, showing this by asking me questions, not doing their work, or asking Ms. Natalie what to do. Other times, students completed the workbook pages with incorrect answers, without working out the problems together, as if simply to fill in the blanks. As an observer, it was difficult for me to tell if students did not understand what to do or if they did not want to do the work, but through my questioning of several students on days I was present, the majority said they did not understand what was expected of them. Through informal conversations with students at lunch or recess, several told me that they did not like math because they “didn’t learn it right” or they “never knew what to do.”

Student behavior varied. There were two or three students who consistently “acted out” in that they teased or said negative things to classmates or spoke out of turn during instruction. Such actions resulted in losing recess. If a table group exhibited desirable behavior they received a point where they were given treats if they reached a target number. When the entire class demonstrated desirable behavior, Ms. Natalie rewarded them with a “star,” where a target number of collected stars resulted in a class party.

**Room 106: Ms. Cynthia’s classroom environment.** The wall outside Ms. Cynthia’s classroom displayed student work. Essays, written in English, about how to stay healthy were the featured work during one of my visits. Inside the classroom was a print-rich space, with labels in English, a few teacher made charts, and several store-bought posters on the walls. Teacher made visuals included “Student Helpers,” writing
tips and writing workshop rules, classroom rules, writing revision tips, and the word wall with vocabulary sorted by content area. Some store bought posters displayed information on the Scientific Method, reading strategies, and other inspirational sayings and expressions such as “Reach your Goal.” Additionally, several rubrics and posters from the district and the Reading Street reading curriculum were apparent. One wall had a large bulletin board labeled “Science Exploration Chart” where throughout the year students thought of different science related questions and topics that they were curious about. Some examples include: “Do eggs really float?” “Why did they invent cigarettes?” “Does caffeine affect plant growth?” A classroom library in the right corner of the room had bookshelves with picture and chapter books and a few bins labeled by genre containing outward facing books. Only English books were evident in the classroom library.

Student desks were arranged in heterogeneous ability groups of four or five. Seating assignments changed periodically throughout the school year. The afternoon, much like the morning class, followed the same daily routine. Students came in after their resource class, put away their belongings in the coatroom, and returned to their seats with necessary materials. They also were not allowed to go to the coatroom if they forgot something in their backpacks. Upon returning to their seats, students independently read a book of choice. Most students, with the exception of four or five, selected English books. Students had 15 minutes of reading time and the lessons for the day commenced.

Interactions between Ms. Cynthia and the fourth graders were quite positive during observations. She was always smiling, unless disciplining a student, and students seemed happy when talking to her—they also smiled when engaging in conversation with
her. Cynthia sat with students during lunch, chatted with some during recess, and asked non-academic questions to students. Through informal conversations with students, most let me know that they “loved” Ms. Cynthia. I frequently heard such comments as, “Ms. Cynthia is so nice, she’s cool. She gives us tickets in her class and we can get treasures, and she tells us stories about her life.”

**Room 106: Ms. Cynthia’s curriculum and materials.** Ms. Cynthia consistently used the Scott Foresman Reading Street Language Arts curriculum. Because this was her first year back in the classroom after 20 years as a technology and library teacher, she disclosed her dependency on lessons and activities from the reading program. This was evident in observations. Along with the basal textbook, students had the accompanying activity workbook with both comprehension and grammar/spelling/vocabulary extension activities. The students did not use a science curriculum during my observations, and instead used various resources such as Scholastic Science magazines, reading books with science-related passages and comprehension questions, or other science trade books. Other materials present in the classroom included Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits, picture or chapter books, and writing workshop notebooks.

**Room 106: Ms. Cynthia’s instruction.** Instructional routines and sequences were fairly consistent in Ms. Cynthia’s classroom. She provided English-only instruction, as she was a monolingual English speaker. After independent reading, Ms. Cynthia led whole group lessons. This sometimes involved reading the story in the basal together as a class, calling on students to read various passages. During observations, she called on the same four or five students to read. On days when the class was not reading from the basal, Ms. Cynthia explained a certain concept on the board and called on
students to answer. Much of these lessons focused on vocabulary words or on reading skills such as “fact versus opinion.” During such lessons, she involved students of various academic levels. If a student seemed unsure, Ms. Cynthia provided wait-time for them to try to answer, and if they still seemed shy, she asked them if they needed help. On two separate days of observation, Ms. Cynthia asked students if they wanted to say the answer or question in Spanish, asking a nearby classmate to translate. Although this whole group instructional format was teacher-led, she gave ample opportunity for students to share their own connections or ideas to discussed concepts. One example in particular occurred when reading about animals affected by disaster in a story in their basal textbooks. A student raised her hand and made a connection to the animals hurt and killed by the recent 2010 Gulf oil spill.

When students said correct answers or responses, Ms. Cynthia rewarded them with “tickets” which were used every other Friday to “purchase” items from the “treasure chest” (i.e., a large box with various prizes). Students seemed excited when receiving tickets, as they frequently raised their hands to answer questions, and would smile and say, “yes” when receiving a ticket. Beyond tickets, Ms. Cynthia praised students using such phrases as “Good work” “Good man/girl, I’m proud of you,” “You’re having a great day, I can tell already.” or “Look at how much you’ve improved in your English. You’re totally going to college.” On one particular day, I heard Ms. Cynthia telling her students how lucky they were to be bilingual and they would have a “leg up” on her because she could only speak one language.

Ms. Cynthia also pulled reading groups four days per week, where she used the leveled readers that accompanied the Reading Street program. When she was reading
with a group, there would be a list of “seatwork” assignments written on the board. Seatwork usually consisted of workbook pages from Reading Street student activity books. Students could ask for help from tablemates, but could not leave their seats nor ask the teacher for assistance. On some days, Ms. Cynthia explained a few examples of what to expect on workbook pages, while on most days she began small group reading instruction immediately after writing the “seatwork” tasks on the board. When walking around observing students during “seatwork,” I saw some students that seemed to understand what to do, the same students who were academically higher in the morning class, while other students told me they did not know what to do and asked for help.

Two to three days per week, students had writing workshop, led by Mr. Stuart, the reading coach. Because Ms. Cynthia was new to the classroom after so many years, he provided assistance all year. Mr. Stuart taught in English, but encouraged students to write in Spanish if necessary. He followed the *Units of Study* (Calkins, 2006) writing curriculum, and students built upon their writing day after day. Walking around looking through the student writing folders, I could see evidence of gradual writing improvement throughout the 10 weeks.

During data collection, science instruction occurred on three days. Two of the days, students worked on Science Fair projects with partners, and once, students as a whole class took turns reading from a Scholastic Science magazine.

Ms. Cynthia’s instructional and social language practices were consistent as she was monolingual English speaking. However, students’ language practices were somewhat different from the morning class. More students spoke English both in academic and social contexts. If students were working with a partner or small group,
which happened less during afternoon observations, more spoke English, even during social conversations. During independent “seatwork,” when I walked around and helped a few students using Spanish, more of them seemed to catch onto the assignment/task with some translations. A few of the quieter students seemed reluctant to answer questions in English in the whole group setting, but would not want to use Spanish to answer the questions either. These same students were more comfortable speaking English one-on-one with Ms. Cynthia.

When talking about language instructional practices and programs with Cynthia, she indicated that she supported the school’s mission for students to become bilingual and biliterate. Cynthia shared this belief, and when talking about how she conveyed this message to her students she said,

CK: I always tell them [my students] that if they really try to work hard in both languages they will have the advantage over someone like me, who speaks one language. And you hope, you’re not going to reach 100% of the kids, but my attitude is that you reach the top 60% even, then you’ve accomplished something because then they truly become biliterate and bilingual. And they will get places that other people can’t.

She said she held high expectations for all her students, but did think that some students’ lower English proficiency was holding them back in class, either socially or academically. She believed that the students who had more English support at home (either from older siblings or parents) were more successful in her class.

Cynthia said that she was really pleased with how much more confident several of her students were this year in their English. Students who did not speak much English in September were able to speak a lot more in May, and exuded more confidence. She was happy that there was an English reading program that she used for language arts instruction. She did, however, worry that her students would not retain English unless
they were “pushed in English.” Ms. Cynthia was concerned that her students would fall behind the next year if they were in a classroom with a teacher that spoke more Spanish than English.

Through student interviews it was revealed that some believed Ms. Cynthia connected academic success with English proficiency. Mariana, a student, when talking about classmates who were stronger in English, felt that they were smarter because of their increased English proficiencies. She felt that Ms. Cynthia favored these students because they were higher performing. Mariana also informed me the reading groups were organized by level of intelligence and specifically said,

MA: Yo pienso que los “Acers” son mas inteligente. (I think that the “Acers” are the most intelligent).
AR: ¿Quien son “Acers?” (Who are the “Acers”)?
MA: Acers are group A. That is Juan, Chris, Diana, Melissa, Betina, and, and (long pause) that’s it.
AR: Why are they called “Acers?” Who made that up?
MA: Ms. Cynthia.
AR: Interesting. Why do you think they’re called “Acers?”
MA: I don’t know (nodding). We are the Cheetahs.
AR: Cheetahs? Okay. And did you pick that name or did she pick that name?
MA: She picked.
AR: ¿Que otros nombres? (What other names)?
MA: Bears, Eagles, and something else for D.

Later in the interview,

AR: ¿So como sabes que “Acers” es el grupo mas inteligente? (So how do you know that “Acers” is the most intelligent group)?
MA: Porque es porque, (pause) cuz [sic] if you get, if you are an “Acer” you get As, you get Bs if you’re a “Bear” and Cs if you’re a Cheetahs, and then Eagles.

Mariana said that she would never be as smart as the “Acers,” who all spoke English well, and that Ms. Cynthia liked them the best.
Even though Cynthia taught language arts and science in English, she said she provided her students with opportunities to use their Spanish if necessary. When talking about her students’ use of their L1 she said,

CK: If they don’t know how to say it in English, why say “then forget it, don’t say it.” No, I’ll tell someone, I can’t understand it, “say it in Spanish,” and someone will jump in. Then they tell them it in Spanish, they, well I don’t know what they’re saying really, then they re-direct them and they say it in English. So yes, absolutely they should use their Spanish. You know, that’s their first language. But do I want them to speak, umm, but I don’t have that where they’re coming in and talking in Spanish, they don’t do that. I don’t know, they just kinda switch when they’re in here. And I’ve never said “no talking in Spanish.” I’ve never said that. I don’t know, it just has never been an issue.

Cynthia did limit her students’ use of Spanish to speaking, and told them they could not write in Spanish, unless it was with Mr. Stuart. Students, such as Ana, Joanna and Mariana, confirmed this saying that Ms. Cynthia sometimes let them speak Spanish in class, where they asked classmates for translation assistance, but did not let them write in Spanish and made this clear in September. Ms. Cynthia had mostly English books in her classroom library, and when I asked her about this, she said she only required English texts, and did not need Spanish literature because she was teaching an “English class.”

**The students in Ms. Cynthia’s classroom.** Student behavior was fairly consistent with behavior in Ms. Natalie’s classroom. The same few who behaved as Ms. Natalie preferred, acted similarly with Ms. Cynthia—the same was true with those that did not comply with expected behavioral norms. Calling out and teasing were proportionately present in the afternoon class. Students, who were quiet and/or shy in the morning class, behaved the same way in Ms. Cynthia’s classroom. Most of the students exhibited desirable behavior, where they looked at the teacher when talking, sat quietly in their seats, and raised their hands to speak. The same students raised their hands frequently in
both classrooms. There were two or three students who raised their hands more to answer questions in the morning than in the afternoon class, but through conversations, it was difficult to tell if it was because of the subject areas (math versus language arts), or if it was the classroom environments themselves. Overall, the students definitely had more opportunities to talk to Ms. Cynthia in her class. As previously mentioned, students shared personal connections or stories, whereas in Ms. Natalie’s classroom, this only occurred on the day of the immigration introduction lesson. Additionally, through informal and interview conversations with students, most said they liked Ms. Cynthia better than Ms. Natalie, and when I asked why, several responded that they liked getting tickets for the treasure chest, or that “she was cool,” or that they liked learning English from her.

Most students spoke English with seeming confidence in Ms. Cynthia’s classroom. David, for example, felt comfortable speaking English, and when he made a mistake he tried to fix it by repeating how to pronounce something “correctly” when hearing his teacher or classmate say it a different way. One time, during a vocabulary lesson in Ms. Cynthia’s classroom, the word was “cruise.” David said “crueeze,” and then a few seconds later heard a student pronounce it “crooze,” so David repeated it softly to himself a few times, “crooze, crooze.”

**Summary of understandings and beliefs at Field School.** This rich description of Field and Ms. Cynthia and Natalie’s fourth grade classrooms, as noted earlier, is constructed from analysis of observation field notes, focus groups and interviews. The same codes of schooling, language practices, and language learning are highlighted in Table 4.6 and subsequently explained in relation to life at Field School.
Schooling. Understandings of schooling were mostly consistent among student and teacher participants. Students believed that a successful student listened to the teacher, was well-behaved, nice to classmates, and helped others. They also felt that speaking both languages, getting good grades and participating was imperative to student success. Field students believed they could only participate in either classroom if they knew the correct answer. Raising their hands only happened if they knew the desired answer, and if students were not sure, it was better to stay still and quiet in their seats—

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<th>Table 4.6 Understandings and Beliefs at Field School</th>
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<td>Schooling- Ms. Natalie’s Classroom</td>
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| Language Practices | Students spoke both languages daily in school for academic purposes. | Students spoke both languages daily in school for social purposes. | Students spoke Spanish at home with families. | Students were aware that they could use Spanish to help them in Ms. Cynthia’s class, but many did not because she did not speak Spanish. | Students were aware that Ms. Cynthia preferred English for written assignments. |

| Language Learning | The purpose of school was to learn both English and Spanish, to become bilingual | Students felt it was important to learn both languages for the future. | Students and teachers attributed bilingualism to increased opportunities and success. | Students felt that having Ms. Cynthia as a teacher helped them learn more English. | Students felt that being in Ms. Natalie’s class helped them remember and learn more Spanish. |
students feared being wrong. They emphasized the importance of acting serious and focused when at school, as students felt this would help them get into college or get a good job. Receiving treats, parties and rewards did motivate students, which is one reason why they preferred Ms. Cynthia’s classroom.

Instruction in both classrooms was teacher-centered and followed the IRE discourse pattern. Ms. Natalie prompted conversations and discussions, and when students worked with partners or small groups, they followed the teacher’s lead or completed math workbook pages. While students were able to engage in deeper personal conversations with Ms. Cynthia, as she provided opportunities for students to make relevant connections to stories or science concepts, her instruction was also teacher-driven.

Both teachers implemented district mandated curricular programs for mathematics and language arts. Although this was not made explicit, the required programs may have been implemented in response to district-wide high stakes testing and accountability. The principal, Mrs. Silvia, did share that her upper grade test scores were under close scrutiny because of hesitations about the dual language program. She hoped that the test results would reflect the positive academic impact dual language instruction had on middle school students.

**Language practices.** Students spoke both languages in school. They spoke Spanish during instruction with Ms. Natalie, and a mix of English and Spanish (depending on the student’s comfort level) during social times. With Ms. Cynthia, English was spoken during academic time (unless a student was not sure of what to say in English), and a mix of Spanish and English was spoken during social times (depending
on the student). Ana, David, and Mariana preferred to speak Spanish because they felt more comfortable since it was their first language, while Joanna preferred English because she was proud of her progress. However, all students understood the importance of speaking English because of their residence in the United States. They knew that they had to learn English to become successful in the future, but did not feel that they would have to consequently abandon their knowledge of Spanish.

Although students knew that Ms. Cynthia permitted Spanish use when answering questions, they were hesitant to write in Spanish because Ms. Cynthia was unable to understand. While Ana and Joanna felt comfortable speaking Spanish with Ms. Cynthia and having a peer translate for her, David and Mariana avoided this and preferred to speak for themselves. If they did not know how to say something in English in the afternoon class, they chose to stay silent. Also, while Ms. Cynthia made it seem that Spanish was welcome in her classroom, her inability to speak and understand the language potentially interfered with students’ language practices.

All students were Spanish dominant in their homes. They used English to help family when in English dominant settings. Participants enjoyed being a resource for their parents.

Language learning. All participants believed that attending Field School would develop bilingualism in English and Spanish. They understood that both teachers were responsible for teaching students their respective language. Student participants seemed to be aware of the value of learning two languages. Knowing two languages helped prepare them for the future for getting jobs, helping out in emergencies, or communicating internationally. They learned Spanish both through their families and
Field teachers. They recognized the importance of speaking Spanish was not limited to increasing future opportunities, but also to maintain relationships with Spanish dominant family members. Ana, Mariana, and David in particular, felt that continuing to learn and speak Spanish was important because it was their first language.

There was a shared yearning amongst most students to learn and speak English. Joanna, Ana, and David all expressed great desire and interest in speaking English. They were excited by their progress this year, and attributed their expanded English proficiency to Ms. Cynthia because she was an English-only speaker. They felt that having her as a teacher for half of the day really helped them learn English fast, and felt successful as a result.

Ms. Natalie was challenged by the task of teaching only in Spanish because of students’ varying Spanish academic levels. However, she recognized the importance of her role, and emphasized Spanish use in her classroom. Ms. Cynthia acknowledged the weight of her role in teaching English through language arts instruction. She also felt challenged by this, but could see progress throughout the year. She agreed with the students that her English dominance served as a catalyst for students’ English proficiency levels. Also, while claiming to value her students’ bilingualism, Cynthia did make a few contradictory references alluding to greater importance of English proficiency.

Comparing Life at Park and Field

In this section I will discuss key themes that came across my data. First, despite differing language instructional programs both schools had common attributes. Curricular materials and instructional methods were similar, as well as student compliance. Students held parallel perceptions on the purpose of schooling, and had a
common vision of student success. Park and Field departed in their language use and practices. Student perceptions of their language and culture also differed across schools.

**Similarities across schools.**

**Instructional materials and methods.** As two schools located in the same city and in the same large, urban district, there were quite a few similarities between Park and Field. Evidence of the current sociopolitical context of urban schooling that emphasizes high stakes testing and accountability was clear in both contexts. Mandated curricular programs in urban public schools are one source of evidence of the emphasis on testing and accountability (Cobb & Rallis, 2005; Crawford, 2008b; Lipman, 2004). Because of this trend, I found that curricular materials and content covered, primarily in mathematics and language arts, were similar in both settings. For example, both schools used the same reading series, *Scott Foresman* Reading Street. Reading instruction exclusively involved the use of the program materials in both Mrs. Palma’s and Ms. Cynthia’s reading blocks; the basal textbook was used during whole group reading instruction, and supplemental leveled readers were used for guided reading/reading groups. Both teachers also used a mathematics curricular program. While Mrs. Palma used Math Expressions (which did not involve much use of manipulatives and problem solving) and Ms. Natalie used Everyday Math (which involved significant use of manipulatives and problem solving) delivery of math instruction was similar in both classes. Students worked in workbooks on all observation days in both settings, and solved problems without the use of manipulatives or much explanation of answers.

Additional similarities existed in instruction. In both settings, the fourth grade classrooms were teacher centered. Teacher participants followed the IRE discourse
pattern, where they asked a question (anticipating one correct answer), called on students to respond, evaluated the responses, and repeated the same process (Cazden, 2001). Students were familiar with this pattern, as they all identified this as appropriate student behavior. They knew that teachers expected them to raise their hands when they knew the “correct” answers. Students felt it was unacceptable to participate if they were unsure of the desired answer, and in observations, I did not hear students ask questions about the content or material, nor challenge or disagree with a student or teacher response.

Classroom activities and learning tasks were also similar across classrooms. Completing workbook pages that corresponded to the curricular programs, both in reading, spelling and grammar, or answering basal story comprehension questions was common in both contexts. Workbook questions focused on basic recall or retelling of the story, and did not involve critical or higher order thinking skills. As previously mentioned, math activities involved solving problems such as multiplication or long division computation or story problems, using memorized steps in solving, and where no conversations or discussions on how or why students came to certain conclusions occurred. While students shared their answers with the teacher and/or classmates, little opportunity existed for explanation in problem solving. Students frequently worked with partners or small groups in the three classrooms, which involved similar “tasks” as that done individually (math problems, completing workbook pages, answering comprehension questions, etc.).

**Discipline and rewards.** Another similarity amongst sites was the emphasis on stringent discipline and routine, grades, and extrinsic rewards. It was evident that Mrs. Palma, Ms. Natalie, and Ms. Cynthia all instilled classroom rules and procedures, and
students were well aware of expectations. They all felt that a “successful” student was nice to classmates, helped others when necessary, did not talk out of turn, spoke only when spoken to by the teacher, completed assignments, and received good grades—mostly As and Bs. Most participants felt that the purpose of schooling was to get a job and/or go to college, so they knew that being focused and following the teachers’ rules were appropriate behaviors. Students knew to respect their teachers and viewed them as authority figures. Fourth graders in both schools were motivated by extrinsic rewards, such as candy, toys or stickers from Ms. Cynthia’s treasure chest, or class parties. Such reward systems were grounds for why students liked their teachers.

**Desire for teachers’ native language knowledge.** Student perceptions of teachers’ language practices were another area for comparison. All Park and Field participants expressed their desire for their teacher (Mrs. Palma or Ms. Cynthia) to speak Spanish. They said it would be appreciated if Mrs. Palma and Ms. Cynthia spoke Spanish and that it was “sad,” or “frustrating,” that they did not. Students such as Jorge and Edgar at Park, and David and Joanna at Field, while confident in their English and academic skills, articulated their desire for all the teachers to know Spanish. “It would be better so they can talk to students who speak Spanish.” Jorge further said “If Mrs. Palma spoke more Spanish, she could help the students who do not speak English instead of the kids helping them, and they won’t have to transfer to another teacher who speaks better Spanish.” David and Mariana thought similarly about Ms. Cynthia, as they wished that she could speak Spanish because sometimes they did not understand something in English, and wished she could help them in Spanish. They also said that some students
said “mean things” or “bad words” in front of Ms. Cynthia, and if she spoke Spanish, she would understand what they were saying.

**Need for learning English.** The final commonality across fourth grade classrooms was the strong yearning to learn English. Although the teachers’ beliefs and understandings about language learning and instruction varied, student participants felt the pressure to learn English. They were aware of how important it was to learn English well, and knew that post-schooling and societal success involved English acquisition. This could be attributed to extraneous factors such as family and societal pressure (Crawford, 1992; Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002; Halcón, 2001; Mora, 2002).

**Differences across schools.**

**School missions.** Although Park and Field Schools were in the same urban district, there were several differences in both settings. The most obvious departure lay in the schools’ missions. Park’s mission was to teach ELLs through a transitional bilingual education program, and through interviews it was revealed that instruction and curriculum were English dominant. The administration aimed to mainstream students into English-only instruction as quickly as possible. Mrs. Palma’s beliefs aligned with Park School’s mission, as she also felt that she should teach her students for the purpose of learning English. While she was proficient in Spanish, she only relied on Spanish use when a student did not understand something in English (although this was not observed).

While several teachers at Park (including Mrs. Palma) were Spanish-speaking, students did not recognize this and thought that most teachers spoke only English. As a result, student participants did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish while at Park.
School. They wanted to speak the language of the school and relate to their teachers and classmates. Students interpreted Spanish as an inferior language as it was not particularly valued in school. While I do not have evidence to prove causation, there are likely links between the teachers who did not speak Spanish (or not perceived as speaking the language) and their de-valuing of Spanish because of its absence.

Further, curriculum content covered during my observations at Park did not connect to the students’ cultural backgrounds or experiences. Topics such as States and Capitals, Solar System, or Weather were integrated across content areas, but did not provide space for students to make personal or other relevant connections to themes. Instruction was not culturally relevant or responsive, and did not align with multicultural education (Banks and Banks, 2005; Ladson Billings, 1994, 1995; Nieto, 2002).

Conversely, Field School’s mission was to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in all students. The administration and teachers aimed to develop a learning environment that honored students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. While this was apparent in Ms. Natalie’s class through the Spanish instruction, she also said she brought in relevant topics to explore and discuss, such as immigration. She provided space for her students to share their personal experiences, which helped them relate to particular concepts.

Ms. Cynthia tried to instill this same respect and appreciation for students’ cultures in her classroom. Although she instructed in English, she said that she encouraged the use of Spanish when students needed their first language to help them connect to content, and she also praised her students for knowing two languages, making them aware that this would help them in the future.
**Time to talk.** Opportunity for students to talk also differed between school sites. At Park, students did not have recess, much allotted free time, or a lunch period that encouraged conversation. Student lunch was in the classroom, and lasted less than 20 minutes (as is common in most schools in the district), but the lunch aide monitored student conversation to ensure ample time for food consumption. As previously mentioned, students were not able to share their personal opinions or connections to content during lessons and activities, thus not allowing students much time in the entire school day to engage in non-academic conversation.

At Field School, students had more time in both classrooms to socialize or engage in discussion with peers and teachers. In Ms. Natalie’s class, she facilitated a weekly “Junta del Salón” (Classroom Meeting). These meetings were a space for students to engage in non-academic Spanish discussion. Ms. Cynthia provided opportunities for students to make connections to course topics through vocabulary instruction, topics discussed in the basal stories, or science concepts. Outdoor recess and lunch in a cafeteria provided daily social time for Field students. Through my observations, I heard several social conversations amongst all fourth grade students. Students switched between English and Spanish, depending on the individual and whom s/he was engaging in discussion with—they were able to use their first language to help them navigate English use.

**How and why language is learned.** Teachers’ and students’ understandings of language learning also differed across school sites. Mrs. Palma and Park student participants felt that attending school would help them learn English. Some students, Edgar and Jorge in particular, attributed English success to their English-speaking
teachers. English language learning was tightly connected to intelligence. Most students did not focus on speaking the language “correctly,” with the exception of Carlos, and seemed comfortable speaking English to the best of their ability in various situations (speaking to classmates, teachers, during interviews, etc). They did not find it necessary to continue learning Spanish, as they thought Spanish was primarily used for family communication. Because so much of their day was immersed in English, several students admitted to some consequent Spanish language loss.

Field participants understood that learning both English and Spanish was imperative to student success. Students knew it was important to learn content in both languages, and did not want to forget Spanish, despite their increasing English proficiencies. They did feel that because they had Ms. Cynthia as a teacher, they learned more English that school year, as having a monolingual English-speaking teacher required them to acquire English rapidly. However, this did not subtract from their Spanish language proficiency, as all students said they would speak Spanish in their futures with family members, for jobs, and in emergencies.

*What language is spoken when, where, and why.* Language practices were different in both school settings. Observations and interviews with Park participants revealed an English-dominant space, one where English was used during all academic and most social times. Students did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish in school, even when they were unsure of how to say something in English. They also did not ask peers for help when this occurred. All student participants felt that they spoke English well and better than Spanish. During interviews, if students struggled to respond in English, they would not answer in Spanish, even when the question was repeated in
Spanish. Students also favored speaking English over Spanish, and some even wished they could speak English to their Spanish dominant family members.

Language practices were evenly split between English and Spanish at Field as a result of the curriculum; a similar split was apparent during social conversations. Students openly discussed their Spanish language use in their home and academic spaces, sharing with me their feelings of comfort and pride for the language. All participants believed it was important to speak Spanish because it was their first language. Field students also were honest when talking about their difficulty in learning and speaking English, unlike Park students who did not reveal such challenges. Field students spoke of incidences when they struggled in saying or understanding something in English; they explained how they tackled the situation, whether they remained quiet, or if they asked for clarification from teachers or classmates. Ana and Mariana in particular conveyed feelings of embarrassment when they did not understand something in English, while Joanna shared her joy in her development of English proficiency, even when she made mistakes.

Language as a problem versus language as a resource. The final variance in school settings was the asset versus deficit perspective in speaking a language other than English. At Park School, administrators, teachers, and students viewed speaking Spanish as a deficit. While the school’s mission did not directly say this, implementing a TBE program is itself subtractive (Cummins, 1996, 2000; Soltero, 2004). Mrs. Palma felt that her role was to teach her ELLs English and felt that those who were not strong in English were her “lowest” achieving students. Park students believed English was the language
that would help them succeed in school and that Spanish had no place in the school because teachers did not speak the language.

Speaking Spanish was viewed as an asset at Field School. This was evident through the school’s mission and curriculum. Because Spanish and English were equally valued, students did not attach as many negative feelings to either language. Both Ms. Natalie and Ms. Cynthia delivered this message to their students, and encouraged them to embrace their first language. They saw value in maintaining Spanish socially and academically, while building students’ English social and academic language proficiency.

Analysis made visible similarities and differences across the two school settings with regards to schooling, language practices and language learning and participants’ understandings and beliefs. Findings around language use and culture were disparate in both contexts. Park is positioned as an English-speaking space supporting assimilation into the dominant culture, while Field’s inclusion of daily native language instruction aims to develop bilingualism and biculturalism. However, findings involving schooling heavily overlapped. Teacher-centered instructional methods prevailed, as well as a void in student voice. Curriculum focused on “content coverage” rather than digging deep to develop students’ thinking. Students viewed and responded to teachers as authority figures in both schools, and very few deviated from this norm and/or expectation. Because of these compelling trends, it is imperative to think about the effects on children. Students’ language practices and language learning are influenced by school culture and norms, as well as actions and attitudes of teachers. It is essential to examine these effects and recognize the power of school discourse models. If pervasive practices, expectations, and teacher beliefs can shape the identity of an ELL, who s/he becomes as a person, it is
crucial to consider the possible ramifications. The following chapter focuses specifically on the students of Park and Field Schools, exploring how the schooling environments and language instructional practices influenced their identities. A close look at the effects of particular learning environments and instructional practices on ELLs is unpacked, along with understanding why and how their beliefs are impacted. Further, the following seeks a better understanding of the impact of these beliefs on young people and who they are becoming as individuals.
Chapter Five:

Who ELLS Become as a Result of School Contexts and Practices

Student Identities

With nuanced understandings of issues alive in the larger educational landscape and specific school and classroom contexts, further analysis of field notes and interview data from Park and Field School focused on the people most affected by the program model and practices enacted in each classroom. Analysis resulted in 15 identity claim categories shedding light on who participants were becoming as learners, educators, and people, and the impact on lives, identities, and quite possibly future trajectories.

Tables 5.1-5.3 illustrate the 15 most prevalent claims, noting how case study participants aligned with each claim. Although there were 15 identity claims, noteworthy parallels and discrepancies were apparent in 11 areas. Before highlighting these, the following section will expand upon participants categorized into particular identity claims, revealing how language instructional models and schooling practices have influenced their identities.

In the paragraphs that follow, the most prevalent identity claims at each school are unpacked by drawing from findings linked to specific case study participants. Case study examples are intended to make visible the thinking associated with claims and to build understandings about the implications of instructional decisions on the lives of real people.

Park School: An English-only learning environment.

*Edgar’s thinking on being a “good student” and learning English.* Edgar was a student new to Park in fourth grade. He transferred from an elementary school within the
Table 5.1 Identity Claims

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am one who thinks that good students act a particular way (listen to their teacher, follow rules, raise hands to participate, get good grades, etc.):</th>
<th>I am one who likes coming to school:</th>
<th>I am one who thinks that English is the ticket to success:</th>
<th>I am one who thinks that being bilingual leads to future opportunities:</th>
<th>I am one who enjoys or is proud to speak Spanish:</th>
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Table 5.2 Identity Claims

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<th>I am one who enjoys or is proud to speak English:</th>
<th>I am one who does not like speaking Spanish:</th>
<th>I am one who is forgetting Spanish:</th>
<th>I am one who thinks that I have to learn English because I am in the United States:</th>
<th>I am one who speaks Spanish because I am (or my family is) Mexican:</th>
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Table 5.3 Identity Claims

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<th>I am one who thinks that being bilingual makes me smart:</th>
<th>I am one who thinks that I am smart if I speak English:</th>
<th>I am one who yearns to speak English:</th>
<th>I am one who feels comfortable speaking Spanish at school:</th>
<th>I am one who feels comfortable speaking English at school:</th>
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same district, one with greater amounts of Spanish than English instruction. Edgar felt happy that he came to Park, and believed that he was smarter because he learned more
this year than in previous school years. Edgar provided short responses in English to many direct questions during our interview. When it came to talking about how to be a “good student” he, along with most of his friends, thought they must get good grades on tests and report cards, raise their hands and say the right answers, follow the rules, not fight, not cheat, and must speak the language of the school—English. For example, when he spoke about social studies and the importance of getting As, he said,

ED: Because when we take the States and Capital test I get all As. But when we take the first test, I got an F, because I forget to study. Then we take the second and I got a C cuz [sic] I got four wrong. And the third one I got an A, and the other one I got an A. And if I get an A one more, my mom is going to buy me a game.

Edgar, along with classmates, positioned school success as something determined by others. He knew when he was being a good student based on his grade, the number of right or wrong answers, and/or other external rewards.

Edgar felt that being at Park School helped him learn English. In the beginning of the school year he could understand a little English and he actually did not speak very much. He and his classmates expressed their understandings of “the rules” and noted they were only permitted to speak when Mrs. Palma called on them. While learning in an environment where teachers often controlled the turn taking and opportunities to speak, Edgar felt that being in Mrs. Palma’s class, with English-dominant instruction and classmates that spoke mostly English, was good for him. Edgar felt that he learned a great deal. When talking about his feelings about learning and speaking English, he said,

AR: How do you feel about speaking English?
ED: Great, because I’m able to talk to my friends in English.
ED: It’s great, easy.
AR: It’s not hard for you?
ED: No.
AR: Why do you think it’s easy for you to speak English?
ED: Because in here I talk a lot of English and here I talked a little bit of Spanish at first, [in September] now when I was here for the rest of the year, I know English.
AR: How does that make you feel?
ED: Great.

Edgar explained that he felt happy when speaking English because he could understand and speak to teachers and students, a difference from the start of the school year. He practiced at home with family members and neighbors. Edgar attributed his fast development of English to his teacher and classmates, and could hardly remember what it was like when he spoke only Spanish.

Carlos and Marisol’s thinking on speaking and forgetting Spanish. Carlos was a fourth grader who attended Park School since the middle of kindergarten. He was consistently placed in transitional bilingual classrooms, where the teachers were bilingual in Spanish and English, but with majority English instruction. During informal and interview conversations, Carlos offered brief English responses when asked questions in Spanish or English. Carlos believed that a successful student at Park always got the answers right, was “silent” unless he raised his hand to participate, only spoke if he had the right answers, helped other students with their work, and had to speak English.

Carlos felt nervous and uncomfortable speaking Spanish in school. He spoke only English at school because “nobody speaks Spanish at school,” and said he spoke English with all friends, both in and out of school. When discussing places for speaking Spanish, he said,

CP: I talk in Spanish at my house and right here [in school] I talk in English.
AR: Okay, do you ever speak in Spanish in here?
CP: No. Uh uh.
AR: How come?
Carlos preferred speaking English, and thought that more of his day consisted of English-speaking. When talking about his feelings about English and Spanish, he said,

**CP:** I like English.
**AR:** How come you like it?
**CP:** Because it’s better than Spanish.
**AR:** Do you think so? Why is that?
**CP:** Cuz [sic] like, I think that Spanish is kind of boring. It don’t sound like fun.
**AR:** It doesn’t sound fun? And you think English sounds fun?
**CP:** Yeah.
**AR:** Why is that?
**CP:** Because we’re learning the same words that are funner [sic].
**AR:** You mean you can say the words more fun when you say the words in English?
**CP:** Mmm hmm. (Nods yes).
**AR:** Why do you think English is better?
**CP:** It’s fun.
**AR:** Is there anything about Spanish that you like?
**CP:** No.

Carlos spoke Spanish at home with his parents and newborn brother. When speaking to his parents, Carlos noted that he sometimes forgot Spanish. He thought this was because he was so used to speaking English for most of the day. When this happened, he explained that he used a translator program on his computer to figure out the words in order to communicate with his parents. He thought Spanish was important in order to speak to his family, but wished they knew English so he would not have to speak Spanish. He admitted to feeling “angry” as a result, and wished that they could speak English because it was “more fun” than Spanish.

Marisol was a fourth grader classmate with Carlos who had been at Park School since Kindergarten. She was previously placed in transitional bilingual classrooms with mostly English instruction. Marisol spoke Spanish at home with her parents and younger
brother. While English was her dominant language at school, she occasionally conversed in Spanish with classmates at lunch when they initiated native language use. However, she felt “shy” and uncomfortable speaking Spanish in school, mostly because Mrs. Palma and her classmates spoke English, and believed that school was a place for speaking English. She spoke English with most friends, both in and out of school. Marisol admitted to language loss and said,

**MV:** I don’t like to talk in Spanish at school.
**AR:** Why don’t you like to speak Spanish at school?
**MV:** It’s because I’m like too shy and I only want to talk, and I don’t remember like a lot of Spanish and I only remember how to talk English.
**AR:** Oh interesting, so at school you kind of forget (Spanish) and then you go home and you remember and you speak more?
**MV:** Yeah (nodding), at school I can only remember like only half of Spanish.
**AR:** Interesting. But at home you remember?
**MV:** Yeah, a lot.
**AR:** Cuz maybe you hear it more?
**MV:** Yeah cuz [sic] of my mom and dad and family.

**Jorge’s thinking on how speaking English makes you smart.** Jorge was a fourth grader, new to Park in the year of this study. He transferred in from a suburban public school approximately 20 miles from Park. He was in a transitional bilingual program since kindergarten and through conversations I learned that he received more Spanish instruction in earlier grades than his current peers at Park. Jorge had a rather expansive English vocabulary compared to his classmates, and when talking about his early language learning experiences he said,

**AR:** How do you think you’ve developed this vocabulary? How have you learned all these big words in English? How did you become so good in English?
**JV:** Umm, my teachers from kindergarten, they taught me a lot and when I was in first grade, I got a really good report card in all those grades.
**AR:** When you learned to read, if you can remember back, did you learn first to read in English or Spanish?
JV: Um, well I learned both of them at the same time. Write Spanish, write English, and read Spanish and read English.

Although Jorge’s perception on language, specifically regarding Spanish, was quite distinct from his classmates, he still placed more importance on English. Jorge recognized the value of speaking Spanish as he felt that he would be able to communicate with more people in the world when older, and was told by his mother that he was lucky to be bilingual. Jorge said, “I feel proud to call myself Mexican-American” and told me that he enjoyed speaking two languages. Prevalent in Jorge’s and his classmates’ responses was a common trend of equating knowledge of English to intelligence. They expressed satisfaction with their increased English proficiency, and said they felt “smart” only when they began to speak and understand English better. Jorge believed that it was more important to speak English in order to be successful. Because school success would get him into college, and later help get him a job, he thought that speaking English was important for such opportunities to occur. Since instruction and all tests and schoolwork were in English, it was vital to speak and understand English, especially reading and writing, in order to be considered smart. In a focus group discussion about whether smart students spoke English or Spanish at Park School he said,

JV: I think the majority of the teachers can’t help out that much, students who speak Spanish.
AR: So that’s why you think that you have to speak English to be a good student here?
All: Yeah.
AR: Okay. What about if you just speak Spanish, can you be a good student?
JV: Maybe, but not so much, because if you do tests and its English and you put the words in Spanish, you’re going to get an F.

Students did not feel “successful” in school if their English was not developed. Nobody expressed positive thoughts on feeling academically competent because of their
ability to speak and understand Spanish. All student participants told me that they only felt smart once they learned English.

**Field School: A dual language learning environment.**

*Mariana’s thinking on being a “good student.”* Mariana was a fourth grade student who attended Field since first grade. Mariana preferred to be interviewed in both languages, and her responses varied between English and Spanish. Like all her classmates, she thought that a successful student participated, raised her hand to answer questions, helped other students, did her work, paid attention, and followed the teachers’ instructions. When talking about appropriate classroom behaviors, she said,

AR: So if I watched you durante la clase, durante lectura, durante matemáticas, que vería? (So if I watched you during class, during reading, math, what would I see)? So would you participate? Are you quiet? ¿Platicas mucho con tus amigos o niños? ¿Qué vería? (Do you talk a lot with friends? What would I see)?

MA: Participarlo, um, contestando preguntas, hago mi trabajo, ayudarle los niños. (Participate, um, answering questions, I do my work, help classmates).

Mariana also believed that a good student spoke both English and Spanish, and felt that both teachers emphasized the importance of being bilingual.

Mariana was an average student according to both fourth grade teachers. During observations, Mariana was often quiet. When I asked her why she did not participate and seemed reserved, she said that she felt unsure of herself when participating, as she often knew the correct answers but felt uncomfortable saying them aloud. She said this was more common in the afternoon, where she felt nervous to answer a question in English, as she did not want to say it incorrectly. She revealed in conversations that language success correlated to correct pronunciation, and did not feel safe speaking English unless she knew the “right way to say it.”
Mariana did not feel as smart as other students, mainly those students stronger in their English proficiency. She believed that a successful student in Ms. Cynthia’s class was very strong in English, and as a result was favored by the teacher. Mariana was an anomaly amongst Field student participants, as all others felt safe speaking both languages in school and enjoyed any opportunity to practice Spanish or English.

**Ana’s thinking on speaking Spanish and English at school, and bilingualism leading to opportunities.** Ana was a fourth grader who was at Field since first grade and received dual language instruction upon arrival at the school. In her interview, Ana preferred to be questioned in Spanish, and provided lengthy, yet coherent and elaborate responses in Spanish.

Ana said she felt happy speaking Spanish because she knew more and enjoyed speaking the language. She also was stronger in her native language. In Ms. Natalie’s class, she only spoke Spanish, and in the afternoon class spoke both English and Spanish. She spoke English to Ms. Cynthia and when answering questions or reading the basal stories, and spoke Spanish when working with peers or socializing.

Ana also said she felt happy speaking English. She felt that her teacher helped her learn more English this year and was excited by this growth. Although Ana sometimes felt challenged in speaking English, and could not think of the words at times throughout the school day, this did not take away from her enjoyment. In fact, one of her favorite things in school was to practice her English. Ana felt that she learned a lot more English than her twin sister in the classroom across the hall because of Ms. Cynthia who only spoke English. When talking about when she felt happy in school she said,

AR:  So cuando sientes feliz? (So when do you feel happy?)
AF:  Con Ms. Cynthia. (No hesitation).
Ana recognized the importance of speaking two languages. She felt that it was important to speak Spanish to her family and in her neighborhood and speaking her first language would increase future job opportunities. Ana hoped to eventually work as a nurse or a veterinarian. Speaking both English and Spanish would allow her to help out in a hospital or in an emergency of any kind.

David’s thinking on speaking Spanish and how being bilingual makes you smart. David was a fourth grader who moved between Chicago and Mexico twice since kindergarten. He started kindergarten in a dual language classroom at Field and moved to Mexico for first and second grades. He returned to Field in third grade. David preferred to be interviewed in both languages, and varied his responses between English and Spanish.

Similar to most classmates, David thought that a smart student was bilingual in English and Spanish and teachers and administrators recognized this as successful. When talking about intelligence connecting to bilingualism he said,

DB: I think a good student speaks both [Spanish and English].
AR: Why?
DB: Because they’re smart and they could speak both.
AR: So you think someone who’s smart can speak both?
DB: Uh huh.
AR: Do you think you can be smart if you only speak Spanish?
DB: No because there’s somebody that asks you something in English that they’re lost or something, and you will not know how to respond.
AR: Mmm hmm. So do you think that you can be smart if you only speak English?
DB: No.
AR: So you have to speak both languages to be smart?
DB: Uh huh.

He believed he was smart because of his language skills in both English and Spanish. As a result of his bilingualism, David thought his teachers and parents considered him to be intelligent. He exuded confidence when speaking both languages in the two classroom settings, and if he was unsure of how to say something in one language, he quickly switched to the other in order to convey his point or response. He did not, however, like to have classmates translate for him, and preferred to speak on his behalf.

David wanted to maintain and develop Spanish, and liked that he had the opportunity to practice during the morning class. He connected Spanish with his Mexican ethnicity. When talking about maintenance of his first language, David said,

AR: Why do you think it’s [Ms. Natalie’s class] a Spanish class?
DB: Because, we have a teacher here that talks all the time in Spanish and we need to practice our Spanish too.
AR: Why do you think that you need to practice your Spanish? Why do you think you need to practice Spanish?
DB: Because that’s our language, the first language, our language and if, cuz [sic] I have a cousin that doesn’t talk it, and he used to talk only Spanish and now his mom and dad don’t understand him because he doesn’t know how to talk Spanish anymore. He doesn’t practice it.
AR: So how do you think his parents feel?
DB: Sad.
AR: That’s pretty sad, right? Do you want that to happen to you?
DB: No.
AR: What would you do? How would you be able to talk to your parents?
DB: If I didn’t know Spanish anymore, I would go to a Spanish class and start talking Spanish again, try to talk in Spanish.

He did not want to forget his native language, and saw value to being bilingual for family communication and maintaining relationships. Being bilingual in English and Spanish was important to David not only for familial communication and because it was a part of his “Mexican” culture, but also for jobs and visiting places around the world.
**Joanna’s thinking on yearning to learn English.** Joanna was a fourth grader who was in a dual language classroom at Field Elementary since first grade. Joanna also preferred to be interviewed in both English and Spanish, and used both languages in her responses. She believed that a smart student and a successful student at Field spoke both English and Spanish.

Joanna spoke Spanish at home with her parents and English with her older brother. She spoke both languages at school and felt that this was the first year that she was able to speak more English. Joanna really enjoyed learning English and felt that she needed to speak English, along with Spanish, in order to work when she was older. This was because there were people who spoke both in the United States and it could help for future jobs.

Although Joanna felt comfortable and enjoyed speaking Spanish because it was her first language, she actually liked speaking English better. This was because she was happy when she spoke it and was proud of herself for learning so much. Her progress in English made her feel tremendously excited and successful, and Joanna was motivated by any opportunity to help her learn more. For example, she practiced her English with her 15-year-old brother, English-dominant teachers and students at Field, and enjoyed doing so because it helped her learn more. When talking about her favorite facets of school she said,

AR: Okay. Um. What, qué es tu cosa favorita acerca de la escuela? (What is your favorite thing about school)?
JR: (Long pause)
AR: Your favorite thing about school?
JR: Matemáticas. Y English.
AR: Okay, por qué matemáticas y por qué Ingles?
JR: Matemáticas porque hay multiplicación. Y English porque quiero aprender más English.
Later in the interview, Joanna discussed her preference in books:

AR: Oh, okay. ¿Qué te gusta leer mejor, los libros en inglés o español? (What do you like to read better, English or Spanish books)?
JR: Inglés. (English).
AR: ¿Por qué?
JR: Porque es de, allí están mas chiquitas palabras que en español.
AR: So no sabes muchas palabras en español?
JR: Sí, pero los libros en español tienen palabras muy largas, difíciles.
AR: Oh okay, so cuando lees libros en inglés, las palabras son chiquitas pero cuando lees libros en español, las palabras son más largas?
JR: Sí.

Joanna’s desire to learn English was noticed by Ms. Cynthia, as she shared with me how proud of Joanna she was for her progress. Through observations, it became apparent that Joanna grew increasingly comfortable speaking in English in a whole group setting.

As a result of the data, it is evident that that the students in both school settings developed beliefs and understandings as a result of their schooling sociocultural experiences. While participants from Park and Field shared similar understandings of behavior expectations and schooling success, ideas around language and culture were quite distinct. The next section unpacks the similarities and differences within the identity claims, and explains possible reasoning behind these outcomes.

Relationships between Identity Codes, Participants, and School Contexts

Parallel identity codes across schools.

“I am one who thinks that good students act a particular way.” As previously explained and displayed in the Identity Claim Table 5.1-Table 5.3, students in both contexts shared similar understandings of schooling. Awareness of appropriate school behavior was defined as raising a hand to participate, speaking when spoken to, or following rules and procedures at Park and Field. Student participants constructed similar definitions of a successful student—exhibiting this appropriate behavior, along
with getting good grades and completing assigned work. This overlap across contexts could be attributed to the use of mandated curricular programs and instructional styles existent at both schools as well as a larger sociopolitical discourse around schooling. Institutional discourses of schooling create definitions of certain types of students as acceptable or “normal.”

Both schools also had similar student demographics in terms of socioeconomic status, race and linguistic background. Research on social reproduction (Anyon, 1981; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; MacLeod, 1987/1995) explains this commonality across settings, as schools teaching certain student groups do so through a “hidden curriculum” to maintain current societal divisions, and restrict social mobility. Perhaps school culture and teacher practices at both schools transferred to students’ beliefs on who they were as individuals, how they defined “success,” and who they will become.

“I am one who enjoys or is proud to speak English.” Most student participants in the two settings shared this feeling of pride when they talked about learning and speaking English. They were happy to have developed English proficiency and most felt comfortable speaking it in different settings. Students especially were proud of themselves when speaking to English-speaking teachers and showing them how much they have learned. Speaking English on behalf of their parents or other family members also allowed students to feel resourceful.

“I am one who feels comfortable speaking English at school.” Majority of students at Park and Field felt comfortable speaking English at school and with the exception of Mariana, felt safe to practice in front of their peers or teachers. Students
occasionally felt uncomfortable speaking English if they were not sure of what to say, or how to say it, but freely spoke English if they knew how to express themselves.

“I am one who thinks that I have to learn English because I am in the United States.” All students across both settings felt the need to learn English. They all attributed the learning of English to something they had to do because they lived in the United States. While students at Field believed it was also important to speak Spanish, they felt that speaking English was also absolutely necessary to succeed in and out of school. Beyond schooling practices, expectations, and norms, students may have received this message and possible pressures from the family, community, and other social factors.

The similarities in both school contexts and participants’ understandings could be attributed to school discourse models, the role of schooling, and societal influences. Students seemed to share beliefs around schooling behaviors and expectations, along with pressures to learn English to obtain success. However, each school’s discourse structure differed in terms of their perspectives of students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These disparities contributed to distinctions in student thinking and responses regarding language and culture.

Divergence of identity codes across schools.

“I am one who thinks that English is the ticket to success.” Although all students and teachers thought that learning English was important for success, Mrs. Palma and students at Park made it known that speaking English led to success within the schooling context and post-schooling accomplishments. Speaking English would allow them to do well in school, go to college, and get a job in the future. With the exception
of Jorge, Park participants did not think they would use their Spanish for professional purposes and only would continue speaking Spanish to communicate with family. Conversely, majority of Field participants believed that speaking both languages would lead to these same accomplishments, and it was necessary to be bilingual to be successful in the future.

“I am one who enjoys or is proud to speak Spanish”/“I am one who does not like speaking Spanish.” Students at Field all enjoyed speaking Spanish. They felt proud that they could speak two languages and could still speak their first language, or the language of their family. Students may have liked speaking English just as much, if not more, but all expressed comfort in speaking Spanish, and associated feelings of joy or content with their native language.

Park participants did not feel this way. With the exception of Jorge, all students preferred English, and associated feelings of shame, anger, shyness, or embarrassment to speaking Spanish. Through interviews and focus groups, it was evident that students did not like speaking their native language. Even Mrs. Palma, who spoke Spanish as a second language, did not consider this an asset, and hesitantly spoke Spanish only when absolutely necessary for communication.

“I am one who feels comfortable speaking Spanish at school.” Comfort in speaking their native language within the school setting was evident in Field participants. Because all students understood that they received dual language instruction, they did not hesitate when talking about their consistent use of Spanish during the school day. Students spoke Spanish in both social and academic contexts.
This was markedly different at Park School as students voiced their discomfort speaking Spanish within the school. Some felt shy or embarrassed and that Spanish did not have a role within the school. While several teachers and students had at least some knowledge of Spanish, students did not recognize this and believed that very few teachers and students actually spoke Spanish at their school.

“I am one who is forgetting Spanish.” As a result of speaking majority English on a daily basis, Park students experienced some language loss. Participants admitted to forgetting some Spanish because of their focus on learning and speaking English. Because school was not a place to practice the native language, Spanish-speaking was becoming less of a priority. Some students expressed that their language loss affected familial communication and they wished their parents knew English to alleviate this challenge.

Because Field participants used Spanish on a daily basis, L1 loss was not experienced. It was not even a discussion point because students expressed their comfort with native language practice and spoke it consistently within the school and home.

“I am one who speaks Spanish because I am (or my family is) Mexican.” Correlation between language and ethnicity was evident at Field School. All students understood that speaking Spanish was important to them because it was their first language and the language of their family. Because students and/or their families were Mexican/Mexican-American, there was a sense of pride connected to their language and ethnicity. All students understood that they were of Mexican origin and valued their L1 as a result.
This connection was not as clear at Park School. Jorge was the only participant who connected the speaking of Spanish to his country of origin or cultural identity. He expressed pride for his first language, his family, and told me he was “happy and proud to be Mexican-American.” Because of this, he knew speaking Spanish was very important to him and would be forever a part of his life. The other Park participants did not feel this way, nor made connections between language and ethnicity.

“I am one who thinks that I have to speak English to be smart”/“I am one who thinks that being bilingual makes me smart and leads to future opportunities.” While all participants recognized that speaking English was necessary to achieve academic success, Mrs. Palma and Park students felt that you only had to speak English to be intelligent. Because academic performance was measured in English, it was imperative to develop these L2 skills, perhaps losing the L1 as a result. Students did not think they would use their Spanish in the future for any other reason beyond communication with family. They did not predict that speaking Spanish would be resourceful in the future, nor would help them in their jobs or higher education. Students and Mrs. Palma said that English would be their professional language in the future. If students did not develop their English academic and social proficiencies, Mrs. Palma feared that they would not finish high school and be college bound. Jorge was once again the exception, as he felt that he would speak both languages, and perhaps even learn a third language that would help him with his future occupation.

Field participants felt differently, as they believed that speaking both languages made them intelligent and successful, and realized that speaking Spanish exceeded
familial communication. Once again because they were learning academic content in both languages, they connected bilingualism to academic success.

Beyond schooling, Field students and teachers also felt that becoming bilingual and biliterate would lead to increased opportunities in the future. For example, students predicted they would speak both English and Spanish for occupations, as well as in college. Further, they believed their bilingualism would be used as a resource to help others in emergencies, and would help them communicate with more people in the world. Most students expressed the desire to learn more languages in the future, such as Chinese or Italian.

Findings from both transitional bilingual and dual language contexts exposed similarities in instructional practices, schooling perceptions and desired behaviors and actions of students, with some marked differences in language practices, teacher and student thoughts on language learning and use, and understandings of home culture. Findings suggest that language instructional programs and schools’ missions do impact students and how they understand themselves as learners and individuals. While it seemed that Park students believed that Spanish was not an important aspect of their identities, Field students embraced and recognized the value of their native language. However, students in both schools responded to the dominant discourse that aimed to create students who were not analytical thinkers and were instead passive recipients of information—students who could get the right answer and score well on tests. It seemed that while Field students were working to develop two languages, becoming autonomous critical thinkers who could productively contribute to society, was not necessarily part of their definitions of successful schooling or part of what successful students need for
participation in social life beyond schools. Findings call into question the notion of
determining “the right” program or model for supporting language learning and language
learners. Getting schooling “right” seems much more complex. The following chapter
focuses on implications of the study, and how these influence education in current public
schools.
Chapter Six

The Takeaway: What This Study Says to Educational Stakeholders

Implications of this Study

Findings detail how Park claimed a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) model; time inside the school revealed something different. Observations and interviews uncovered that practices at Park did not exemplify the core characteristics and structure of a TBE program (Hofstetter 2004; Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003; Soltero, 2004). The instructional model resembled an English-only model, providing sheltered English instruction when necessary. On the other hand Field followed the spirit of the definition of dual language but life in both schools offer a cautionary tale where noting the type of program is far from sufficient in creating learners prepared for 21st century life in one or multiple languages. Simply naming a program is not enough; pedagogical practices, beliefs and expectations assume equal weight as language of instruction. Drawing from insights gained from studying life in both schools, this chapter implies that it is necessary to move beyond selecting “the right” program to taking into account the practices that unfold in school spaces. Specifically it calls educators to consider time for using languages in order to learn language, to examine quality of instruction interactions, to scrutinize issues of language and power, and to think about who children are and closely follow who children become as a result of their schooling.

Learning through language: Time to use language. While instructional practices in both school settings portrayed similarities, space and time to practice language differed. Halliday’s (1978) research included language learning, where learning
language, learning about language, and learning through language are important stages in
the process. As explained in the literature review, learning language includes
investigation and construction through interactions with others, and learning through
language involves the individual’s use of context and understandings of the world to
make meaning of language (Anderson, 2004; Halliday, 1978; Matthiessen, 2006). His
model highlights the need for language learners to be language users and that use yields
more learning about language itself as well as the topic of study. In a school context
when teaching ELLs, this learning through language stage is crucial, as it is important for
children’s language development to exceed superficial levels and enhance cognitive skills
necessary for advancement. Krashen’s (1981, 1982) research on language acquisition
also applies, as ELLs must engage in contextualized use in order to develop their first and
second languages. In order to ensure this growth, students must be given varied
opportunities to use and practice language in a non-threatening environment.

Students in this particular study were all learning English as a second language.
They entered the schooling context in kindergarten with stronger knowledge of their
native language, Spanish. In general, children and ELLs require time and space to speak
both their first and second languages in contexts that help ensure meaningful
comprehension. However, this time to use or acquire language, or learning through
language, differed in both school contexts. At Park School, student participants did not
have substantial time to talk—that is they did not have much time to use either language.
Most of the school day involved teacher-driven instruction, where student opportunity to
use language was limited to responding to questions with teacher-anticipated answers.
Because the majority of instructional time was somewhat scripted and predictable (with
heavy use of mandated curricular programs), native English speakers and ELLs’ use of English was limited. All spoken English was nearly programmed and prescribed; students spoke English only when they knew the expected or desirable phrase or sentence. This was reflected in interviews and focus groups, as students seemed unable to explain their thoughts and feelings. Perhaps students encountered difficulty engaging in interview and focus group discussions because they were not used to, or familiar with, non-prescribed conversations in the school setting. Mrs. Palma also corrected English use, which potentially hinders language learning (Krashen, 1981, 1982). Overall, unsuitable conditions to acquire meaningful English were pervasive.

Students also did not have “choice” as to which language they could use, which is critical in language learning (Saunders & O’Brien, 2006). As discussed in the findings, there was little Spanish use in Mrs. Palma’s classroom. It was evident through student responses that they felt uncomfortable using their L1 at Park. School was a place to speak only English, and using Spanish in an academic context was not welcomed. Mrs. Palma, a Latina speaker of Spanish as a second language, did not use this component of her identity to connect to students. Thus, there were no opportunities to practice and use students’ native language.

Further, limited free time and social conversations at lunch, and the lack of recess limited their opportunities to talk with peers. Instead, these potential periods of the day—where social conversation had a place and students could practice and use both languages—were tightly monitored and opportunities to learn through language were inadequate.
By contrast, substantial time was available to practice Spanish at Field, as use of students’ L1 was emphasized through all academic and social conversation in Ms. Natalie’s classroom. Weekly class meetings permitted learning through language and maintenance of L1, as it provided a safe space for students to engage in social discussion in Spanish. In Ms. Cynthia’s classroom, students had increased chances to speak English in a safe, non-threatening way. Students’ English use was not corrected, and it was understood that they could speak Spanish to convey their ideas when appropriate. While Ms. Cynthia herself did not understand what students were saying when they spoke Spanish, she helped students understand that they were language resources. The daily 40 minutes of non-instructional time during lunch and recess also provided space and time for students to acquire and learn through language. Because of the language program model at Field, students consequently learned through both languages, and opportunities for first and second language development occurred on a daily basis.

My research suggests that educators of students learning English as an additional language need to provide time and safe space to use the first and second languages. When ELLs have the opportunity to practice English in comfortable settings, their confidence grows. When they are in secure environments and the affective filter is not triggered, their language can develop productively. As is evident in this particular study, most Park students did not elaborate on answers, ask questions or express their feelings. Most responses and observed conversation were succinct, said in short phrases or single words. Conversely because of increased time to learn through language Field students were capable of expressing themselves and communicating their emotions and feelings.
They used descriptive language in their interview and focus group responses, and felt comfortable switching between Spanish and English to convey meaning.

Nevertheless, while Field participants experienced more social time to use language, teacher led instructional time at both Park and Field did not allow for deep student thinking or critique. Any academic conversation that occurred in either setting did not develop the skills necessary to be productive members of society. So while Field students learned two languages, the level of development was limited in the academic sense. The language used and modeled did not necessarily prepare students for life as an active citizen in society. How language is actually used and developed in the classroom bears greater significance, as this influences who students become. Instructional methods and curriculum contribute to acquisition of academic language, and this shifts focus from language, to the particular learning methods or opportunities apparent in the classroom settings.

**Examining quality of instruction.** While there are many definitions of quality that permeate educational and societal discourse, those that view schooling as a means to becoming active citizens likely would agree that quality requires deep student engagement and participation. Such a classroom involves students in decision-making processes, both with respect to curriculum and the learning community. Content learned is relevant to students’ lives and instruction is inquiry-based (Dewey, 1916/2007). The teacher’s role is facilitator rather than manager.

Instruction in all three classrooms studied was teacher-centered and elicited basic recall information. Students raised hands to speak, only did so when they knew the “appropriate” response, did not come up to the board regularly to explain work or think
aloud, and did not ask many questions to clarify concepts. The Initiation, student Response and teacher Evaluation (IRE) discourse structure was prevalent in all classrooms (Cazden, 2001). Student participants in both sites viewed teachers as authority figures, not facilitators, where they had no role in challenging what was said and consistently agreed with the “desired,” correct answers. Curricular content was rarely relevant and not based on student investigation. Freire’s (1970/2000) banking concept prevailed, as teachers deposited information into students, while students played the role as “receptacles.”

The demands for a learner in the 21st century mentioned in the review of the literature were not fostered in either setting. If one defines quality in these terms, then an emphasis on collaboration and development of problem-solving skills, communication, using information for multiple purposes, analysis and critique of texts ought to be an integral part of daily life in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010; NCTE, 2011). While students worked collaboratively with peers in both schools, they only worked together to accomplish assigned work—which amounted to completing worksheets together. Partner and small group work was limited to learning to get along or take turns. Helping each other was restricted to telling peers the assignment answers. Any response to literature or text selections did not transcend superficial comprehension or coverage. In these collaborations, students did not develop general problem-solving skills. Teachers did not create or facilitate a learning environment where students “created, critiqued, analyzed, or evaluated” texts.

Thus, naming a program and language of instruction is not enough to develop a bilingual or biliterate student with agency and the necessary skills to engage the world in
critical and powerful ways. While student participants may leave Field School speaking, reading, and writing in two languages, they are not developing higher order thinking skills or learning to challenge the status quo. The school’s cultural acceptance may guide students in development of pride for their ethnic origin and linguistic background, while the instructional practices and norms are shaping students’ schooling perceptions. Students are led to believe that while school may or may not be a place for cultural acceptance in terms of language and ethnicity, it remains a place where success is defined by narrow measures.

It is important to question and understand why this discourse structure was apparent at Park and Field, both spaces with Latino/a Spanish-speaking ELLs. Instructional interactions and existing hierarchies were similar, producing a particular type of individual. Before discussing who students become as a result of schooling, it is important to examine the role of English versus Spanish, as this perspective also affects identity construction. While the language instructional programs at both schools were distinct, the intense desire to learn English was obvious among all participants, even Field students who valued their L1. Thinking about the power of language, English in this nation, further explains this desire. Placing societal power on one language removes elements of non-dominant cultures and facilitates the assimilation process.

**Scrutinizing the power of language and deculturalization.** Language is about more than syntax and vocabulary—it is about power and access. While the children in this study were born into households where they first learned a language other than English, findings suggested that English was favored. English is seen as the language of success in our nation (and worldwide) and it is important for educators to recognize that
this dominance can erode a major aspect of linguistically diverse groups’ culture. While learning social and academic English affords individuals linguistic capital in the United States, it is not necessary to develop this language of power at the expense of eliminating the native language. The risk of deculturalization must be understood, which was a powerful theme in this study’s findings. All student participants were either born in Mexico, or their parents emigrated from Mexico to the United States shortly before they were born. Although fourth grade may be a bit young in understanding cultural identity, the students were asked how they felt about their native language, being Mexican, or whether they considered themselves to be Mexican, Mexican-American, or American. All Field students connected to their Mexican ethnicity on some level: Some students said they spoke Spanish because they were of Mexican descent, others acknowledged that their families lived and/or came from Mexico, while all shared pride when referred to as Mexican or Mexican-American. Irrespective of these cultural connections, Field participants recognized that English was very important. While several students said they envisioned speaking Spanish in future occupations, they also knew that speaking English was a priority for the workplace. While students were not necessarily “deculturalized” at Field, they continued to place English in a relative role of power.

Most Park participants identified as being American because they spoke “more English.” They did not feel that speaking Spanish would be involved in their futures beyond familial communication. Park participants emphasized English use and sometimes they spoke so much in and outside of school to reinforce these language skills, that Spanish was “forgotten.” This triggers curiosity on what communication looks like in the students’ homes as they were so focused on gaining robust English fluency, they
consequently neglected their native language—the language that is the means of communication with the adults/caregivers of their family. This is supported in the literature as the fixation on learning English and assimilating to the dominant culture results in feelings of shame towards speaking the L1 and creating a communication barrier between parents and children (Gutierrez, et al., 2002; Jacinta, 2002; Spring, 2007; Valenzuela, 1999).

Further, Mrs. Palma of Park School did not prohibit Spanish from being spoken in the classroom, but did not use Spanish in her instruction or modifications. Thus, while she did not explicitly tell students to refrain from speaking Spanish, they picked up on the clues. How welcome is the Spanish language in a learning environment where Spanish use is not actively supported by the teacher? Students internalized the dominant discourse structure, saying that they felt “shy,” or “angry” when speaking Spanish, or even that they “forgot” Spanish when they were at school, but suddenly remembered when in the home. In reality, they did not “forget” the language, as they were able to speak it with family, but instead suppressed their L1 as a result of the school environment.

The power of the English language affects the teacher-student relationship. Perhaps participants did not feel validated in the classroom, as their first language, a large component of cultural identity, was not respected. As discussed in the literature, this generates “anxiety” within the learning environment and can influence ELLs’ school perceptions and disengage them from their learning experiences (DaSilva-Iddings & Katz, 2007; Ortiz & Sumaryono, 2004). Park students made strong parallels between speaking English and having a deeper, comfortable understanding of, and relationship
with Mrs. Palma. While Mrs. Palma spoke Spanish, students did not recognize this as a resource to them. Speaking English was the way to communicate with her, and if they could not think of the correct words, communication was halted. Her actions, attitudes toward Spanish, and instructional implications spoke loudly to her students.

There is a fundamental, if not irreconcilable, tension in a school environment that purports to be bilingual, yet ascribes and/or is victim to the superiority of English. There are many benefits to speaking two languages, both socially and cognitively, and valuing and building upon Spanish as a native language is a laudable start. In other words, a non-English native language is a resource—both for the student and the school to which s/he belongs. English-only settings do not provide opportunities where ELLs are appreciated for this unique and respectable facet of their identities (Genesee and Riches, 2006; Saunders & O’Brien, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991b). It is imperative that educational affiliates understand these issues and repercussions of language, power, and deculturalization in order to shift toward viewing language as a resource (Ruiz, 1984).

Thinking about students’ backgrounds and who they are as individuals upon entering the school is an aspect of the language as a resource perspective. New English learners are individuals that come into school communities with a wealth of background knowledge and experiences to build upon. School discourse structures evident at Park and Field, and so many other public schools in the nation, induce educational stakeholders to believe that becoming one particular type of student is the desirable outcome, rather than viewing schooling as a means to produce diverse, unique individuals. These individuals must realize that because schooling shapes student
identity, it is necessary to think about who students are when they enter a school, and consequently who they become.

**Thinking about who children are and become as a result of schooling.**

*Asset versus deficit perspective of native language and identity.* It is not controversial to assert that educators affect in- and post-schooling identities. Positioning learners in particular ways plays a role in developing self-perceptions and perspectives on his/her societal role. Teaching students as blank slates, disregarding background and prior knowledge was the instructional norm at Park. In my view, Mrs. Palma and administrators devalued what students brought into the classroom, particularly their knowledge of Spanish, while most educators at Field welcomed this into the curriculum.

Latino/a students learning English as an additional language at both Park and Field were viewed differently across settings, influencing aspects of their identities. At Park School, students’ knowledge of their first language, Spanish, was viewed as a deficit. By omitting the students’ language from the school curriculum and environment, negative messages about the Spanish language become apparent, thus displaying blatant disapproval for students’ cultures and backgrounds. As a result of the school’s deficit perspective, ELL participants at Park did not ascribe worth to their native language—their likelihood of becoming truly bilingual was minimized. The pervasive deficit perspective at Park School had significant impact on the ELLs’ perceptions about themselves, their schooling experiences, and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Mrs. Palma positioned her successful students as monolingual English-speakers who did not need their linguistic background to help them move forward in the classroom; those students who needed more native language support were positioned as lower achievers.
What becomes of students who are less developed in their English skills? If they are continuously perceived as underachieving because of their English proficiency, they may begin to doubt themselves as learners and become unmotivated. If they are not able to effectively communicate with their teacher, their level of engagement with the curriculum and overall schooling experience decreases. How would students’ self-perceptions change if they were instead positioned as thinkers, as bilinguals and bicultural individuals?

Conversely, Spanish was considered an asset at Field School, as the school’s mission was to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in all students, portraying a value-added perspective of Spanish. Teachers positioned ELLs as bilingual and biliterate, as those who acknowledged the importance and value of knowing two languages. Students’ thinking and beliefs were influenced as a result. All ELL participants esteemed their native language; they shared beliefs that being bilingual would bring them post-schooling success. Because Spanish was widely accepted in their school, as they not only were surrounded by spoken language but also instructed in their L1, the fourth graders developed dignity: They were proud that they could speak two languages and most importantly acknowledged and embraced their cultural and linguistic background. They did not feel the need to detach this important aspect of their identity from their academic setting. School was just as much a safe space for Spanish as it was for English. The worth of their native language at Field School may have influenced students’ self-perceptions and who they become as individuals post-schooling. They have greater potential of becoming more confident, and bilingual and bicultural as adolescents and adults.
The outlook toward Spanish-speaking ELLs at Field ought to be the dominant perspective. It is imperative that more educational stakeholders foster this perspective in schools so that it becomes contagious and widespread. Students from other countries around the world, such as Finland and Singapore, are bilingual or multilingual and bi- or multi-literate, in some instances through bilingual policies, and are viewed as valuable contributors to society because of multilingualism (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In the United States, privileged schools offer “foreign language” education to English dominant students. Colleges and universities have foreign language requirements, encouraging highly educated individuals to become bi- or multilingual. But students who enter elementary schools with a rich linguistic history in languages other than English are often viewed as inferior. They are deprived of opportunities to become bilingual and biliterate and benefit from the positive aspects. New English learners are set up for potential societal failure and are not afforded an equal playing field as native English speakers that have the possibility to learn two or more languages. They are instead forced to abandon a critical component of their selves in the process of becoming monolingual English speakers.

**Schooling and its influence on identity.** Beyond language and just as compelling, emphasizing obedience and rewarding one particular way of being, shapes identity. Both schools stressed “good” conduct, and disciplined students when they acted against the norm. Such a school and classroom culture produces a particular type of student: one who follows the rules, is respectful to teachers and classmates, speaks only when spoken to, raises his/her hand to talk or ask a question, knows the “correct” answers, and does not challenge authority or the desired responses. Students are not
taught to “think outside the box.” During the course of data collection, very few
discipline problems occurred, and not one student asked Mrs. Palma, Ms. Natalie, or Ms.
Cynthia a question for further clarity or disagreed with a classmate’s response. Students
appeared almost robotic as they behaved in a similar manner day after day. Students said
they had to enact these desirable behaviors in order to achieve post-schooling success.
All students across settings made comments that alluded to fear or disappointment felt by
themselves, parents or teachers, if they did not act a specific way—they wanted to please
teachers and administrators. These perceptions of schooling and themselves are directly
related to the school and teacher practices.

Students at Park and Field, and in many urban public schools, are taught what
acceptable behavior is, and that model students accept the existing conditions, exercise
limited and/or restricted creative thinking, and learn content and think at the superficial
level. They were not instructed or supported in the development of critical thinking skills
or in finding their own voice. These classroom structures and norms are not optimal for
learning. Children were becoming “good students” in the sense that they followed rules
that entailed being controlled. They did not, as Cazden (2001), Dewey (1916/2007), or
Freire (1970/2000) would suggest, have access to problem-posing or problem-solving
curricula where they could come to see themselves as agentive learners. In other words,
children were not becoming thinkers. Schooling in these sites did not prepare youth to
become citizens of a democratic society; it instead produced compliant children whose
senses of selves were tied to external judgments. Students were led to believe that this
was sufficient to obtain post-schooling success. But in reality, they likely will be set
apart from students who attended schools that built higher order thinking skills,
encouraged them to challenge the norm, and exposed students to multiple perspectives on learned concepts. These practices contribute to social reproduction, preventing socioeconomic mobility (Anyon, 1981; Bordieu, 1986; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; MacLeod, 1987/1995). The upshot is that perspectives on children in certain subgroups—Latino/a English language learners in this case—need to change immediately to increase educational equality and democratic schooling opportunities.

Beyond Park and Field: Implications for Education and Schooling

Findings from this particular study speak to the educational system as a whole. Providing time and safe space to use language, reexamining instructional quality, recognizing the effects of language and power, and understanding how schooling and dominant discourse structures shape student identity are essential when thinking about educating students to meet their utmost potential. Such considerations create further implications for educators, specifically regarding how best to prepare teachers and administrators to instruct students in current schools, so they can meet learning demands for the 21st century, as well as keeping in mind parents and the students themselves.

Reexamining teacher education and professional development. In college and university teacher education programs, just as classes on Special Education are required, courses on multicultural education and pedagogy to best teach English language learners in our increasingly linguistically diverse society should be included. Related ongoing professional development for practicing educators should be made available and mandatory. Future and current teachers need to be aware of historical and current policies and updated research on best practices that apply to students in various school settings and beyond. It is also important to adhere to beliefs and philosophies of
teaching, despite administrative pressures. If teachers believe that certain practices are most effective in teaching ELLs, then they need to maintain an appropriate classroom culture, and administrators must give them the flexibility to do so. It is always a priority to instruct to meet the needs of students and use culturally responsive or relevant pedagogy. Even if teachers receive curricular mandates that may not align with philosophical beliefs, it is imperative to continue to find ways to meet student interests, develop student voice and critical thinking skills. In an era of high-stakes testing, teachers need to be supported in responding to this increased accountability while not hindering student potential along the way. Educators of ELLs and all students should use collaborative grouping and partner work as opportunities for students to talk in a safe space, to effectively acquire and learn through language, build problem-solving skills, and to realize that it is okay to disagree with each other and challenge the textbooks, teachers’, or classmates’ thoughts.

**Making informed decisions as administrators.** School administrators at all levels must thoroughly research instructional strategies and curricular programs before requiring teacher implementation. Park administration, for example, would benefit from learning about the wide range of advantages new English learners enjoy from native language instruction and/or support. Also information on instruction that best meets the needs of ELLs and culturally relevant pedagogy would help administrators create and promote a more effective learning environment. While high stakes testing places significant pressure on administrators, it is important to think about how test-driven, English-only instruction can impact students beyond schooling, and students should instead be taught for the purpose of achieving societal and occupational success.
Enhancing the parent’s role in his/her child’s schooling. While parents/caretakers understand the importance of having their children learn English, it is also crucial for them to realize that losing their first language need not occur in tandem. Children should be encouraged to develop literacy and spoken language in both the L1 and L2, and school officials and teachers should work to educate caretakers on the benefits associated with bilingualism. Parents should feel as if they are valuable tools in their children’s bi- or multilingual development. This information will hopefully make apparent the merits of becoming bilingual, and result in increased protest in the event that school administration employs ineffective policies.

Putting children first. Ultimately, implications for students are of paramount importance. ELLs need to be in learning environments that allow them to realize their endless potential and maintain pride in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They have the right and deserve to become thinkers in both languages and receive a democratic education that prepares them for an even societal playing field. Children should not associate shame or embarrassment to who they are as individuals, and their sociocultural schooling experiences should not negatively shape development of identities. It is imperative that ELLs are able to recognize the benefits in becoming bilingual and biliterate, and that endless opportunities result from such an advanced skill. Schooling and instructional practices should enhance and nurture these beliefs and understandings, rather than detract from the sense of self.
Chapter Seven:
Further Questions and Future Directions

Through data collection and analysis, potential areas for further research emerged. First, this concept of “forgetting” Spanish at Park calls for deeper questioning and analysis. While students claimed that they did not remember Spanish in the classroom and school building, it was obvious that this did not really occur, bearing in mind that they spoke Spanish within the home. Uncovering reasoning or justification behind this is imperative. Also, while hearing teacher and student thoughts and understandings of language learning and practices offered substantial findings, interviews with parents/caregivers of ELLs would provide deeper perspective to this study. Listening to their experiences, as they may have certain opinions and beliefs on language learning and instructional language programs, would be another important angle. Perhaps some parents believe the misconceptions of English immersion to be true, thus wanting their children to be exposed to English-only instruction. Maybe parents are under the assumption that their children’s teachers are using native language instruction when that is not actually occurring. Hearing parents’ perceptions and thoughts on their own language learning experiences would make significant data contributions to this area of research.

Expanding this qualitative study to mixed-methods may further increase validity of the findings. Doing a large-scale study, surveying considerable numbers of ELLs and educators, along with more interviews and/or focus groups seems necessary. Another area of future research would be to focus on academic achievement to better understand
the students as learners. While the current study revealed rich aspects of student identity and schooling perceptions, a glimpse into the academic performance of the ELLs would provide another important dimension worthy of consideration. Looking at both standardized test scores and comparing these results with formative assessments that gauge growth in areas that measure higher order thinking would offer a deeper understanding of how language instructional practices or programs in action influence students. Furthermore, tracking students’ performance and perceptions over time could be especially interesting in eighth grade and beyond, as research supports enhanced academic achievement resulting from dual language instruction in these upper grades. Interviews and focus group discussions around the same issues of identity and schooling could be asked again in subsequent years in ways that invite student participants to tell more of their stories and explore critical thinking.

Continued studies could explore: How are students’ perceptions of schooling and themselves impacted by time and subsequent instructional practices? Perhaps continued schooling that promotes social reproduction influences self-perceptions and what occupational or higher education opportunities are available to them. The institution of schooling may limit student likelihood or desire to achieve certain goals or career aspirations. Or maybe students will develop a strong sense of agency to resist the dominant discourse and aspire for obtainment of success. Such a question promotes educators to facilitate development of this sense of agency in their students, allowing them to recognize their limitless potential. Another question for future study is: In what ways do language perceptions and use transpire in adolescent years? Perhaps Field students continued to value bilingualism, while Spanish language loss persisted among
Park participants. It would be interesting to discover if bilingualism truly continued into young adulthood, as Field students predicted, and how they used this aspect of identity in their everyday lives.

My engagement and participation in this research study has inspired me to conduct future research in the area of English language learners in our nation, especially in response to increasing linguistic and cultural diversity, along with societal factors and decisions that may or may not be meetings the needs of public school students.
March 1, 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians,

My name is Arthi Rao, and I am a doctoral student at DePaul University’s School of Education. As part of my dissertation, I will be doing a study of English language learner children’s feelings about their learning experiences in their classroom and school. I am investigating how language of instruction may affect English language learners and their perceptions of school. I will be conducting observations and interviews of your child and his/her classmates and teacher. I will be in your child’s classroom beginning April 2010 through the end of the school year.

There is minimal risk in this study. Your child may occasionally feel uncomfortable sharing personal information with myself or in front of classmates. However, if your child does feel uncomfortable answering any questions, s/he can choose not to answer. Also, everything said is confidential. I will audio record our interviews and observations, but I will be the only one who has access to the information and I will permanently delete the recordings within 3 years. However, through my interviews with your child, it may benefit your child’s teachers’ instruction. Teachers may learn how to better meet the learning needs of English language learners as a result of this study.

I do request and require your permission before the observations and interviews begin. Attached is a consent form, where your signature will grant permission. If you are interested, please sign the form and send it back to school with your child.

Thank you so much for your cooperation. My contact information is below if you have any questions.

Arthi Rao
DePaul University
**Carta de Explicación**

1 de marzo, 2010

Estimados Padres,

Me llamo Arthi Rao, y soy un estudiante doctoral en la Educación de DePaul University. Como parte de mi disertación, yo estaré haciendo un estudio de los sentimientos de niños quién están aprendiendo Inglés en las escuelas, y sus experiencias que aprenden en su salón y la escuela. Investigo cómo el idioma de instrucción puede afectar a estudiantes y sus percepciones de la escuela. Estaré realizando observaciones y entrevistas de su niño(a) y sus compañeros de clase y del maestro(a). Estaré en el salón de su niño/a que empieza 2010 de abril por el fin del año escolar.

Hay riesgo mínimo en este estudio. Ocasionadamente su niño/a puede sentirse incómodo en compartir información personal conmigo o en frente de compañeros de clase. Sin embargo, si su niño/a se siente incómodo en contestar alguna pregunta, el/ella puede escoger no contestar. También, todo dicho es confidencial. Las entrevistas y las observaciones son grabadas, pero seré la única que tiene acceso a la información y permanentemente borraré las grabaciones dentro de 3 años. Sin embargo, por medio de mis entrevistas con su niño/a, la instruction del maestro de su niño/a se puede beneficiar. Los maestros pueden aprender las necesidades de los estudiantes del idioma ingles a consecuencia de este estudio.

Solícito y requiero su permiso antes que las observaciones y las entrevistas empiecen. Conectado es una forma de consentimiento, donde su firma otorgará permiso. Si usted es interesado, por favor firme la forma y lo regresa a la escuela con su niño/a.

Gracias por su cooperación. Mi información de contacto esta abajo si usted tiene cualquier pregunta.

Arthi Rao  
DePaul University
Appendix B
Parental Consent Form

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR CHILD’S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY
NATIVE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND THE IMPACT ON THE IDENTITY OF SPANISH-SPEAKING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

What is the purpose of this research?
We are asking your child to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about how instruction in English-only or in both English and Spanish affects students and their perceptions of schooling. Your child is invited to participate in this study because s/he is a student learning English as a second language and is taught either with English and Spanish instruction, or with English-only instruction. This study is being conducted by Arthi Rao, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain her Doctoral degree in Education. Her faculty advisor, Dr. Katie Van Sluys, will supervise this research.

How much time will this take?
This study will be spread out over a 3-month period. I will be in your child’s classroom 1-2 times/week, and observations will occur 1-2 times/week during the 3 months. 2-30 minute focus group discussions will take place in the 2nd month of research, and 1 or 2 20-minute individual interviews will occur in the 2nd and 3rd months.

What will my child be asked to do if I allow her/him to participate in this study?
If you allow your child to be in this study, s/he will be asked to participate in 2-30 minute focus group discussions with some of his/her classmates, and 1-2 20-minute individual interviews. Both the focus groups and interviews will be audio recorded, and transcribed afterwards. All information collected in the research records will remain confidential and I will not use your child’s real name. I will also observe your child during regular class time (during whole group and small group instruction), during lunch, and free time. I will audio-record and take notes during class time, and will take notes during observations at lunch and free time.

Additionally, I may ask your child to share his/her work with me as a discussion point. For example, if we are talking about writing, I may ask to see a writing assignment. However, if your child does not feel comfortable sharing his/her work with me, s/he can choose not to do so.

What are the risks involved in participating in this study?
Being in this study involves very little risk. Because I will ask the student participants questions about themselves and their opinions of their classroom, teacher, and school, there is a chance that your child may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed answering certain questions. During focus groups, students may not want to answer certain questions in front of their classmates, and during one-on-one interviews, they may not want to share personal information. However, I will make it very clear that s/he does not have to answer any question that makes him/her uncomfortable during both focus groups and interviews, thus minimizing possible risk for your child. Because the focus group discussions will occur with a group of children, it is possible that one of the students may repeat what your child says to someone outside the group. We will ask that all students respect each other and not repeat what they hear in the focus group to anyone else.
What are the benefits of my child's participation in this study?
Your child will not personally benefit from being in this study. However, we hope that the knowledge gained from this research will generally help researchers, teachers and students.

Can I decide not to allow my child to participate? If so, are there other options?
Yes, you can choose not to allow your child to participate. Even if you allow your child to be in the study now, you can change your mind later, and your child can leave the study. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to allow your child to participate or change your mind later. His/her grade will not be affected in any way as a result of your decisions. Also, even if you give your permission, your child may decide that s/he does not want to be in this study, and that is okay with us.

Parents please be aware that under the Protection of Pupil Rights Act. 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked or of materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Arthi Rao at (773) 677-6585 to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

How will the confidentiality of the research records be protected?
The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any report we might publish, we will not include any information that will identify your child. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researchers will have access to the records that identify your child by name. Audio recordings of interviews and focus groups will be deleted within 3 years. Some people might review the records in order to make sure I am doing what I am supposed to. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board, or the DePaul faculty member supervising this research, may review your information. If they look at our records, they will keep the information confidential.

Whom can I contact for more information?
If you have questions about this study, please contact Arthi Rao at (773) 677-6585 or artrao@yahoo.com. If you have questions about your child’s rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University’s Director of Research Protections at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu. You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I have all my questions answered. (Check one):

☐ I permit my child to be in this study. ☐ I DO NOT permit my child to be in this study.

Child’s Name: ___________________________ Grade in School: ____________

Parent/GuardianSignature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Printed name: ____________________________________________
¿Qué es el propósito de esta investigación?
Pedimos que su niño esté en un estudio de investigación porque tratamos de aprender más acerca de cómo instrucción en inglés-Unico o en ambos inglés y español afecta a estudiantes y sus percepciones de educar. Su niño es invitado a tomar parte en este estudio porque s/él es un estudiante que aprende inglés como una segunda lengua y es enseñado o con inglés e instrucción española, o con inglés-Unico instrucción. Este estudio es realizado por Arthi Rao, un estudiante de posgrado en la Universidad de DePaul como un requisito para obtener su grado Doctoral en la Educación. Su consejero de la facultad, el Dr. Katie Van Sluys, supervisará esta investigación.

¿Cuánto tiempo hace esto toma?
Este estudio será realizado sobre una temporada de 3 meses. Asistire en el salon 1-2 veces por semana, y las observaciones ocurrirán 1-2 veces por semana durante los 3 meses. Dos grupos de discusión (30 minutos) sucederán en el segundo mes de investigación, y 1 o 2 entrevistas individuales de 20 minutos ocurrirán en el segundo y tercer mes.

¿Qué será pedido mi niño para hacer si permito a ella/él para tomar parte en este estudio?
Si usted da permiso para que su niño participe en este estudio, se le pide que tome parte en dos grupos de discusión (30 minutos) con algunos de sus compañeros de clase, y en 1-2 entrevistas individuales de 20 minutos. Los grupos de discusión y entrevistas serán grabadas, y transcribidos después. Toda información completa en los registros de investigación se quedará confidencial y no utilizaremos el nombre verdadero del niño. También observaré a su niño durante tiempo regular de clase (durante el grupo entero y instrucción de grupo pequeño), durante la hora de almuerzo, y el tiempo libre. Hago audio-registro y tomo apuntes durante tiempo de clase, y tomaré apuntes durante observaciones en la hora de almuerzo y el tiempo libre.

Adicionalmente, puedo pedir que su niño comparta su trabajo conmigo como un punto de discusión. Por ejemplo, si hablamos de escritura, yo puedo pedir ver una tarea de escritura. Sin embargo, si su niño no se siente cómodo compartiendo su trabajo conmigo, puede negarse.

¿Qué son implicados los riesgos a tomar parte en este estudio?
Participar en este estudio implica muy poco riesgo. Porque las preguntas serán acerca de sus opiniones de su maestro, y de la escuela, hay una oportunidad que su niño puede sentirse incómodo o avergonzado contestando ciertas preguntas. Durante grupos de discusión puede que los estudiantes no quieren contestar ciertas preguntas delante de sus compañeros de clase, y durante entrevistas de uno a uno, no quieren compartir información personal. Sin embargo, yo lo haré muy claro que el/ella no tiene que contestar ninguna pregunta incómoda durante ambos grupos de discusión y entrevistas, así minimizando riesgo posible para su niño. Porque los grupos de discusión ocurrirán con un grupo de niños, es posible que uno de los estudiantes pueda repetir lo que su niño dice a alguien fuera del grupo. Se les pide que todos estudiantes respetan uno al otro y no repiten lo que ellos oyen en el grupos de discusión a nadie más.

¿Qué es los beneficios de la participación de mi niño en este estudio?
Su niño no beneficiará personalmente de estar en este estudio. Sin embargo, nosotros esperamos
que el conocimiento ganado de esta investigación ayudará generalmente a investigadores, los maestros y los estudiantes.

¿Puedo decidir yo no permitir a mi niño para participar? ¿Si eso es el caso, hay otras opciones?
Usted puede escoger que su niño no participe. Incluso si usted permite a su niño para participar en el estudio ahora, puede cambiar de opinión después, y su niño puede dejar el estudio. No habrá consecuencias negativas si decide no permitir a su niño para participar ni cambiar de opinión después. Las calificaciones no serán afectado en ninguna manera a consecuencia de sus decisiones. Incluso, si usted da su permiso, su niño puede decidir que el/ella no quiere participar en el estudio, y eso está bien con nosotros.

Padres están enterados que bajo la Protección de Derechos de Alumno Actúa. 20 U. S. C. La sección 1232 (c)(1)(A) (Protection of Pupil Rights Act. 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c)(1)(A)), usted tiene el derecho de revisar una copia de las preguntas preguntadas o de materias que serán utilizadas con sus estudiantes. Si usted quiere debe contactar Arthi Rao en (773) 677-6585 en obtener una copia de las preguntas o materias.

¿Cómo haga la confidencialidad de los registros de investigación es protegida?
Los registros de este estudio serán mantenidos confidenciales. En ningún reporte que nosotros quizás publiquemos, nosotros no incluiremos información que identificará a su niño. Los registros de la investigación serán almacenados firmemente, y sólo los investigadores tendrán acceso a los registros que identifiquen a su niño por nombre. Las grabaciones en audio de grupos de entrevistas y foco serán borradas dentro de 3 años. Algunas personas quizás revisen los registros para asegurarse yo hago lo que soy supuesto a. Por ejemplo, la Universidad de DePaul la Tabla Institucional de Revisión, o el miembro de facultad de DePaul que supervisa esta investigación, puede revisar su información. Si ellos miran nuestros registros, ellos mantendrán la información confidencial.

¿Quién puedo contactar yo para más información?
Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de este estudio, por favor contacto Arthi Rao en (773) 677-6585 o artrao@yahoo.com. Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de los derechos de su niño como un sujeto de investigación, usted puede contactar Loess-Perez de Susan, las Protecciones de Investigación de del Director de Universidad de DePaul en (312) 362-7593 o por correo electrónico en sloesspe@depaul.edu.

Se la va dar una copia de esta información para mantener en sus registros.

La Declaración de Consentimiento:
He leído el encima de información. Tengo todas mis preguntas contestaron. (Verifique uno:)

☐ Permito que mi niño esté en este estudio. ☐ Yo no permite que mi niño esté en este estudio.

Nombre de hijo(a):__________________________________________ Grado en la escuela: ______________

La Firma de Padre/Guardián:____________________________________ Fecha: ____________

Nombre Impreso:________________________________________________
Appendix C

Teacher Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

NATIVE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND THE IMPACT ON THE IDENTITY OF SPANISH-SPEAKING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

What is the purpose of this research?
We are asking you to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about how student identity and school outlook may be influenced by language of instruction. Because there are different instructional programs offered to students learning English as an additional language, this research aims to examine how students are impacted as a result. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a teacher of English language learners (ELLs). This study is being conducted by Arthi Rao, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain her Doctoral degree in Education. Her faculty advisor, Dr. Katie Van Sluys, will supervise this research.

How much time will this take?
This study will take at most 80 minutes of your individual time through 1 or 2-40 minute interviews. Additionally, classroom observations will be conducted while you are teaching, but you will be able to carry on instruction as usual. I will conduct observations 1-2 times/week during the 3-month research period.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate in this study?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked complete 1-2 40 minute interviews. The interview questions will focus on the teaching and learning of ELL students. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed afterwards. The researcher will also observe your whole group and small group instruction at different points of the day during the duration of the 3-4 month study, and these instructional sessions will also be audio-recorded. Additionally, the researcher, with your permission, may examine teacher lesson plans or curricular materials.

What are the risks involved in participating in this study?
Being in this study does not involve any risks other than what you would encounter in daily life. For example, you may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering certain questions. But remember that you can always choose not to answer a question if this happens.

What are the benefits of my participation in this study?
You will not personally benefit from being in this study. However, we hope that the knowledge gained as a result of the research will generally help researchers, teachers, and students.

Can I decide not to participate? If so, are there other options?
Yes, you can choose not to participate. Even if you agree to be in the study now, you can change your mind later and leave the study. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research will not affect your job standing in the Chicago Public School district or in your school.
**How will the confidentiality of the research records be protected?**
The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any report we might publish, we will not include any information that will identify you—pseudonyms will be used at all times. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records that identify you by name. Observation field notes and audio-recorded interviews will be digitally saved on a password secured computer, and will be permanently deleted within 3 years. Some people might review the records in order to make sure I am doing what I am supposed to. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board, or the DePaul faculty member supervising this research, may review your information. If they look at our records, they will keep your information confidential.

**Whom can I contact for more information?**
If you have questions about this study, please contact Arthi Rao at (773) 677-6585 or artrao@yahoo.com. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University’s Director of Research Protections at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

**You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.**

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have all my questions answered. (Check one:)

☐ I consent to be in this study.  ☐ I **DO NOT** consent to be in this study.

Signature:_____________________________________________ Date: __________________

Printed name: __________________________________________
Appendix D

Student Interview Protocol

**Student Focus Group Protocol**

**Perceptions of School**

1. How do you feel when you come to school? Why do you feel this way?
2. Tell me about what you learn in school?
3. Tell me about your teacher? How does s/he make you feel in the classroom?
4. Does your teacher speak Spanish? How do you know this?

**Language Beliefs and Practices**

5. When and where do you speak Spanish? Why?
6. When and where do you speak English? Why?
7. How do you feel about speaking Spanish? Why?
8. How do you feel about speaking English? Why?
9. Do you feel comfortable speaking Spanish at school? Why or why not?
10. Do you feel comfortable speaking English at school? Why or why not?
11. How do you think your teacher feels when you speak Spanish?
12. How do you think your teacher feels when you speak English?

**Student Interview Protocol/Guide**

**Perceptions of Self**

1. If I were to watch a videotape of you in your home, what would I see and hear?
2. How would your parents or someone at home describe you? Your Teacher?
3. How would you describe yourself at home? At school?
Perceptions of School

1. How do you feel when you come to school? Why do you feel this way? Give me an example of a time when you may feel this way.

2. How do you feel when you’re in your classroom?

3. If I were to watch a videotape of you in your classroom, what would I see and hear? In the lunchroom?

4. If I were to watch you during reading, what would I see? During Writing? Math?

5. Tell me about what you learn in school?

6. Tell me about your teacher? How does s/he make you feel in the classroom?

7. What is your favorite thing about school?

8. What is your least favorite thing about school?

Language Beliefs and Practices

1. What language do you speak at home? With your family (siblings, parents, grandparents, etc)? Why?

2. What language do you speak with your friends? Why?

3. How do you feel about speaking Spanish? Why?

4. How do you feel about speaking English? Why?

5. How do you decide which language to use?

Protocolo de Grupo de Discusión

Las Percepciones de la Escuela

1. Cómo te sientes cuando vienes a la escuela? ¿Por qué te sientes de esta manera?

2. ¿Dime acerca de lo que aprendes en la escuela ¿Qué aprendes en la escuela?

3. ¿Dime acerca de tú maestro(a)? ¿Cómo te hace sentir en el salón?

4. ¿Tu maestro(a) habla español? ¿Cómo sabes?
Las Creencias del Idioma y Practican

5. ¿Cuando y donde hablas español? ¿Por qué?

6. ¿Cuando y donde hablas inglés? ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Cómo te sientes acerca de hablar español? ¿Por qué?

8. ¿Cómo te sientes acerca de hablar inglés? ¿Por qué?

9. ¿Te sientes cómodo cuando hablas español en la escuela? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

10. ¿Te sientes cómodo cuando hablas inglés en la escuela? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

11. ¿Cómo crees que se siente tu maestro(a) cuando hablas español?

12. ¿Cómo crees que se siente tu maestro(a) cuando hablas inglés?

Protocolo/Guía de Entrevista de Estudiante

Las Percepciones de Identidad

1. ¿Si miramos una cinta de vídeo de ti en tu casa, qué veríamos y escucharíamos?

2. ¿Cómo te describiría tus padres o alguien en casa? ¿Tú Maestro(a)?

3. ¿Cómo lo describirías en casa? ¿En la escuela?

Las Percepciones de la Escuela

1. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando vienes a la escuela? ¿Por qué te sientes de esta manera? Dame un ejemplo de un tiempo cuando te puedes sentir de esta manera.

2. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando estás en tu clase/salón?

3. ¿Si debía mirar una cinta de vídeo de tú en tu aula, qué vería yo y oiría? ¿En la cafetería?

4. ¿Si debía mirarte durante lectura, qué vería yo? ¿Durante Escritura? ¿Las matemáticas?

5. Dime acerca de lo que aprendes en la escuela. ¿Que aprendes en la escuela?

6. ¿Me dices acerca de tu maestro(a)? ¿Cómo haga a s/el le hace te sientes en el salon?
7. ¿Qué es tu cosa favorita acerca de la escuela?

8. ¿Qué es tu cosa menos favorita acerca de la escuela?

Las Creencias del Idioma y Practican

1. ¿Qué idioma hablas en casa? ¿Con tu familia (hermanos, los padres, los abuelos, etc)? ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Qué idioma hablas con tus amigos? ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Cómo te sientes acerca de hablar español? ¿Por qué?

4. ¿Cómo te sientes acerca de hablar inglés? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Cómo decides cuál idioma utilizas?
Appendix E

Educator Interview Protocol

**Educator Interview Protocol/Guide**

**Teachers’ Beliefs and Understandings of Teaching and Language Learning**

1. Describe your beliefs and understandings about working with English language learners? Why do you feel this way?

2. Describe your school’s/administrators’ beliefs of teaching ELLs? How are you made aware of what the beliefs of the school are?

3. Do you know the history of the school’s language instructional practices? Have they always used a transitional bilingual (or dual language) model?

4. What role do you have in your students’ language learning?

**Instructional Approaches**

1. Describe what your work with ELLs looks like on a typical day in your classroom.

2. What conditions and approaches are necessary when teaching ELLs? Why do you find these approaches appropriate?

3. Describe an ideal lesson/activity that best meets the needs of your students learning English as an additional language.

**Reflection on Students**

1. What expectations do you have for your students as a whole? Why do you feel this way?

2. How would you describe ________(name of student participant) as a student/learner? Why?

3. What are your expectations for your students once leaving your class? Why do you feel this way?

4. What do you want most for your students? What is your vision for graduates of your classroom?

5. Is there anything else you want me to know about language learning, language learners, and/or your experiences/knowledge working with ELLs?
References


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synthesis of research evidence (pp. 14-63). New York: Cambridge University Press.


VITA
Arthi B. Rao

EDUCATION

DePaul University
Ed.D. Curriculum Studies
Chicago, IL
June 2011

University of Pennsylvania
M.S.Ed. Elementary Education
Philadelphia, PA
May 2002

University of Michigan
B.A. Psychology & Women’s Studies
Ann Arbor, MI
April 2000

TEACHING AND COACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois at Chicago
Adjunct Lecturer/Field Instructor-August 2009-present
Chicago, IL
Instruct undergraduate teacher candidates on issues of multiculturalism, bilingualism, and diversity in the elementary school. Integrate theoretical and empirical research with practical application to field placements. Emphasize the importance of culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy. Teach weekly seminars with senior teacher candidates to discuss student teaching experiences in the field and reflect on students’ own learning. Supervise 25 pre-service teachers in their field placements within 10 Chicago Public Schools. Observe teacher candidates in their classrooms, and discuss learning and growth through reflective conversations.

Chicago New Teacher Center
Induction Coach-August 2007-June 2009
Chicago, IL
Mentored first and second year teachers in challenging to staff Chicago Public schools. Observed teachers, modeled lessons, and provided opportunities for novice teachers to reflect and improve upon their practice. Facilitated beginning teachers in the analysis of student work to further differentiate classroom instruction. Led, designed and implemented monthly professional development on relevant topics, such as classroom management, race, class and culture, differentiating instruction, parental communication, developing integrated units of study, and reflection and goal setting, for beginning teachers.

Sawyer Elementary School-Chicago Public Schools
Third Grade Transitional Bilingual Teacher-August 2004-June 2006
Chicago, IL
Gained specialized experience in transitioning Spanish-speaking students to English-medium educational settings. Differentiated instruction in all subject areas to meet varying needs of the students. Embraced and welcomed students’ home culture and language in our learning environment, increasing the cultural relevance of the curriculum.