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TOWARDS ENDING THE STRUGGLE:

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND PERCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR

RE-ENGINEERING STUDENT SUCCESS IN NEW MEXICO

By

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M.A., Education & Reading, New Mexico Highlands University, 1976

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education
Educational Leadership

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family. First, to my husband John, who has been my crutch through every step with unbelievable patience, enduring support both emotionally and financially encouraging me though all the frustrations. I truly could not have done this without him.

My appreciation also to our sons and their families, Gary, Greg, Scott, April, Rosalie, and Jeannean, and our grandchildren Shelby, Kodielynn, Carlos, Alysha, Vince, Baylee, and Mackenzie and our precious great grandchildren, Andres, Serenity, Kaiden, Kassie, and Kendall. They helped every way they could and were always there for me during the time I was in class, studying, reading, collecting data, writing, writing, and writing. They had unwavering faith in me.

To my deceased parents Philip C. U. and Evangeline Arellano Sánchez who believed in me and never let me give up in life. They taught me the importance and value of an education, something we have tried to instill in our sons and our daughters-in-law who all have college degrees. I think of my deceased family members especially my brother Charles, who was there in spirit.

Lastly, to my brothers and their families, who checked on me, asked about my progress, and bragged about me even before I was ever close to finishing. They never doubted me.

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May God bless all of you.

TOWARDS ENDING THE STRUGGLE:

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ABSTRACT

Bilingual education, teaching of academic content in two languages, is the instructional plan intended to help English language learner students develop the academic competence necessary to close the achievement gap that exists between minority students and English dominant students. This qualitative study examined the experiences of immigrant and native New Mexico Hispanic students in bilingual education. It examined participant perspectives about the influence of their own ethnic and national origins on the place of language in their families and lives; the meaning of language in their education, aspirations, and work; their experiences in and interpretations of bilingual education in school; and their sense of what is helpful and unhelpful in bilingual programs. Findings were categorized into the concepts of nationality and origins, culture and family, meaning of language, and relationship of language to future aspirations. Central to this research is the bilingual student and the elements of bilingual education program implementation themes: teaching strategies, support and resources, communication, and academics.

The study presents conclusions, implications, and suggested practices for what students, staff, and parents perceive as a culturally relevant and state-of-the-art program design for bilingual education.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Research

As a nation, we have failed to tap into and learn from the knowledge base of classroom practitioners, researchers, community activists, and teacher educators, their work has been invisible, their knowledge base ignored, their insights misunderstood, and their success stories unavailable. People who are disconnected from the day-to-day realities of bilingual classrooms are leading the public debate. In order to improve our programs, and make sound policy and pedagogical decisions concerning the education of language minority students we must broaden the discussion. We must lift every voice.

Beykont (2000, p. viii).

Introduction

Zeynep Beykont is a researcher and activist in the field of education for language minorities. When the necessary resources and enthusiasm are available, she firmly believes bilingual education and academic excellence go hand in hand (Beykont, 2000). Beykont (2000) also supports the idea that educational and political reforms should come from the experiences of those involved with students in bilingual education programs. This theory aligns with the research focus of this study: experiences, beliefs, and origins of educators, students, and parents involved in bilingual education.

In the United States, the dominant language and the language of the government is English, although there is, for example, an official government website in Spanish (http://www.usa.gov/gobiernousa/). In New Mexico, language is unique and critical to the people and the landscapes. Both English and Spanish have been recognized as official languages at different times in the history of New Mexico (Bills & Vigil, 2008). In the educational arena, academic achievement is measured by English competence and usually begins and ends with assessment for academic proficiency in all subjects in English (August & Hakuta, 1998). Yet much of the population of the United States is made up of minority

groups, the largest of which are Hispanics/ Latinos, many of whom speak varying levels of English, if at all. Based on census numbers, 49 million out of 310 million are identified as Hispanic and by 2015 the number is expected to be 57 million (United States Census Bureau, 2011). This is more evident in the schools, where in 2000, each group of five included one immigrant and of the immigrant group, two thirds were Hispanic (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 86). As most Latino immigrants speak Spanish and only Spanish, is there equity in assessing them in English? No, but it is reality, although states including New Mexico have other options. States may use the Spanish language version of the assessment if the student has been in the United States for three or fewer, consecutive years. This is still not enough to make up for the fact that psychometricians consider the translations invalid due to vocabulary differences between English and Spanish as well as differences in the vocabulary among Spanish speakers (Crawford, 2004).

In public education, the goal is acculturation and assimilation of all into one social system (August & Hakuta, 1998; Peñalosa, 1980). Macedo (2000) referred to a similar process as colonization, which is the loss of language and identity (p. 23). He (Macedo, 2000) wrote about the experiences of Native Americans in US boarding schools that were forbidden to speak their language (Macedo, 2000). Macedo (2000) also recounted Anzaldúa's graphic poetry about scars left by the fracture of her cultural identity (Anzaldúa, 1987). African author Ngugi's grief about the loss of the harmony from his native language and its replacement with the language of education is also an example of colonization (Macedo, 2000). Others (San Miguel & Donato, 2010) labeled the educational process of acculturation-colonization as subtractive both linguistically and culturally, meaning all

cultural heritage and language were eradicated from the curriculum with the purpose of making English the official language (p. 32).

Students must learn English in order to be full participants in US schools, and students whose first language is one other than English are placed in bilingual or alternative language programs in order to achieve the goal. Students who are English speakers may also be placed in bilingual education to learn their heritage language. When they come into a school, they must quickly make major changes in their speech and academic competency (Saracho & Spodek, 1986).

How is it that some language programs are more successful than others are and what do we know about what works? Clearly, this has become a political discussion focused on which language should be used to teach English language learners rather than which instructional strategies work (August & Hakuta, 1998; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Nieto, 2000). Amidst all of this are students who are not making progress and teachers who need guidance and direction to help students develop language proficiency and improve academic performance.

The assessment of bilingual education programs should utilize the opinions and perspectives of those served and those involved in them; students, parents, and instructional and administrative staff as well as the academic achievement of students. Millions of dollars are expended on language programs on the premise that students will improve their proficiency in English, but at this time, only limited research on program effectiveness is available (Robledo-Montecel & Cortez, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to explore how language programs used with English language learners influence academic proficiency of students as understood by teachers,

parents, and school leaders as well as by the` students themselves. More specifically, this research seeks to hear the voices by asking the question:

> From the perspectives of teachers, students, administrators, and parents, how do
> language programs, methods, and/or instructional strategies impact students,
> culturally, linguistically, and academically?

In an effort to hear the voices of those most affected by language programs, students, teachers, administrators, and parents, the approach of this study is qualitative. Gay (2003) described the power of stories as mechanisms for improving teacher preparation. She (Gay, 2003) says that stories and narratives are meaningful because of what has been written about multicultural teacher education, of which bilingual programs are a part of, about the why and how but not who. Nothing has been written from the insider perspective of people going through the process, that is, individuals telling of their own experiences (Gay, 2003, p. 6). Lichtman (2006) also noted qualitative research relies on voices; it involves interviews and/or observations in ordinary unchanged settings (p. 231).

Background for the Study

The population of the United States is constantly changing as reflected by increases in the numbers of minority groups. Recent data posted by the US Census Bureau estimated that the total number of minorities has reached 100 million individuals (US Census Bureau, 2011). The data indicated Hispanics make up the largest minority group. African Americans are the second largest group, followed by Asians, and the fourth largest are Native Americans, including Alaska Natives (USCB, 2011). Nationwide, 65% of Hispanics are recent immigrants or second generation and 35% are third generation or higher (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Of fifty states (USCB, 2007), four are "majority minority" where the

majority population is composed of minority groups, Hawaii, New Mexico, California, and

Texas. The District of Columbia is also made up of a population that is majority minority.

In New Mexico, Hispanics make up 48.6% of the total population while American

Indians total 10.9% for an overall 59.5% of the state's residents (Rural Policy Research

Initiative, 2006; USCB, 2007, p. 3). Table 1 presents the numbers as well as the increases

from 2004 to 2010.

Table 1

Ethnic Profile of New Mexico

Year	Hispanic	Nat. Amer.	White	Black	Asian /PI
2004	43.3	10.1	42.8	2.4	1.4
2007	48.6	10.9	36.6	2.6	1.3
2010	46.5	9.5	40.5	2.1	1.3

Note. Data adapted from "Demographic and Economic Profile: New Mexico" (2006).
Retrieved from http://www.rupri.org/Forms/NewMexico.pdf. & US Census Bureau
State and County QuickFacts. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov.

One fact that may come as a surprise to most is that only 18% of the Hispanic

population in New Mexico is foreign born, one of the lowest rates in the United States

(USCB, 2007). This is due in part to the high mobility rates of immigrant Hispanics because

of lack of employment and housing (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). New Mexico is usually at

the high end of the unemployment statistics and at the low end of income levels (RUPRI,

2006; USCB, 2007), forcing immigrants to move to other states where the odds for success

are better. Parents must move to find work; they do not own homes, instead they have to

rent, and although there are fair housing laws in place, discrimination still exists (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

In New Mexico, many native-born Hispanics are descendants of the first European settlers that came from Spain in 1598 (Cobos, 1983, p. viii; Simmons, 1998, p. 68). This group traces its ancestry to Spanish and Mexican colonists as well as members of the indigenous population (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2010; Maciel & Gonzales-Berry, 2000; Sánchez, 1967). Sánchez (1967) documented how the ancestors of native Hispanics in New Mexico and Colorado came from Spain through Mexico after they conquered the indigenous people of Mexico. They intermarried with Indians resulting in an ethnic mixture of Spanish and Indian sometimes referred to as mestizo (Maciel & Gonzales-Berry, 2000). The culture, language, and traditions of this group remained Spanish and most identify themselves as Hispanic. The people, the dialect of the Spanish language spoken, and the culture have retained many of the influences of the original pioneers. Today members of this ethnic group primarily speak English while a few have maintained their Spanish dialect (Cobos, 1983). New Mexico would look very different today without those influences (Simmons, 1998, p. 121).

New Mexico's native Hispanic population has endured many economic, environmental, and socio-cultural hardships throughout history and survived, but they have not overcome the lack of quality education (Sánchez, 1967). Rural isolation has also contributed to their disadvantaged status and they, although United States citizens for many generations, today account for considerable numbers of English language learners because of an inadequate and incomplete education that is most reflected in a very limited vocabulary. Members of this group continue to live on family land located in the centuries-old mountain

villages in New Mexico, and only recently have younger members left to attend universities and stayed in the city (Maciel & Gonzales-Berry, 2000). The same population is ranked as one of the largest groups living at or below the poverty level because of a lack of employment opportunity in their rural communities (RUPRI, 2006). Most live in New Mexico counties resulting in large numbers of Hispanic residents. Out of 386 lowest income level counties in the nation, 12 are in New Mexico and all are counties with Hispanic majority populations (RUPRI, 2006; USCB, 2007).

A second group of Hispanics/Latinos identify themselves as from another country. They are usually recent immigrants or first generation born in the United States, originally from Latin America. Several studies (Peñalosa, 1980; Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2008; Villa, 2003) indicated Hispanic immigrants usually arrive in the US very literate in their home language. For them it is easier to learn English since literacy easily transfers from the home language to the second language (Collier, 1995; Krashen, 2003). However, other studies (Mather, 2009) indicate this has changed recently, because the new wave of immigrants is unable to attend school in their own countries and thus they have limited literacy skills to transfer to English. They come to a country where economic and social survival depends on the knowledge of English. This gives immigrants an immediate and urgent goal. They must learn English very quickly but they learn social rather than academic language (Peñalosa, 1980).

The Pew Hispanic Research Center (2008) released a study providing recent data on second and third generation Hispanic immigrants. The study supports Crawford's (1996) work on language revealing 23% of the first generation speaks English with varying levels of

proficiency; in the second generation the number increases by 62% to 88% and by the third generation 94% of the group speaks English only (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2008).

National statistical information indicates the number of Hispanics speaking a language other than English is about 75% (USCB, 2007, p. 14). Over 30% also spoke English but with varying degrees of fluency. The data are similar for student populations. Many students are identified as English language learners based on an assessment of language proficiency. They score below proficiency level in English resulting in their being labeled as English language learners. Most of the difficulty for English language learner students is not in conversational skills but in an academic language, which is intellectually more demanding. Some language proficiency assessments rely on conversational English to determine proficiency. This complicates matters by identifying some students as proficient when in reality they cannot function in academic language (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Another factor contributing to discrepancies in numbers, is that the assessment process relies on a home language survey to self identify by indicating the home language spoken. Many English language learners speak only English at home; they do not speak another language and thus they are not assessed.

The authors (Ovando & Collier, 1998) explained students know the definitions of words, but do not know how to use the words in sentences, a practice referred to as "context reduced with few contextual clues to meaning" (p. 93). Proficiency is defined as a "measurement of how well an individual has mastered a language…measured in the four domains…: reading, writing, speaking, and listening" (education.com, 2013, para. 1). Fillmore (2003) refers to the difficulty experienced by students and teachers alike as a communication mismatch between academic language, the language of instruction and

textbooks, and social language. At the center of the crisis are minority students especially

Hispanic students. Although Hispanics and other immigrants have been part of the

population for decades, educators are still struggling to find effective strategies for teaching

them. The subject itself brings about passionate yet irrational discourse (Gersten & Baker,

2000).

Performing academically in a second language is only one challenge with which these

second language learners must cope. They have the additional challenge of trying to

maintain their cultural identity. In my opinion, the statistical data, the issues, and the stories

of students who are non-language dominant in English should compel educators to ask

themselves, "How can I as an educator create effective educational environments where

students are able to be themselves fully, in terms of ethnic, racial, and cultural identity?"

Recent studies on academic achievement and ethnic identification include extensive

documentation on students, their sense of self, and how they manage all of it, despite

sometimes being forced to become "race-less" in order to do well in school (Nasir & Saxe,

2003, p. 14).

bell hooks (2004) described African Americans' experience with language as they

were brought to the United States:

> To think about the black people in relation to language, to think about their trauma as
>
> they were compelled to witness their language rendered meaningless with a
>
> colonizing European culture, where voices deemed foreign could not be spoken, were
>
> outlawed tongues, renegade speech. When I realize how long it has taken for white
>
> Americans to acknowledge the diverse languages of Native Americans, to accept that
>
> the speech their ancestral colonizers declared as merely grunts or gibberish was

indeed language, it is difficult not to hear in Standard English always the sound of slaughter and conquest. (p. 256)

As educators and more importantly as Americans, I believe we must be receptive, respectful, and honor the language, experience, and culture of others. Unfortunately, it has taken several generations for many to accept and validate the languages of others who do not speak English.

Freeman and Freeman's (2004) story of Mai, a Hmong girl, gave insight into the life of an Asian child who was born in the US but spoke only Hmong, her home language when she entered school. School personnel placed her in a bilingual education program where she was provided with English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. She was pulled out of the regular class for tutoring with a Hmong bilingual teacher assistant and given limited one to one instruction in isolation rather than in an integrated content related program.

Mai was in a bilingual program model designed to move her quickly from Hmong into English, without developing literacy in Hmong. The majority of her education was delivered in English. By the time Mai was in fifth grade, she had lost her ability to speak Hmong. She is now barely able to understand her parents and grandparents who speak little English yet Mai's own English literacy skills are still not at a proficient level. She also never developed literacy proficiency in her home language. Mai is classified as a long-term English language learner and consistently scores below proficiency on language assessments. She did not receive a thoroughly articulated, consistent instructional program and still struggles with academics (Freeman & Freeman, 2004). Mai speaks conversational English and is constantly grappling with her schoolwork because she has not mastered academic English. This student has good grades but does not do well on standardized assessments.

Mai must learn content knowledge in science, math, and social studies in English but she does not have fluency in the formal style of English necessary for academic proficiency (Edwards, 1981). Mai and other struggling second language learners are placed in language programs designed to increase proficiency, without any regard for individual level of proficiency in the home language, thus Mai is not proficient in any language (Freeman & Freeman, 2004).

There are thousands of stories like Mai's. Many are right here in the Southwestern United States, where countless numbers of minority children suffer the humiliation and shame of being unable to verbalize and converse in the mainstream language. Manuel (1971) told stories of many such children, one of them a young girl who emigrated from Mexico at 12 years of age. Although she should have been in seventh grade, she entered school and was placed in third grade because she knew very little English. She was not provided with any language program in Spanish, instead all her instruction was in English, with which she struggled. She did very well in math, surpassing other students, but still she was kept in third grade. She was afraid to speak English because she had a heavy accent and was unable to pronounce words correctly. Had it not been for a caring teacher who tutored her in English after school, she would have finished third grade with a minimal vocabulary in English. The family moved to another part of the city where, this time the girl enrolled in junior high and the appropriate grade using her report card from Mexico. Because she was no longer the oldest student in class she regained her self-esteem and became fluent in English, continuing her education beyond high school, unlike many of her minority group peers who dropped out in high school (Manuel, 1971). There are many other stories of students who would have been dropouts had it not been for the efforts of school counselors and teachers as well as

family members who saw the potential (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). These students (and their parents) make up the majority of minority populations in the Southwest but still remain voiceless, devalued, disenfranchised, and embarrassed by their inability to communicate articulately in English (Peñalosa, 1980). Despite the long presence of Latinos in this country, high dropout rates and low educational levels still affect financial success for this ethnic group (Irizarry & Nieto, 2010).

English language proficiency level influences academic achievement, which in turn affects household income (García & Jensen, 2009). According to the U. S. Dept. of Commerce, educational level relates directly to the income individuals generate over a lifetime (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2003).

Academic demands. Just a few years ago, prior to the passage of No Child Left Behind (US Department of Education, 2001), English language learners were included in assessment data but their test scores had no impact on the overall rating of a school (Bailey, A., 2007, p. ix). Test scores of all students in the school had to show progress, however all scores were averaged. Conversely, No Child Left Behind (USDE, 2001) requires separation of test scores for all subgroups of students including English language learners. Before 1994 neither federal nor state policies required monitoring of English language learner students' academic achievement or used any assessment information for English language learners in accountability reporting (Bailey, A. 2007, p. ix). This policy lowered expectations for minority groups and established different (much lower) standards. There were no provisions to ensure this group of students made progress in education and the doors to academic and financial success were closed forever. As a result, they and future generations faced low

socioeconomic status because of minimum wage service employment (Peñalosa, 1980). San Miguel and Donato (2010) reiterated this same point: "education in all its forms serves to reproduce a highly stratified society aimed at ensuring the political and cultural hegemony of the dominant Anglo group in the society and the socioeconomic subordinations of Latinos" (p. 27). Even the new wave of immigrants in the 21st century has not seen any change in the status of Latinos and continued inequities in education (Murillo et al., 2010).

    Addressing student needs. To compound the difficulty, today most of society is still unaware of the cognitive and linguistic obstacles faced by the group, obstacles invisible and incomprehensible to the dominant language group. Second language learners are always trying to catch up. They are trying to learn academic content in math, science, and social studies in a language they do not fully understand. Collier and Thomas (North West Regional Educational Laboratory, 1995) concluded as students move into the upper grades, demands increase more rapidly and they lag even further behind. Students face a huge challenge by having to learn subject matter and language simultaneously. The only solution, and one dictated by law, is to provide instruction in the student's home language through bilingual or alternative language programs (NWREL, 1995). The problem is sorting through the arguments and weighing the merits of the various programs and their outcomes.

    Today, many of the students from these linguistically and culturally diverse subgroups speak English, low level, social, non-academic English, are losing their home language, and are making only limited gains in English (Cummins, 1983; Fillmore, 2003). These students function at what Cummins (1989; 2003b) identified as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill level (BICS), conversational English, the language of everyday interaction. BICS, learned in about two years, is the level of language necessary to engage in

ordinary social conversations (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Rigg & Allen, 1989). Students

need Cognitive Affective Linguistic Proficiency Skills (CALPS), the level of academic

language required to excel in education, politics, and business. It is the level of language

necessary for appropriate grade level academic purposes, and usually takes from five to

seven years to learn (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Rigg & Allen, 1989). It is the language

bilingual and alternative language programs are designed to teach.

> We already know there are instructional methods and strategies used in a variety of

language programs that affect literacy in English. Such programs include English as a

Second Language (ESL), dual language programs (using both languages for instruction), and

other second language acquisition program models (Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1989; Gersten

& Baker, 2000; Krashen, 2003). The more information we collect from classroom educators

on other non-traditional, alternative, "out of the box" methods, the faster we can move

towards successful instruction for English language learners. There is no relevant

information readily available determining what methods and strategies are effective in some

New Mexico schools and how such a resource would be of great importance to school

districts having English language learners. Studying language instruction programs in

schools where English language learners meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the

measurement from NCLB (USDE, 2001) for proficiency in reading/language arts, math, and

science, would give other schools guidance specific to the minority groups they serve. For

New Mexico schools, AYP was waivered by USDE and replaced with a school grading

system. In the grading system, English language leaner and other subgroups are not identified

by subgroup (NMPED, 2012b).

Collecting, analyzing, and presenting data on student, parent, and staff perspectives about language programs and methods, may help schools build effective models as they develop their programs. Providing qualitative information alongside available assessment data may help schools revamp language programs. One of the most critical is planning professional development to improve instruction for all students including English language learners.

The lack of studies relating academic achievement to language programs, methods, and strategies in New Mexico brings the problem to a more critical level. There are many studies on bilingual education in this state focusing on model development and effectiveness, evaluation and assessment, and policy but none on the participants and their perspectives. This qualitative research explores the elements of language programs, specifically bilingual education, and the relationship to language academic proficiency and student success as seen by program participants. Although there are studies on successful programs at the national level that identify exemplary programs, none mentions our state (Robledo-Montecel & Cortez, 2002). If any unpublished research exists at the state level, it is not readily available to school districts.

It is essential we begin to investigate approaches deemed effective for English language learners. Schools are required by NCLB (USDE, 2001) to demonstrate progress with all students, regardless of the subgroup. NCLB (USDE, 2001) also supports acquisition of English as fundamental to academic success for five million English language learners and mandates an annual assessment for English proficiency with demonstrated results (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans,

2003, p. 14). The basic premise of NCLB (USDE, 2001) is every child can learn and every district, school, and teacher must be accountable for his/her learning.

Statement of the Problem

The same issues that are a result of increases in minority group populations nationwide are even more prevalent in New Mexico. The issues include the need for an equitable education provided in a language students can understand, with adequate resources including qualified teachers and appropriate materials, as well as suitable facilities, with respect and value for the students' language and culture. New Mexico is different from most states in many ways, among them unique cultures, traditions, and language posing challenges as well as strengths. Diverse populations including Hispanics and Native Americans have a long history of existence in New Mexico and maintained their culture, traditions, and language throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and into the twenty first century (Sánchez, 1967).

New Mexico is also different from other states in its rich history of education. Early forms of formal education were established by Native Americans, and then continued in the missions and pueblos for 300 years, and finally in the 1890s to free public schools in most towns, along with four institutions of higher education (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005). As early as 1791, free public schools were found in all pueblos and Spanish settlements. In 1822-23, every town was required to have a school; in 1826, the first college was founded in Santa Fe by the Catholic religious; and in 1827, there were public schools in 19 villages (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005). New Mexico was also the first state to enact legislation authorizing instruction in languages other than English (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Although

lack of materials, teachers, finances, and long distances were problems that sometimes could not be overcome, education seemed to be important to the leadership of New Mexico.

Today there are 89 school districts in New Mexico and 58 have bilingual programs with state funding totaling $39,000,000 (NMPED, 2009). This does not include alternative language programs for which cost is not available because districts do not receive additional funding and are not required to categorize expenditures for them. Despite the funding, few schools and districts seem to be making progress with English language learners in a state with one of the highest per capita percentages of English language learners in the nation, 19% (NMPED, 2008). The majority of English language learners in New Mexico include native Hispanics, Native Americans, and immigrant Hispanics (NMPED, 2008). In 2011, seven hundred eighteen schools (86.4%) did not meet the standards of measurement of No Child Left Behind, the majority due to English language learner students not meeting standards in content areas (NMPED, 2011; USDE, 2001).

How much value are we receiving for our money? Most importantly, how prepared are English language learners to compete against fluent English proficient students in higher education or for the kind of employment that provides good wages?

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I explored how language programs, strategies, and methods used with English language learners and other Hispanics enrolled in programs, influenced students and their academic proficiency as understood by teachers, parents, and school leaders as well as students themselves. New Mexico, with its diversity, presents many opportunities for this type of educational research.

In 2009, then New Mexico Public Education Secretary Veronica García spoke to a group of educators about the lack of progress made by New Mexico's English language learners (NMPED, 2009b). She was concerned about the considerable gap in achievement existing in student performance between English language learners and their native English-speaking peers (see Table 3). She asked teachers, administrators, and parents to develop a state plan to close the achievement gap for students who failed to meet English language proficiency (NMPED, 2009b).

Secretary García believed schools must be given guidance in building a framework for implementing effective bilingual and alternative language programs to begin to make academic progress with New Mexico's English language learners. A task force met to work on the plan, however, a change in administration interrupted the process and unfortunately, nothing further has come of it.

In another response to apprehensions relative to Hispanic students' academic performance, closing the achievement gap, and increasing graduation rates, the New Mexico Legislature (2010) passed the Hispanic Education Act (HB150). The act created a liaison position and an advisory committee to help NMPED engage parents, community, businesses, school districts, higher education, and policy makers. The goal is to work together to improve education for Hispanic students, attendance, and completion of programs at colleges and universities (NM Legislature, 2010). The committee compiled useful information about the state's Hispanic students in the form of a report, the Hispanic Education Status Report SY 2010-2011 (NMPED, 2012a).

New Mexico Public Education Department data (NMPED, 2009c) indicated there are 326,000 students in the public schools and 19.2% (62,500) are English language learners.

Many are enrolled in schools that have not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as measured by the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA), the state test of academic proficiency. Schools not meeting AYP have between 20% and 99% of their populations identified as English language learners (NMPED, 2006). Recently New Mexico was given a waiver from using AYP as a measurement for proficiency and schools are issued grades instead. The waiver requires the grading of schools based on total percent proficient and amount of growth made (NMPED, 2012b). In relation to those numbers, a large percentage of the group is either Hispanic or Native American (NMPED, 2006).

The total number of schools in New Mexico that have not met AYP has increased from 97 schools in 2001 to 718 in 2011. In other words, in 2011 out of 831 schools, 86.4% did not make AYP (NMPED, 2011). This information is presented in the following table.

Table 2

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status of New Mexico Public Schools

Indicator	2001	2003	2006	2009	2010	2011
Made AYP	579	587	367	252	193	113
Did not make AYP	97	153	433	568	634	718
Total	676	740	800	820	827	831

Note. Data adapted from AYP Quick Facts 2009 and AYP Quick Facts 2011. Retrieved from http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ayp2009/aypQuickFacts.pdf &. http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ayp2011/.

The dismal statistics amplify questions parents and communities have about schools and the lack of success some of their students have in meeting required proficiency levels. Are students who are struggling with English enrolled in bilingual/alternative language

programs? If so, which programs have the most success in preparing students for English proficiency? How do these programs affect students academically and emotionally? What programs and instructional methods are beneficial? Responding to these questions is essential in the process of determining what programs to implement and which practices help students become proficient in English and enable more schools to meet AYP (or a grade of C or above).

Historically, there was not the same expectation for English language learners and special education students with regard to academic proficiency. No Child Left Behind (USDE, 2001) changed that. The new assessment requirements are informing educators of the lack of success our present system has with students from specific populations, such as Native Americans, Hispanic immigrants, and native New Mexico Hispanics.

Of great importance are the limitations of NCLB (USDE, 2001) regarding assessment of minority groups, the most critical are the shortcomings of academic assessments used to measure English language learners' performance for AYP. To test proficiency, students must be able to understand the academic language used in tests at the same time they are learning English (Crawford, 2004). The student who does not know English or know it well cannot make sense of what a test is asking for and, although modifications for English language learner students and the use of a Spanish language test are available, it may not be enough. There are also students who do not qualify for modifications or an alternative language test that must be assessed in English (Crawford, 2004). We must keep in mind the tests cannot separate errors due to language from those due to academics, and the same test is given to students who are fluent in English (Crawford, 2004). Students may know the content area but cannot demonstrate their knowledge if they do not understand the questions. This is

reflected in the NMSBA, the state test given to all students (NMPED, 2006). Academic achievement assessments are developed for native English speakers, thus they have low reliability and validity for students who are English language learners (Abedi, 2004; Crawford, 2004).

Additionally, assessing the English language learner group creates other problems such as the variation in the number of years each student takes to reach English proficiency, the diversity of the group, socioeconomic status, culture and language background, educational level, and mobility (Crawford, 2004). Students who come from low socioeconomic and educational levels take longer to learn English than others (Abedi, 2004; Crawford, 2004). Mobility and diversity complicate matters by creating a fluctuation in numbers from year to year. Proficiency levels apply to the group and do not track individuals (Abedi, 2004; Crawford, 2004). One of the biggest problems is the fact English language learners are identified as such because of proficiency level and upon exiting the group, are no longer counted as English language learners. Numbers remain consistent and show a lack of progress as new students are identified. To try to remedy this problem, the US Department of Education began to allow schools to count former English language learners for two years after they are classified proficient (Crawford, 2004). English language learners will always be enrolled in New Mexico schools and numbers are projected to continue growing.

Although NCLB (USDE, 2001) is an important effort to hold schools accountable for students' academic performance, especially those who were ignored in the past, one problem is that the law is top down (Crawford, 2004). The United States government imposed reform and emphasized tests and outcomes without providing the necessary funding for teacher

training, adequate facilities and materials, and professional development on effective

instructional approaches (Contreras, 2010). NCLB (USDE, 2001) also set an unrealistic

target for schools to meet full proficiency for all student groups including English language

learners by 2014 (Crawford, 2004). This is only possible if these newcomers are not allowed

to enroll in school. The impact of NCLB (USDE, 2001) has been felt more by the Hispanic

group because it is the largest and fastest growing minority group with a language

background other than English (García & Jensen, 2009).

Regardless of concerns with NCLB (USDE, 2001) such as assessment, insufficient

funding, and unrealistic targets, it is still federal law and educators must do a better job with

minority groups and English language learners who are not achieving (Crawford, 2004).

Often the students themselves are blamed for underachievement and failure because of

culture, language, and economic level. Some teachers may believe these factors make

English language learners "difficult to teach" and view them as culturally and linguistically

deprived, which may in turn lead some educators to absolve themselves of their

responsibility (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 2004, p. 201). No longer should educators be able

to blame students for academic failure because of their native language or their background

and environment. New Mexico, like other states, faces the challenge of enabling all students

to meet academic standards and persuading teachers to lead efforts to meet this challenge.

In New Mexico, English language learners also labeled Limited English Proficient

(LEP), are identified through the language proficiency assessment, the New Mexico English

Language Proficiency Assessment (NMELPA). Because English language learners are not

fluent in English, the majority of these students struggle with academics, which is reflected in

their performance on current assessments (Abedi, 2004). Data from NMPED (2006)

Accountability and Data System (ADS) and Student Teacher Accountability Reporting

System (STARS) indicate proficiency varies greatly between the English language learner

subgroup and the All Students category, which includes all students tested. The variation

ranges from 15.3 percentage points to 23.5 percentage points (NMPED 2006). The data in

Table 3 shows that 58% of students in the All Students category at high school level were

proficient in reading while only 34.5% of English language learners were proficient

(NMPED, 2006). Data displayed in the table also indicates English language learners are

always more than 15 percentage points lower at every grade level than the All Students

group.

Table 3

NM Student Groups-All Students and ELL Students % Proficient in Reading in 2006

Student Group	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	HS
All Students	54.5	53.9	57.2	40.4	50.4	50.9	58
ELL Students	39	36.9	38	25.1	34.4	33.9	34.5

Note. Data adapted from "NMPED Accountability data and assessment" (2006).

Studies conducted on language programs generally focus on selected groups. The

most common language programs researched include those designed for Hispanic and Asian

students in the United States and French students in Canada (Cummins, 1983; Schauber,

Morissette, & Langlois, 1995). In New Mexico, however, it is difficult to find any studies

focused on diverse student groups specific to the state or studies on the failure of English

language learners to meet academic proficiency on standards based assessments. I trust that

this research project is the first of several that will help to make changes in the education of

students in New Mexico who struggle with the English language. The end goal would be to

enable all New Mexico students, regardless of ethnicity and language group, to meet levels of proficiency in academic subjects and give them the tools necessary to be productive and financially successful citizens.

Through this study, I have explored information from language program participants about programs and strategies, as well as their perceptions. Of utmost importance is how students, parents, and staff feel about language programs, student performance, and the cultural and linguistic impact programs have made on them. Specifically the study was designed to respond to the research question and sub-questions:

Research Question:

From the perspectives of teachers, students, administrators, and parents how do language programs, methods, and/or instructional strategies influence students culturally, linguistically, and academically?

Research Sub-questions:

1. What meaning do participants make of the relationship between language and their national, familial, and cultural origins, future aspirations, and schooling?

2. What do participants identify as helpful and unhelpful to the process of language acquisition, to academic achievement, and to overall student success?

Research Design

This study is a qualitative research study; different from the mostly positivist large studies that employ quantitative methods often the norm in education, and give information on trends but tell us little about the lived realities that regularly occur in education (Waxman, Tharp, & Hilberg, 2004). Quantitative research measures and uses numbers to describe the subject studied whereas qualitative research uses words to describe the people and events

being studied (Mertens, 2005, p. 6). I agree with Waxman, Tharp, and Hilberg (2004) who believe that qualitative research improves the process of education for children who are of diverse backgrounds by incorporating the cultural and linguistic experiences of these children and their families (p. 233). I chose to do a phenomenological study because "knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process and researchers should attempt to understand the world of lived experience from those who live it" (Mertens, 2005, p. 13). Phenomenology enables a researcher to understand and describe an event, the focus of the investigation, through the lens of the participants and also determines how the information is gathered.

My research plan included the selection of one high school located in Northern New Mexico where the majority of students were Hispanics, both native New Mexicans and immigrants, in grades nine through twelve, and who participated in language instruction programs. The list of potential secondary schools was ranked from highest to lowest according to percent proficiency of English language learners on reading. I contacted district personnel from the first school on the list and was granted permission to conduct the study.

After meeting with school administration and receiving their permission, I interviewed students, administrators, and instructional staff participating in language programs. I was also able to interview a limited number of parents of students in programs. I conducted primarily individual interviews though a few students were interviewed together in small groups. Interviews are a common method used in qualitative studies to get in depth information from participants, and give voice to the participants' experiences in their own words.

Students and parents were interviewed in English, Spanish, or a combination in response to their comfort level. An advantage I had was that I am able to speak, read, and write in both Spanish and English.

Significance of the Study

There have been movements to promote English as the only language in the United States beginning with the language colonization of Native Americans and continuing with English only initiatives of recent years (Macedo, 2000). For citizens of New Mexico, the right to maintain language and culture was guaranteed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, an agreement between the U. S. government and Mexico, but like other government policies, it is often ignored in schools and other institutions (Maciel & Gonzales-Berry, 2000; Roberts, 2001; Sánchez, 1967; Simmons, 1998).

As was the case for other Hispanics/Latinos across the nation for many years, New Mexicans were not allowed to speak Spanish in schools and many were punished for doing so (San Miguel & Donato, 2010). Their culture and language was devalued as the political system tried to erase all traces from the curriculum and move towards English only (San Miguel & Donato, 2010). I remember the stories told by my parents and grandparents about being paddled, shunned, and isolated from others if they spoke even one word of Spanish. As a result, they did not speak if they did not know the words in English and still today many unknowingly follow the same tradition of domination.

This study does not dispute the need for students to learn English. As bell hooks, (2004) so eloquently said,

I know that it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do

with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make

it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize (p. 85).

This study does however have as its underpinnings the belief that it is critical for

children to understand the language used to teach them (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In

short, with my study I explored language programs, associated instructional methods, and

gave voice to those experiencing the programs.

We may be reluctant to accept how a critical review of statistics nationwide shows

English language learners making little progress from year to year whether they participate in

bilingual and alternative language programs or not (Bailey, A., 2007). In addition, many

programs, especially at the secondary level, lack quality (Solórzano & Solórzano, 2004). Of

no less importance is accountability for the huge amount of funding being spent on programs

nationwide as well as in New Mexico. Can educators point to exemplary programs that can

be replicated? If we measure for effectiveness with the same measures used for other school

programs for NCLB (USDE, 2001), can we say language programs are serving the purposes

for which they are designed.

My hope is that the information collected through this study will help teachers to

provide instruction that is more relevant for English language learners. It may serve to

support educators in designing a framework for bilingual education programs to provide a

language foundation that enables students to meet proficiency levels appropriate to their

grade placement. The information I was able to gather through this research may contribute

to ending the academic struggle experienced by English language learners.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Walking with Language
Some have carried it, held it close, protected.
Others have pulled it along like a reluctant child.
Still others have waved it like a flag, a signal to others.
And still, some have filled the language with rage and
Dare others to come close.
And there are those who find their language burdensome
  Shackle.
They continually pick at the lock.

Zepeda, (2004, p. xiii).

Introduction

Zepeda (2004, p. xii) described reactions and emotions language sparks. Despite these reactions, language programs and their affects on student success is a topic for which there has not been a lot of research conducted. Although there are extensive studies of language learning, there is none available on both language programs and student success (Collier, 1995; Collier, 2004; Durán, 1994; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Hartley & Johnson, 1995; Krashen, 1982; Krashen, 1996a; Krashen, 1996b; Krashen, 2003). Student success as characterized by students making progress and meeting proficiency in academics has also been the subject of many studies (Darling-Hammond, French, & García-Lopez, 2002; Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999) but research combining language learning and academic progress is limited (Robledo-Montecel & Cortez, 2002). In addition, while there are studies as mentioned, another gap in the research is in qualitative research. As early as 1992, the National Research Council called for improving research on evaluations by conducting qualitative research to identify program features (August & Hakuta, 1998). The authors believed political controversy over bilingual education led to much research comparing

programmatic approaches for effectiveness (August & Hakuta, 1998). Although they reviewed an extensive collection of studies on most aspects of bilingual education, they failed to mention any studies where children and their personal narratives were the focus of the study. August and Hakuta (1997) also proposed priorities for adding to this but they do not include a student focus. Trueba, Guthrie, and Au (1981) proposed ethnographic research to give a more realistic view of the educational process and to have an important impact on the quality of education. Mehan (1981) agreed that many evaluations do not document how programs affect children; instead, they overlook what happens in classrooms and compare schools. In proposing more research of a qualitative nature in the study of bilingual education, Trueba et al. (1981) were way before their time and largely unheeded.

This literature review was developed from conducting a systematic search of various sources for books, journals, articles, studies, dissertations, and electronic documents after identifying the following key terms:

- English as a Second Language

- Second language acquisition language programs

- Bilingual education

- Multiethnic and multilingual education

- Alternative language programs

- School reform and school improvement

- Achievement gap

- Student success in academics

- High performing schools and other subtopics

Morse (2004, p. 500) suggested that to prepare a comprehensive review the background, justification, and need for research should be provided. The works of major authors and researchers in the field served to set a substantial starting point for my review. Initially, based on my examination of study abstracts in bilingual education, only those with direct reference to language programs and how they affect literacy in English were to be selected, but because so many other variables affect student success, I expanded my review. In an effort to locate studies that are more specific and narrow the scope, a second key word, qualitative research, was used but it did not produce significant results. This review provides information relating to the main research question of this study and the subquestions as noted in chapter one.

There is an abundance of literature available on bilingual education in the form of position papers, articles, and research based literature, much of it directly contributing to the development of the research questions. The review was used to provide background information that helped me conduct the research by identifying program models, developing a list of effective strategies, composing interview questions, and assisting in understanding attitudes of staff, students, and parents in relation to bilingual education.

Five major topics or variations of them emerged during my review of literature. In the first, I examined bilingual education and second language acquisition in general with a summary of models and their effectiveness and descriptions of programs used in schools. In the second I summed up selected studies on program participants and barriers they face in achieving academic success. This helped guide the research by providing interview questions to uncover insight into culture and attitudes. Student characteristics, environment, and

program implementation, were factors essential to consider when examining bilingual education through the participants' perspectives.

The subject of bilingual education would not be complete without reviewing the third topic, controversial issues and arguments relating to the subject such as:

- o What language should be used for instruction

- o Parental misconceptions

- o Not necessary for success

- o Expensive to implement

- o Lack of qualified teachers

- o Causes erosion of English

Controversy affects program participants and their perceptions and attitudes regarding programs.

The fourth topic I examined included federal and state policies affecting programs nationally and in New Mexico. The fifth topic consisted of an investigation of effective strategies and provided me with a foundation in relation to the research question centering on academic achievement and establishing of themes and patterns. Based on these points the following topics emerged as relevant to the research: (a) bilingual education, second language acquisition, and program effectiveness (b) program participants and barriers to success, (c) controversies encompassing bilingual education, (d) state and national policy, and (e) strategies for success.

Bilingual Education and Second Language Acquisition

My review of the literature begins with a description of language education programs designed for students whose home language is not English and who are identified as English

language learners. Programs are classified into two categories: Bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) also called alternative language instruction (Antunez & Zelasko, 2001, p.1).

Bilingual education. In bilingual education, the language of instruction is the student's home or native language until the student attains proficiency in English and academic vocabulary. The only difference between bilingual education and a standard instructional program should be the language (Imhoff, 1990). The ultimate goal is very similar to a regular classroom instructional program where students receive the education necessary to become productive and responsible citizens (Bilingual Education Office, 1990). Academic excellence and bilingualism go hand in hand to provide a quality education that students from various cultural groups are entitled to receive, the same as all other students (Beykont, 2000).

Additional benefits of bilingual education are the cognitive advantages of speaking more than one language (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). This links to thought processes involved in problem solving and creativity, neither of which is adequately assessed in schools, if at all (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Early exit. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) (Antunez & Zelasko, 2001) listed various bilingual and alternative program models; among the most common across the U. S. is transitional bilingual education also called early exit (August & Hakuta, 1998; Jones & Fuller, 2003). It is the most supported at the federal level and prevalent in most states (Ovando & Collier, 1998). This model requires content area instruction such as math or social studies to begin at a linguistic primary level in the student's home language. For the language arts component, the student is given English as a Second

Language (ESL) instruction using visuals and examples, appropriate materials, all connecting to the student's experiences provided in a low anxiety setting (Bilingual Education Office, 1990). Students are usually taught non-core area classes such as music, art, and physical education in English.

Transitional. In a transitional program, students who all speak the same native language are quickly transitioned into all English instruction. The home language is developed only to the extent necessary to aid in the transfer (North West Regional Educational Laboratory, NWREL, 1995). The method does have some value in that it uses native language for instruction even if only for a limited time (Ovando & Collier, 1998). This bridging program is designed to help move students from the home language to English in three years or less, but studies have demonstrated full proficiency takes five to seven years (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

A transitional program in addition to not being a true bilingual program has many other obstacles. It is a segregated model requiring language minority speakers to be separated from other students. Most educators see it as a remedial program where students receive special, although less challenging instruction; and where it takes more time to learn academic English than the program itself calls for (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

In New Mexico, requirements for state funding for transitional programs includes one period of home language arts, one English as a Second Language (ESL), and one possible additional period of content area (math, science, or social science) in the home language totaling two or three periods per day (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2008, p. 5).

Although transitional programs are the most prevalent in schools in the US today, research results are not clear as to their effectiveness (Imhoff, 1990) but research has

indicated students performed better than students in English only classrooms (Rolstad &
MacSwan, 2010). A more accurate determination of program effectiveness may include
using control groups in program evaluations if rigorous controls could be applied, however
most researchers determined this would be impossible (Cummins, 2003b). Whether
transitional programs are effective is not relevant to the federal government whose policies
have repeatedly been positioned the purpose as bilingual education only to transition students
into English (August & Hakuta, 1998).

Late exit, developmental, or maintenance. A second model listed by NCELA
(Antunez & Zelasko, 2001, p.1) called late exit, developmental, or maintenance bilingual
education teaches students language arts in the home language as well as in English. They
receive content classes in English or their home language depending on the school plan,
which is developed through assessments with goals of bi-literacy and bilingualism (NWREL,
1995). These programs can also be implemented as heritage or revitalization programs
designed to teach young people the home language. They enable a student to attain and
maintain proficiency in their home language regardless of proficiency level.

This model is controversial in communities where there are small numbers of
minority group students or where parents and community object to the use of a language
other than English for instruction. In New Mexico, required instructional time is one period
per day in home language arts and ESL, and can include an additional hour of content area in
the home language (NMPED, 2008). The difference between transitional and maintenance is
the goal of biliteracy in a maintenance program versus English only proficiency in
transitional (NMPED, 2008). An examination of 200 studies and reports concluded that
educational achievement of students in late exit maintenance and dual language programs

were comparable to and usually higher than peers in other programs and the more time, they stayed in the program the better their academic performance (Barton, 2006).

Dual language immersion. Two-way or bilingual immersion, more commonly known as dual language immersion is taught equally in both the home language and English (Antunez & Zelasko, 2001; Ovando & Collier, 1998). In an ideal program, half of the students are English speakers and half are home language speakers. Language arts and content classes are taught in both languages and the goal is proficiency in English and the home language (NWREL, 1995). Models vary in the time allotted to subject areas, the languages used, and the percentages of home language and English used according to the grade level (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Because students are all together, segregation is not an issue and both cultures and languages are valued.

A dual language model has the most positive impact on academic achievement when compared to other bilingual programs (Collier, 2004; NWREL, 1995; Ovando & Collier, 1998). García and Jensen (2009) presented evidence in comparisons of Hispanic English language learners in dual language that outperform or do as well as native English speakers in dual language and outperform native Spanish speakers in other program models. Gándara and Contreras (2009) concluded students in late exit bilingual programs such as dual language were comparable and usually scored better in academic assessment than students in other programs. Ramirez (1992) also provided evidence that four years in a program was not sufficient but after seven years, students were beginning to reach grade level norms. Collier (1992, 2004) conducted multiple studies from 1990 through 2003 on dual language programs that overwhelmingly demonstrated programmatic success for student participants. Dual language includes an ESL period for English language learners, is effective for both Spanish

and English speakers, and does not sacrifice English development (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In addition, the program helps to reduce prejudice by uniting the group as one with a common goal as they learn from each other (August & Hakuta, 1998). Barriers to the program include cost, scheduling, materials, and licensed staff.

English as a Second Language (ESL). The other option to bilingual education, English as a second language (ESL), provides the standard curriculum in English only and no instruction in the minority language (Ovando & Collier, 1998). ESL models can range in structure from a pullout program where students miss other subjects to attend ESL to sheltered instruction where specific content is combined with language and taught together (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Bilingual education and alternative language programs implemented across the nation through many different models are not an end in themselves, but a process to help second language learners achieve academically in the mainstream language, English.

English as a Second Language (ESL) methodology involves little or no use of the home language (Antunez & Zelasko, 2001; NWREL, 1995). Language arts is taught in English with sheltered instruction using simplified vocabulary, extra time, manipulatives, pictures, and hands on activities (Barton, 2006; NWREL, 1995). Sheltered instruction may also be used to teach content area math or science using strategies to make word meanings clear (Ovando & Collier, 1998). The most common strategies used are the application of prior knowledge, building background knowledge, repetition, cooperative learning, group projects, and the use of technology (Cummins, 2003a). It can be taught in a self-contained classroom or as a pullout, requiring students to be taken out of the regular classroom to receive ESL instruction. Intensive English language arts in ESL may include students from

any language group and although teachers need not be fluent in the student's home language, they do need training in English as a second language (Jones & Fuller, 2003).

Submersion. A submersion program puts English language learners whose first language is not English into an all-English classroom without any support or modification (NWREL, 1995). Although it is sometimes listed as a model, it cannot be called bilingual education, as there is only one language of instruction used (NWREL, 1995; Ovando & Collier, 1998). It was found to be unconstitutional in Lau vs. Nichols, 1974 (García, 1990; NWREL, 1995) and legally cannot be used in public schools. This does not mean it is entirely absent in schools today. When schools have low numbers of English language learners, they fail to put students in appropriate classes either because they are unaware of the law or lack funds and personnel. Parents of these students are unlikely to request programs for their children for many reasons including fear regarding immigration status, language inadequacy, and lack of self-confidence in bringing their concerns to school authorities (Imhoff, 1990).

For Hispanic/Latino students the history of failed policies continues today. They do not receive a quality education because schools use curricula that lack academic rigor, essential resources, and have inadequately trained staff, despite requirements of the federal bilingual act of 1968 and subsequent modifications (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; San Miguel & Donato, 2010). The focus is on outcomes of assessments with no relation to other factors such as instruction, language, and cultural bias of materials, and allowing institutions to place the blame on students themselves, which has been very harmful to English language learners (Irizarry & Nieto, 2010). The responsibility of the institution is absolved and students continue to fail. The number of children experiencing an achievement gap, continues to

increase and become more widespread because of population increases (Contreras, 2010; García & Jensen, 2009; Irizarry & Nieto, 2010).

What effect do language programs have on literacy in English? Many studies have demonstrated there is a positive relationship between literacy in the native language and English language development (Clay, 1993; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Knowledge of the native language establishes a primary literacy base and the transfer to English is more effective and easily made. The result is that students attain at higher academic levels than students who have only Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), basic level proficiency in their home language (Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1989; Cummins, 2003a). Cummins' (1989) research demonstrated a common skill underlies all language and makes the learning of another language easier when the skill has been established in the native language.

Zappert and Cruz (1977) reviewed over 150 bilingual project evaluations and research studies, but excluded more than 80% of them because of serious methodological weaknesses and examined a total of 12 (p. 39). In their study, they found bilingual education and bilingualism improves English, and more importantly, does not interfere with English oral language development, reading, writing, math, social studies, cognition, or self-image (p. 39). Evidence compiled also indicated attendance improved for students in programs. The fact so many of the programs had to be excluded from the review points out improvements need to be made not only in programs but in research design and data collection to present sound investigations and help inform decisions on bilingual program implementation (Zappert & Cruz, 1977).

The benefits of high quality programs are touted by many, most recently García and Jensen (2009) whose research review indicated bilingual programs over English only, can close the Hispanic vs. White reading gap by at least 20 and up to 33 percentage points (p. 1). They (García & Jensen, 2009) also found 17 studies consistently showing bilingual programs were better than English only (p. 9) and in 13 additional studies, 9 demonstrated Spanish dominant students performed better in reading in English when in a bilingual program while 4 showed no difference (p. 9).

> Gándara and Contreras (2009) made an important point regarding bilingual education: Although it has been shown to be a viable and often superior form of education for both English learners and English speakers some states have moved to ban its use…and opt to place English learners in English only settings with very few if any additional resources or supports. It is not surprising then, that under these conditions, Latino students who are not proficient in English fare poorly in U. S. schools, never really catching up with their English-speaking peers, and thus are prone to drop out of school. (p. 33)

Still, we cannot ignore the other side of the debate regarding the lack of effectiveness of bilingual education programs. Baker (1990) cited several reviews by Troike, Baker and de Kanter, Rossell and Ross, Willig, and others whose work concluded most bilingual education programs had no effect on student achievement with the remainder equally grouped into both positive and negative. Also most were products of poor design and shoddy methodology. Baker (1990) claimed many reviewers who compiled encouraging data were advocates and unlikely to find flaws. In his review he discounted some of the most basic tenets of bilingual education, one being literacy in the first language transfers to literacy in the second language.

Baker (1990) cited one study by Engle conducted in 1975 as evidence literacy makes no difference, emphatically disagreeing with most of the research (Clay, 1993; Collier, 1992; Collier, 2004; Krashen, 1996 a; Krashen, 1996 b; NWREL, 1995; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Baker (1990) did make some valid conclusions, as cited in this literature review, but he did not conduct studies himself and even considered himself out of the field yet he wrote reviews of selected studies.

Another opponent of bilingual education, Porter (1998) believes the movement had good intentions initially. She says the original legislation was intended to help immigrant children become proficient in English. However, it has resulted in segregation, excessive funding, teaching native language rather than academic English, and a focus on maintaining ethnic culture (Porter, 1998, p. 4). Porter (1998) concedes there are some positive effects including parental involvement, professional development that centers on understanding and respect for children from diverse backgrounds, and an increased awareness of the needs of those children (p. 5). She argues the school's job is to increase academic competence in English, the dominant language in the US, not preserve culture.

As previously mentioned, program evaluations cannot determine effectiveness because of several problems. Evaluations have not adhered to controlled research settings using cohort groups and longitudinal data (Gersten & Baker, 2000). There are also a variety of program designs and levels of implementation of programs occurring at district and school levels making each different (Cummins, 2003b). In this research, I did not review program models and their effectiveness; instead, I explored what is helpful and unhelpful to student success through the lenses of practitioners and participants instead of through assessment and achievement data.

Program Participants and Barriers to Success

Bilingual education resulted from court decisions enacted into law to ensure minority group children had access to an appropriate education. For many reasons it has not been implemented universally and instead, in most schools, English has been used to provide only ESL (Gamboa, 1980). Minority children are still placed in an atmosphere where equal access is not provided. Some speak English while others struggle to learn it at the same time they receive instruction for all subjects in English. Students who speak English struggle with other factors contributing to low academic success (García and Jensen, 2009, p. 8):

- Parental education level affects and sometimes predicts the next generation's level

- Family income not only determines who will attend college but also the children's future income

- Parental English proficiency influences the child's proficiency and future income

- Parental marital status single parent vs. dual affects student's academic performance

Some students go to schools where finances are insufficient and others attend adequately funded schools. Despite court rulings, federal and state mandates, modifications and reforms, and community concerns, Hispanics/Latinos usually attend schools segregated by location, inadequate, untrained school staff, and overcrowded, substandard buildings (San Miguel & Donato, 2010).

Some children suffer prejudice because of their skin color, accented English, or for other reasons. These students have no control over their language proficiency, economic status, ethnic origin, or the color of their skin, yet all of these dynamics have an impact on their education. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in New Mexico. In 1940,

Sánchez (1967) conducted a study of the social and economic conditions of native Hispanics in New Mexico. Taos County was selected as the site for the study because it reflected conditions all over New Mexico. The study also included general information in the first section, and concluded Hispanics statewide, suffered many inequities in the areas of education, health, and social services due to isolation and cultural differences (Sánchez, 1967, p. 36). Sánchez felt so strongly about these inequities he titled his book "Forgotten People" and one chapter "Stepchildren of a Nation". Sánchez's research was qualitative in nature, considered a classic on the subject of New Mexico Hispanics, and has been quoted recently by many (Nieto-Phillips, 2004; Nunn, 2001; Roberts, 2001). Nunn (2001), who in her work on the art of the New Deal era says Hispanics were "forgotten and treated as stepchildren"" and regarded as invisible because of their ethnicity (p. xi).

Sanchez (1967) tried to "go behind and beyond the facts in an attempt to achieve subjective identification with the New Mexican and to give life to the facts and color to their portrayal" (p. viii). Though the study does not directly attribute injustices committed against native New Mexico Hispanics to racial prejudice, the findings included bias due to language, culture, lack of education, poverty, and a lack of sophistication in the American way of life.

Simmons (1998) supported this concept when documenting the loss of land suffered by native New Mexico Hispanics because of injustices coming from the US government and newcomers to New Mexico. Simmons referred to cultural differences in perceptions of land that Hispanics align to family and community and Anglos (for lack of a better term) see as a belonging and property to be sold (p. 143). The loss of their land was a dramatic event in the native Hispanic's life.

Social factors, language difficulty, family income, educational level, occupation, attitudes, gender, cultural variables, and many other issues make up the situational context of education for all students and especially affect minority students (Brisk, Burgos, & Hamerle, 2004). Utilizing information about situational context can enable educators to facilitate the progress of minority group students (Brisk et al., 2004). Neuman and Celano (2001) said, "Consequently learning and development cannot be considered apart from the individual's social environment, the ecocultural niche" (p. 8). In Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez, (2002), personal narratives by minority group students in teacher education programs provided insight as to how students deal with issues of diversity involving themselves and their students. The collection is of value to anyone who works with minorities, however, it does not use research data to support the difficulties encountered by students. Brisk et al. (2004) designed their work, a resource for studies, without personal experiences, instead including lessons and projects to help students understand situational factors, much as Darling-Hammond et al. (2002).

Language minority students' progress in schools depends on their academic English language proficiency and their ability to function and do well in a language majority setting (Brisk et al., 2004). Academic performance of English language learners is lower than for majority groups and the gap becomes wider each year (Garcia & Jensen, 2009; Lindholm, 1990). No Child Left Behind (USDE, 2001) requires schools to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and English language learners disproportionately impact results for the two/three student groups they are part of: English language learner, Racial/Ethnic, and usually low socioeconomic (Barton, 2006). In addition, the group continues to grow in the US because of large increases in student groups who speak a language other than English

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Population growth in New Mexico follows the same US trend and as a result, it has become more critical to know how to meet the educational needs of the state's English language learners.

Difficulty with language includes understanding language used by teachers, most speakers of Standard English, and reading materials used in instruction and classroom English (Brisk et al., 2004). Students may have problems with comprehension and articulation, which results in low self-concept, frustration, and powerlessness. In one classroom study, a teacher did an informal oral survey of students and their use of English. One girl in the study said she hated English and though she was in the classroom amongst all the students, she felt lonely and "invisible" (Brisk et al., 2004, p.16). When English becomes the main language the heritage language is lost, usually within two generations (Crawford, 1996; Crawford, 2004; Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2008). Language loss affects the social identity of the student, that aspect of who they are, as well as loss of linguistic, social, and economic benefits of speaking a second language (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Hurtado & García, 1994).

The home language a student speaks also impacts social status. Often a native French speaker is placed considerably higher on the social class ladder than a native Spanish speaker yet Spanish is more advantageous economically (Brisk et al., 2004). Spanish accented English and regional dialects of Spanish are usually considered the language of the poor and uneducated and are used by teachers to categorize and group students unfairly (August & Hakuta, 1998). Hernandez (1980) said a listener makes an evaluation of the speech of an individual based on attitudes previously formed toward the minority group.

Along with language barriers, English language learners must often overcome other problems such as economics, which directly influence education usually dependent on the quality of the school system and tax base of the community (Brisk et al., 2004). Higher income communities traditionally have better schools for many reasons. They have more resources, more parent involvement, better facilities, and locations in safer places, and as a result, they attract a larger pool of better-qualified teacher applicants (García-Lopez, 2002). Various studies have indicated per pupil expenditures also impact student achievement levels (Brisk et al., 2004). This is especially true for bilingual students who must have qualified and competent personnel to provide appropriate instruction. School districts claim bilingual programs are expensive because of the additional costs for teachers, transportation, and educational materials but both the federal government and most states provide extra funding for programs (Brisk et al., 2004). Yet little is said about the financial impact of not providing an adequate education for Hispanics/Latinos both in the nation and in the state. Most members of this group live at poverty level, a direct effect of the relationship between language background and academic outcomes. This has resulted in identifying the group as the "most socio-economically disadvantaged group in the US" (Crosnoe, 2009, p. 12).

Baker (1990) in his review on bilingual education stated various studies indicated low socio economic levels of Hispanics can be attributed to low educational levels, lack of proficiency in academic subjects, as well as a lack of proficiency in English (p. 41). Additionally students from low-income families often lack study aids contributing to educational success such as a computer, a quiet place to study, books, reference sources and other reading materials, internet access, and access to tutoring and other study aids.

Krashen's (1996b) research review determined several reasons high socio-economic students become academically successful, among them; a better basic education in their first language, more reading materials at home, a good diet, time, and parents who value education (p. 38). Although Krashen (1996b) did not conduct this particular research himself, he did provide a broad reference list including many frequently cited studies.

Economics can also affect student attendance, stability of home life, unsafe neighborhoods, and mobility when parents must follow jobs. A study by Hurtado, Gonzales, and Vega (1994) found it is not easy for students to be academically successful when they do not have time to study and instead must work to contribute to family income. Due to these circumstances, students are tired, overwhelmed, appear disinterested or incapable, and consequently teachers set lower expectations (García-Lopez, 2002). Some students do not value education until they get out of school and realize the career possibilities available to those with higher education. Students need to be made aware of how a lack of education limits job opportunities (Bilingual Education Office, 1989; Brisk et al., 2004).

Negative attitudes towards ethnic groups influence educational performance and give rise to prejudicial treatment (Brisk et al., 2004). Especially subject to prejudice are the most recent immigrants to a community and those who suffer prejudice because of skin color (Hale-Benson, 1990). Attitudes are generally worse in schools when children inherit prejudicial adult attitudes and demonstrate them without mercy or compassion.

Some studies linked academic achievement to social identity. Hurtado et al. (1994) defined social identity as, "that part of an individual's self concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 57). Social identity can be affected negatively when

success in schools is associated with the dominant group. Minority students feel as if they are betraying their own when they try to excel academically. Social identity can be affected positively if the environment is welcoming and faculty is encouraging consequently improving students' self-concept (Hurtado et al., 1994).

I remember a conversation with a student who was attending a college with only 10% minority group enrollment. He said he liked to come home as often as he could so he could be himself rather than having to be someone else. He was, in essence giving up his social identity when he went away to school. Here was an example of a minority student who had to change to fit into an educational system that was different and unfamiliar (Hernandez, 1980). Here also was an example of what Richard Rodriguez, well known author and newspaper columnist, referred to as his "public identity" when he had to change himself to fit into a public school (Rodriguez, 2004, p. 38). The study on social identity by Hurtado et al., (1994) was conducted through a survey, utilized available national student data, and provided information I used for this research. One minor drawback of the study was not collecting qualitative data pertinent to attitudes and culture.

Gender is another variable with implications for minority students. Female students must decide to attend school or follow the traditional roles of staying home or finding a job, getting married, and raising a family (Gándara, 1994). Gender can also be an issue when females are subjected to unequal treatment by school personnel. Studies (Brisk et al., 2004; Durán, 1983) suggest females are given less assistance and less recognition by teachers who have lower expectations for them. Some think females are incapable of the higher level thinking required of subjects such as science and math. Females are also frequently exposed

to use of the generic male pronoun when referring to members of the group (Brisk et al., 2004; Durán, 1983).

Minority group families may not have positive experiences with school staff resulting in negative perceptions. Studies (Brisk et al., 2004) indicate the relationship between the school and parents is critical to academic success. Negative relationships usually result in a lack of parental involvement and participation. Minority parents are not usually encouraged to take part in school activities (Edwards, 1990). School communication is another problem since parents are usually given information in academic level English that they may not understand. This causes them to feel uneducated, incompetent, and discourages parent participation (Edwards, 1990). Edwards (1990) compiled much information on developing partnerships with minority parents. In all practicality, schools may reach out but most of these parents have little time to come to the school, volunteer as tutors, participate in training, or take part in workshops.

There are students who overcome various situational context barriers because of their own personal resilience. Those individuals often received support from parents, teachers, and others involved in their lives as mentioned further in this chapter. Brooks and Kavanaugh (1999) in their study on high performing schools attributed success to high academic performance requirements at the schools. Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) maintained most schools do not view sociocultural factors as barriers to success, and instead identify factors in a deficit model they refer to as the "culturally different paradigm" (p. vii). It implies Hispanic students are not capable, and do not have the values or characteristics for academic success, all of which school personnel can use as an excuse not to help students (Reyes et al., 1999). Scribner (1999) pointed to 10 schools all located along the

Texas/Mexico border where students do succeed in spite of the odds. The schools determined students need support and cannot accomplish this on their own and within a vacuum.

In another study on schools that "beat the odds", 12 schools in Arizona designated as successful (proficient levels in reading and math) shared six common elements (Morrison Institute, 2006). The study used assessment data sets as well as qualitative methods to first identify the schools and then the common elements (Morrison Institute, 2006). The six elements were in three categories (Morrison Institute, 2006, p. 6):

- Disciplined thought
  - Focus on achievement as the bottom line for student, teacher, and classroom
  - Assessment daily, weekly, monthly, etc.,
- Disciplined people
  - Strong and steady principal
  - Collaboration for solutions
- Disciplined action
  - Program commitment
  - Individualized instruction

Another study by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) of successful schools in California reviewed funding provided for schools and found high performing schools did not have more resources than low performing schools (Pérez et al., 2007). From data collected through telephone interviews, researchers identified several themes although the factors contributing to success were unique for each school (Pérez et al., 2007, p. v):

- High quality staff

- Standards based curriculum

- Coherent instruction

A similar AIR study provides an analysis of several New Mexico schools with similar conclusions and themes as the California study (AIR, 2008, p. 2):

- Highly qualified, dedicated, and collaborative staff

- Vertically aligned instruction tied to state standards and goals

- Sensitivity to the cultural and community context

The more knowledge we have about what makes this difference the more we can do our part to help students achieve success.

Controversy

Bilingual education and alternative language instruction continue to be controversial topics. Some of the controversy centers on the following often-erroneous beliefs (Krashen, 1996b, p. 1):

- To learn English properly, students should be fully immersed in English only.

- First language instruction will erode students' knowledge of English.

- Schools should teach in the official language, English.

- Parents do not want bilingual education for their children.

- If some minority students have succeeded without bilingual education, all can.

- Students should be taught in English only.

- Schools must deal with added program expense and teacher shortage.

Generally, few educators disagree with the premise that because students must function in English in US schools, learning English is the priority. It is in how they are taught

where controversy begins. Teaching English only is a standard U. S. instructional method that began with Native Americans in boarding schools early in our nation's history (Beykont, 2000; Macedo, 2000). The second group required to be taught English only were Hispanics/Latinos (Jones & Fuller, 2003). Far worse was the fate of African Americans in the early 1800s who were not allowed to attend schools and although language was not the issue, colonization was (Beykont, 2000). Today most students in bilingual education are taught in their first language, which is used as a bridge to transfer to English. Unfortunately, there are still teachers who expect students to learn English without linguistic support in their own language and expect students to read in English before learning to speak English (Krashen, 1996b). This experience is like living in a foreign country without knowing the language. Teachers need to understand this perspective and perhaps this will encourage them to have some consideration for their students.

Gersten and Baker's (2000) research found some study participants equate success with fluency in English only; others value fluency in the home language as well as in English. Participants expressed the opinion the English language is primary to intellectual development and must be the first step in the ladder of academic success (Gersten & Baker, 2000). Value is placed on speaking solely in one language at a time. There is no value placed on code switching, alternately speaking in both languages throughout the conversation. It is even considered a social stigma (Durán, 1994). Code switching is a demonstration of higher language proficiency and the ability to think in both languages (Durán, 1994). Most teachers are not knowledgeable of this and are not skilled in designing instruction with this in mind (Durán, 1994). When dialects are not valued, students are often

corrected, subjected to rejection, and eventually stop speaking in public (Brisk et. al. 2004).

Anzaldúa (1987) said it better than anyone has:

> Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. (p. 59)

There is also controversy surrounding native language programs used for instruction. Cummins (1983) cited countless studies that support the idea native language instruction incurs no cost to the dominant language regardless of the relationship and there are many similarities between languages such as English and Spanish (p. 4). Some believe English must be taught on its own with no connection to the home language and it is through English only children can succeed, however, a strength of bilingual education is learning and improving proficiency in the first language (Martínez, 2000).. In New Mexico, this should be the goal since bilingual funding requires instruction in the home language (NMPED, 2008).

The debate over bilingual education in New Mexico existed even in the early days of education when students came to school speaking Spanish and were taught in Spanish. In 1891, English was required in schools, followed by the 1907 ruling to adopt English books with Spanish literacy second, then in 1912 the constitution required teachers to be proficient in English and Spanish (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005). Similar to other important acts, reforms, and improvements in education, little was enforced because of financial constraints, remoteness, staffing, poverty, and unwillingness of officials (Sánchez, 1967).

A recent analysis of five New Mexico school districts by the N.M. Legislative

Finance Committee (NMLFC, 2009) uncovered that all had long-standing bilingual programs

and native New Mexico students who had been in bilingual programs for 12 years were

unable to speak their home language with any fluency (NMLFC, 2009). Assessments

indicated some of the students could understand very little Spanish. The study will inevitably

add to the controversy in New Mexico surrounding bilingual education and the appropriate

use of funding.

Another argument against bilingual instruction is "parents don't want it." Often

studies knowingly or unknowingly sway public opinion with the way questions are posed. If

a parent is asked whether they support bilingual education at the expense of English is no

support; however when asked if they support bilingual education the results change to a 60%

to 100% approval (Krashen, 1996b, p. 44). There are parents who do not want their children

to be in any kind of bilingual program because they are convinced it sets them back in other

subjects and obstructs their learning of English. There are ways to alter those convictions

and it should be incumbent on schools and educators to show parents research supporting

bilingual education that demonstrates English language learners achieve higher academic

proficiency by learning in both the primary language and English (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Success without bilingual education is possible and has been demonstrated by the few

who never had the benefit of programs and despite that have succeeded (Krashen, 1996b).

These individuals often received a substantial amount of support in the form of parental

encouragement, formal and informal tutoring, a good foundation of literacy in the first

language, and basic English proficiency. For Richard Rodriguez, who writes and speaks

against bilingual education, extensive social interaction with English speakers and an

insatiable appetite for reading contributed to his English proficiency without bilingual education (Krashen, 1996b, p. 19).

Economics and teacher shortages are two more reasons bilingual education is not supported in some schools. The expense of programs comes from having to purchase materials in two languages by schools that usually have limited funds because of low tax bases. At the federal level, NCLB (USDE, 2001) provides funds for state programs as long as English is the target language and students are English language learners. New Mexico funds schools for each child in a bilingual program. All funds carry compliance and accountability requirements and some districts prefer to avoid that (NMPED, 2008).

There are many ways teacher shortages can be alleviated. Fewer specialized teachers are required when bilingual instruction is provided in the early grades and children can be gradually exited by subject proficiency. Other short-term proposals include team teaching and the use of para-professionals and students as peer teachers. Long-term initiatives include providing resources such as professional development and stipends to encourage teachers to become specialized (Krashen, 1996b). An additional measure would be to begin the process of recruiting and preparing teachers from the communities they will serve, adding incentives like salary increments, scholarships, and specialized training (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Bilingual education is a confusing topic in the field of education among parents, public, and school officials primarily because of the variety of models and their implementation. Scheduling, lack of coordination between regular and bilingual education staff, and time constraints are problems facing administrators. School staff must support programs and ensure quality of education, accurate student placement, a challenging curriculum, and consistent instruction. Implementing these basic tenets will encourage

students to stay in school, acquire a positive identity, bilingual proficiency, a command of academic English, and graduate with plans to continue their education (Beykont, 2000). The needs of Hispanic/Latino students are greater today; as a result, all parents, educators, community, and most critically, education researchers, must become more aggressive toward changing what does not work and implementing what does (Beykont, 2000).

Controversy enveloping bilingual programs will continue as a political discussion and unfortunately will continue to influence policy. It is time for bilingual educators to put their efforts into researching what works, as well as into collecting information for improvement from participants, then using the results to design programs and set higher goals and expectations, rather than constantly having to defend programs (Beykont, 2000). What is needed is a united campaign for enhanced quality and ensuring equity and social justice. The campaign should be based on discussions with those involved and served by programs in contrast to the past when millions were spent without requesting input from the participants for whom programs were designed (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). That concept is totally aligned with this research.

Policy Research in Bilingual Education Programs

Literature on bilingual education programs includes policy at state and federal levels developed through the efforts of the public as well as efforts of legislators. Policies are designed to ensure schools do not deny access to education because of language. Failure to provide instruction in the language of the student is a violation of civil rights laws guaranteed and ruled by the U. S. Supreme Court in Lau vs. Nichols, a landmark case (Imhoff, 1990; Santa Ana, 2004, p. 102). In New Mexico, because of Serna vs. Portales, 1974, the courts ordered Portales Municipal Schools to implement a bilingual bicultural program to serve

limited or non-English speaking students (Mondragón & Stapleton, 2005). Bilingual

education existed in New Mexico for decades prior to this, but the case mandated English

language learners must be served. The case also established an adjusted funding formula to

provide the necessary resources for programs.

In 1981, Castaneda vs. Pickard set standards for program implementation for English

language learners (Ovando & Collier, 1998). It required programs that were based on sound

educational theories, had adequate resources, materials and personnel, and evaluations for

effectiveness in teaching language and the full curriculum (Ovando & Collier, 1998). As

García and Chávez (1988) wrote after reviewing data from the U. S. Commission on Civil

Rights, language minority and ethnic minority students have been cheated out of their

education daily by receiving instruction in a language they could not fully understand and by

being placed in substandard classrooms.

Demographic changes in the US over the last twenty years dramatically affected the

educational process and educational policies, especially accountability. Whether schools are

accountable and equitable in the treatment of minority group students is an intense topic.

Reyes and Rorrer (2001) documented the extent of change in minority/majority states such as

California where 52% of student enrollment is from minority groups, most of them English

language learners and projections indicate in fifteen years it will be 70%. Due to home

environment, language, and culture most of these students are not successfully competing

with their white, English only, dominant culture peers. These students' poor performance

greatly affects success rates for schools. Reyes and Rorrer (2001) also included a policy

review of selected states with policy changes made because of the increase in diverse

populations and because of federal mandates for accountability. The mandates guarantee all

students must be educated with appropriate programs and methods, a requirement in education for the past several decades. Of all states, New Mexico has one of the largest per capita English language learner population at 21.1%, composed of Hispanics and Native Americans, making a study such as mine useful to districts in the state (NMPED, 2010).

Gebhard (2002) conducted a qualitative research study of the experiences of three, second language learners that examined educational reform in a California school attempting to transform itself into a high performing school. The study may have implications for policy makers and teachers when designing and implementing reform initiatives for second language learners to achieve academic success. The research also provides excellent general information and for the purposes of this study is important because the author included examples of data sources and analysis. It also includes an extensive reference list, examples of interview questions used, and a description of the school where the data was collected. The one problem with Gebhard's work is the small number of student participants and of those, only one remained at the school throughout the course of the study. The others left because of retention and transfers to other schools.

Changes in federal policy were enacted because of emerging knowledge derived from studies of how English language learner children can be taught more effectively (García & Gonzalez, 1995). The authors described a variety of linguistic interactions students had to learn in order to achieve language proficiency. Students are exposed to the language of the home, language of the media, academic language of the school, and social language of their peers. These interactions are at various levels and include code switching, which is the use of two languages simultaneously and interchangeably (Durán, 1994). The importance of this study relates to personal challenges faced by the students included in the study.

Changes in policy also come because of a lack of understanding and support for programs reflected by changes in the name of the federal office that regulates bilingual education programs. In 1974, it was known as the Office for Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, OBEMLA; then in 2001 after No Child Left Behind, the office was renamed the Office for English Language Acquisition, OELA (USDE, 2001).   Policy from OELA concentrates on the primary goal of English language acquisition and not bilingual education and is now "sanitized" (meaning removing the word bilingual) (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2010, p. 20).

Strategies for Student Success

Various studies in my review identified effective educational practices. One example is making students the center of instruction using hands on, culturally aligned, cooperative learning activities. In another, teachers and students work together, dialoguing to increase language and literacy with the goal of teaching complex thinking (Doherty, Hilberg, Pintal, & Tharp, 2003; Menken, 2001; Morrison Institute, 2006). Many of the instructional strategies are suitable for all students and raise achievement levels for all, but others are specific to learners of any language. The use of appropriate instruction and new strategies affects academic proficiency, improving opportunities for students of diverse groups (Menken, 2001).

There are essentials that must be in place for English language learners to be academically successful (Gersten & Baker, 2000). Examples include frequent opportunities to interact in language to increase proficiency, addressing the formal, grammatical component of English, providing English Language development and sheltered content instruction (students learn English while learning academic content) learning new

vocabulary, and using cooperative learning and peer tutoring (Gersten & Baker, 2000). The article included many references to other studies and helped me compile a base of best practices to use as a starting point for themes for this study. The study included data from educators around the country with the exception of New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado, all states with large English language learner student populations. The omission of these key states imposes some limitations on the value of their data.

Cummins (1989) also supported student empowerment and language interaction and developed a simple plan for teachers to use in developing academic language. He incorporated Alma Flor Ada's critical literacy framework that encouraged teachers to allow students to share experiences as they interact with each other and the teacher, for the purpose of expanding literacy as well as enhancing self-esteem in a powerful collaborative process (Cummins, 1989, p. 17). He continued with his claim that language programs alone are not the answer; status, power, empowerment, identity, school wide commitment, and parent involvement are all factors to be addressed (Cummins, 1989, p. 17). Cummins' (1989) research confirmed what has been discussed in this study, relating to environment at school and home, and having both support a strong bilingual curriculum to increase student proficiency.

Collier (1992) synthesized eighteen long term studies (four + years) conducted in various language programs nationwide, and influence programs had on academic achievement. While some of the studies provided critical information for this research there were many shortcomings as well. Some of the studies were conducted prior to NCLB (USDE, 2001) and the advent of standards based instruction; assessment information was not as accurate as what is available today; many language programs are not appropriate to the

needs of students and do not meet requirements; and qualitative data from students and teachers was not collected. Unfortunately, there is no data available for New Mexico in any of the studies.

Collier's (1995) research on effective practices for English language learners supported literacy in language as necessary for academic success. Success in academics for these students is determined by the development of cognitive and academic proficiency as well as language proficiency (Collier, 1995). Without language proficiency and the skills necessary to be competent, students cannot solve problems encountered in cognitive development activities. A student must understand and be able to participate fully in the language of instruction.

Krashen's (2003) research changed second language acquisition instructional methods by identifying the role of comprehensible input, the process of linking new words and language in English with clues to their meanings in either nonverbal form (pictures, objects, demonstrations) or verbal form (words already understood) . He also recommended teachers provide lessons from which students can learn by first using the native language to teach the concept, followed by teaching the lesson in English, having students summarize and ask questions in the native language, followed by native language and English clarification (Krashen, 1996a). His research findings utilized the design determined by most language researchers as essential to ensure academic success for English language learners (Collier, 1992; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1989; Krashen, 2003). Along with comprehensible input and subject matter teaching in the home language, Krashen (1996a) stated bilingual education programs must also develop literacy in the home language, which transfers into the second language (p. 4).

Kwong, (2000, p. 46), a Cantonese bilingual teacher in Massachusetts, developed a

summary of the research-based benefits of strategies used in bilingual education based on her

observations over the years she has taught bilingual education. Table 4 lists the benefits and

compares them with instruction in monolingual English only programs.

Table 4

Benefits of Bilingual Education Instruction

Benefits	Bilingual Program	English Monolingual Program
Transfer of previous skills	Continue to develop higher level native language literacy	Stop developing native language literacy
	Native language skills will transfer to English	No support for transferring native language to English
	Learn English faster	Learn English slowly
	Teaching of similarities and differences between languages	No support in awareness of differences and similarities in languages
Understandable Instruction	Learning increases with instruction in native language	Learning is delayed as students learn English first
	Common language between teacher and student	No common language
	Lowers level of frustration	Heightens level of frustration
Academic challenge	Appropriate level of academic instruction and curriculum	Lower level of instruction and less challenging curriculum
	Translation skills are learned	Native language skills not utilized
Emotional benefits	Student adjusts to environment	Student lacks support in adjusting
	Adults and peers are role models	Can not identify with anyone else
	Students develop bicultural identity and pride in native language	Is not vocal and becomes ashamed of culture and language
	Validation of cultural and immigrant experience	Previous experience is not validated or valued
	Relates to peers in program	Isolated from others with same culture

Note: Data adapted from "Bilingualism equals access" (Kwong, 2000).

Summary and Analysis

This literature review identified research available on bilingual education, alternative education programs, effective instructional practices, and barriers facing minority group students. It provided an awareness of attitudes and controversial opinions regarding bilingual education and policies affecting the education of English language learners as well as successful strategies and interventions. The studies were an excellent basis on which I built my research. They provided valuable information on developing and aligning topics, determining gaps, and connecting with schools, staff, students, and parents involved in bilingual and alternative language programs in the state of New Mexico.

The studies, literature reviews, books, and articles provided essential insight into what I had to avoid and be cognizant of to make certain this study was worth the time and effort for all involved. My hope is that the results will contribute to helping meet the needs of students in New Mexico. The research guided me in collecting data not previously available for New Mexico with the expectation others will see the need, continue to build on the process, and eventually change will happen.

My study was qualitative and was conducted in a New Mexico school; as such it provides information on language programs through the eyes and experiences of those who are involved in bilingual education day in and day out: students, teachers, parents, and other school staff. The information collected in this study can help improve program effectiveness by relating experiences of participants to the goal of achieving academic success for students, something not encountered in the literature review.

Chapter 3

Research Design

I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice:
Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue – my woman's voice,
my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence.

Anzaldúa, (1987, p. 59).

Introduction

This quotation gives a very personal view of how one person feels relative to her language and how using it can be a painful experience. Anzaldúa (1987) describes the feeling of many who speak a language other than English. She is referring to how many native Hispanics do not speak pure Spanish and often use variations of Spanish made up of regional dialects as well as English (Anzaldúa, 1987). Her poetry also relates to the frustrations of those who cannot speak English well, feel inferior to others, often are ashamed to speak in English, and remain quiet as a result.

Mode of Research - Qualitative

Through my research project, I gathered perspectives and information from teachers, administrators, students, and parents on bilingual education programs in a New Mexico high school. I also collected participant insights related to the success of students. An additional focus on language and the culture associated with it adds to a rich understanding of bilingual education and those involved.

To explore language programs at one school, I used techniques from Mertens (2005) and Lichtman (2006) for conducting qualitative research. Qualitative methods are used to explore phenomenon by examining the lived experiences of participants. Mertens (2005) suggests participants and their personal experiences should be studied to uncover not an lore

language programs, I used techniques from Mertens (2005) and Lichtman (2006) for conducting qualitative research. Qualitative methods are used to explore phenomenon by examining the lived experiences of participants. Mertens (2005) suggests participants and their personal experiences should be studied to uncover not an analysis of the subject, but how it is perceived by participants, and the political rather than technical issues associated with a transformative approach. Qualitative methods also allowed me to look at the subject in depth to provide insight and a more complete picture of the phenomenon studied (Lichtman, 2006).

The selection of qualitative research as the method for this study is based on Woods (1999) four characteristics of qualitative studies. The characteristics are concerned with life situations and events as they happen; seek to discover perspectives, meanings, and behaviors of participants; emphasize how and why things happen; start with questions and ideas and generate theory from data in an emergent design (Woods, 1999, p. 2). Verma and Mallick (1999) stated:

> The results obtained through quantitative studies are not the only knowledge of reality and all things do not exist in quantities lending themselves readily to measurement – there are many qualities, behaviors, and events that cannot be measured because no tool or technique has been devised- as yet. (p. 4)

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explained that qualitative methods of research focus on the social nature of reality and the relationship between what is studied and the researcher; whereas quantitative methods study the relationship between variables and statistics. Quantitative questions ask why and compare data while qualitative questions ask what and

how (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research attempts to express the "whole" experience (Meloy, 1994, p. 86).

Qualitative data collection methods, the most common being the interview, allow individual views to be captured in more detail, than through numerical or number based instruments such as rating scales, since qualitative data usually takes the form of words and not numbers (Lichtman, 2006). The primary data collection procedures for this study were individual and a small number of group interviews. Interviews provided the personal data and descriptive narratives for the thick, rich description required in qualitative research (Bailey, C., 2007; Lichtman, 2006; Locke, Silverman, & Spirduso, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interviews were semi-structured to provide a balance of structure and flexibility to probe for more responses (Bailey, C., 2007). Interviews are fundamental tools for collecting qualitative data with the assumption that all perspectives are meaningful (Patton, 2002).

By interviewing students, teachers, administrators, and parents, I collected information that provided me with an understanding of perceptions about bilingual programs, thus producing a greater variety of information (Mertens, 2005).

Research Question and Sub-questions

The research question for this study is,

Research Question:

From the perspectives of teachers, students, administrators, and parents how do language programs, methods, and/or instructional strategies influence students culturally, linguistically, and academically?

Research Sub-questions:

1. What meaning do participants make of the relationship between language and their national, familial, and cultural origins; future aspirations, and schooling?

2. What do participants identify as helpful and unhelpful to the process of language acquisition, to academic achievement, and to overall student success?

I examined these questions through the lived experiences of five different groups of stakeholders who are participants of bilingual programs including teachers, immigrant Hispanic parents, native New Mexican Hispanic parents, immigrant Hispanic students, and native New Mexican Hispanic students.

Philosophical and Theoretical Framework

The philosophical framework for this study is critical theory. A critical theory approach aims to collect information with the intent of enhancing the education process and increasing power to linguistic minorities, giving them a say in their own education, and thereby making it a perfect framework for this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Trueba and McLaren (2000) proposed critical theory to transform educational practices that enable students, particularly minorities, to be involved in their education, benefit from linguistic and cultural uniqueness, and go forward through a non-biased collaborative process created in the classroom. C. Bailey (2007) contended the aim of critical theory is to empower people and work to bring about meaningful social change (p. 55).

Critical theory is an ideological perspective determining how research will be conducted (Creswell, 1998). It can serve as a catalyst for change because "a researcher should engage in inquiry with the expectation their work will be instrumental in bringing about change" (Schram, 2006, p. 45). In critical theory, it is important to provide a

legitimate investigation as a motivation for transformation. Patton (2002) wrote, "what gives critical theory its name is that it seeks not just to study and understand society but to critique and change society" (p. 131).

Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) commented that although critical theory was developed seventy years ago it can still "disrupt and challenge the status quo" (p. 87). The authors listed several characteristics for critical theory, three of which relate to my research. One of the characteristics is "critique of instrumental or technical rationality which separates fact from value in an obsession with proper method losing …understanding of value choices in the process" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002, p. 92). An explanation of this would be there is more interest in the plan and the method than in the human side of the system and an obsession with fact versus value. This is exactly what happens in schools. Are the programs more important than students and their perspectives? They should not be, but reality is that they are, because it appears to me students are important for purposes of enrollment and test scores but not as much for being individuals and having opinions. It has been my experience that the more common reality is implementation of program first, academic achievement second, and students third, aligning with criteria for program requirements (NMPED, 2008).

The goal of language programs is to increase English proficiency levels of students who are linguistically diverse. Many of these students attend schools classified as needing improvement, having failed to meet AYP (or C or better in the school grading system) for two consecutive years (NMPED, 2006). It is highly possible this critical theory study will begin the process of change to generate relevant effective practices to help schools educate English language learners and meet required assessment levels.

A second characteristic (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002) is "reconceptualized critical theory of power – linguistic/discursive power" (p. 94). In this concept, the authors explain the term linguistic power is an overarching power regulating and dominating. In education, linguistic or discursive power in the form of employer sponsored training sessions is designed to inform teachers in methodology. This aligns with this study in discovering what methods are effective practices for populations in the study and whether or not they are traditional instructional methods or less common alternatives. The findings of the research support established methods and also suggest other less traditional "out of the box" ways to help close the achievement gap for English language learners. Kilbourn (2006) told us the primary aim of a dissertation "is to develop new knowledge and understanding….and should reflect an attitude of genuine inquiry—it involves a spirit of genuinely finding out rather than proving" (p. 537).

A third characteristic of critical theory applying to this study is the "role of cultural pedagogy in critical theory" (p. 95), which serves to help researchers understand dominant and oppressive societies and still work towards social justice and democracy. In language programs today, we can deduce indirectly what does not work by reviewing assessment information. Research can be very beneficial and much more likely to be utilized in educational settings if solutions are presented for problems. Guido-DiBrito, Chávez, and Lincoln (2010) noted critical paradigms sometimes take a negative position in finding things wrong and unchangeable rather than determining what opportunity there is for transformation and what strengths are being discovered. The key is to go further, go beyond the obstacles, and focus on the positive aspects to promote change.

In summary, critical theory must be multivocal and allow those who are participants in programs to become part of the discussion, express themselves, define their experiences, and in doing so serve as a catalyst for social and political change and social justice, in this case, for the English Language Learner group in New Mexico (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Author bell hooks (as cited in Mertens, 2005) reminded us of the researcher's role: "who speaks for whom…. The researcher must seek out those who are silent and must involve those who are marginalized" (p. 176). A critical framework must organize and mobilize a group with a common purpose to advance ethics and respect for different cultures, the right to be different and most importantly for the improvement of education for students who are members of minority groups (Trueba & McLaren, 2000, p. 67). Freire (as cited in Trueba & McLaren, 2000) wrote "multiculturality" has to be "created, politically produced, worked on" (p. 67).

Positionality

Lincoln and Guba (1994) labeled the advantage of researchers who are members of the culture being studied as "emic" and describe this as insider research. They noted the data are more meaningful when researched in this way and this usually can only be accomplished through qualitative research. The students who were part of this study are students I identify with, through my own personal experience, as well as professionally as an educator in New Mexico.

I was raised in a small, rural community in New Mexico where the population is over 90% Hispanic (USCB, 2007), where everyone knows everyone, and where everyone's linguistic proficiency and competence is very similar. When I was a student in Kindergarten through twelfth grade, I had no idea I was functioning at a level far below my peers in larger

schools across the state. Students who are educated in rural areas are at a disadvantage

educationally because rural schools receive a reduced amount of funding due to fewer

students.

This translates into fewer resources available to support schools, thus affecting

buildings, equipment, materials, course offerings, up-to-date facilities, and even instructional

staff not to mention interaction with students of different cultures (Beaulieu & Gibbs, 2005).

Larger schools not only give students many more options but their locations in urban areas

offer more experiences and learning opportunities through museums, theatres, and many

other activities. Experiences such as these expand the intellect and vocabulary of students

who live in urban areas.

My opinion of my educational level quickly changed when I attended college which

although only forty miles away, was academically a world away from the one I left. I

became less vocal and even ashamed of my lack of English fluency and my limited

vocabulary. The many personal stories from the Hispanic, African-American, Asian

American, Native American, Hawaiian, and other voices of the silenced in Santa Ana (2004)

resonated for me. I, like them, feared being called on and never volunteered for anything

hoping for low visibility. I realize had I been given a more comprehensive education with

more focus on academic language I would have made different decisions in my life. Not

being as fluent in English as many of my college peers, forced me to go back to my safe

home environment.

My children went to the same school I did and the opportunities they were able to

take advantage of were very limited, consequently they worked hard to overcome what can

be called linguistic inadequacy. My husband on the other hand, was educated in an urban

area, with different ethnic groups, and is much more proficient and confident of his linguistic abilities. Through my experiences, I can relate to how the students feel about themselves and how parents feel about their children and their academic success. Through my involvement as an "insider," data documentation is more accurate in terms of meaning yet on the other hand, I also worked diligently to report unbiased data when students or parents do not share my background and experience.

Kilbourn (2006) suggested in a qualitative research proposal, the researcher must be aware of his/her own biography as it relates to the study (p. 546). This will help a reader determine the quality and integrity of the research (p. 546). Johnson-Bailey (2004) expressed concern that the researcher avoids bringing in one's own issues into the study and making it a personal agenda.

I have been an educator working with children throughout my career. Being a teacher and principal at all grade levels gave me more insight in the interview process especially in addressing colleagues and students appropriately. These experiences combined with my professional knowledge served to ensure the research was been designed, developed, and conducted through an experientially based lens. Johnson-Bailey (2004) reminded us that at any given time we could be an insider or an outsider in the research context. She warned against going into a field of study with a certain viewpoint and then because of the setting, subjects, policies, or power issues, make a shift in perspective (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). I was aware of this from the outset, thus data collection and analysis was not compromised. To help me guard against this, I had a colleague conduct a bracketing interview with me to reveal my views and prejudices (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). I referred to my own interview throughout the study to guard against unconscious influence of my perspectives and

experiences. Although I identify with one of the groups I studied, native Hispanics, I do not identify with the other group, immigrant Hispanic. Being aware of one's positionality, of being the insider, the emic (Mertens, 1998), asking the questions related to the positions and examining what one has written can help to achieve balance.

Site of the Study

The district was located in Northern New Mexico and over 30% of the student population was identified as English language learners. The high school selected for this study had a population of each of the two ethnic groups studied. The school also met the most important criterion of the study, funded bilingual education and ESL programs in place for two or more years. Initially a list of schools was compiled with the following similar characteristics:

- Location

- Population groups

- High schools were priority

- At least 15% of students in the district identified as English language learners

- Ranked in order of proficiency high to low for English language learners in reading

Student populations are usually reflective of the general population of the region selected. New Mexico is unique in demographics and culture with a strong influence of Spanish, Mexican, and Native American cultures. The groups included in my study were Hispanics who recently immigrated from Mexico or other Latin American countries and US born Hispanics who can trace their roots back to the early 1500s in New Mexico (Sánchez, 1967). Many native Hispanic students in New Mexico and other states speak only English

but are not proficient in English, and are labeled as English language learners (Villa, 2003).

An English language learner either is not born in the US or speaks a language other than

English or has one in their background, and is not meeting the state's proficiency level in an

English proficiency assessment (Abedi, 2004). The term excludes other students whose

academic English backgrounds are limited with many of the same needs as English language

learners but do not have a non-dominant home or heritage language (Gándara & Contreras,

2009).

This study focused on one school to allow deeper concentration for more data

collection at the site. Qualitative research offers techniques very suitable to focused, small

studies to enable researchers to delve deeply into meaning for a thorough understanding of

the phenomenon and its impact on participants (McMillan, 1996). My intent was to collect

in depth data to allow for the "thick description" that serves as the grounding for qualitative

analysis (Patton, 2002, p. 503). Lichtman (2006) noted that thick description helps the

researcher see essential meanings and understandings. Locke, Silverman, and Spirduso

(2004), define it as, "thick description is detailed records concerning context, people, actions,

and the perceptions of participants" (p. 150).

Methodology

I identified this study as a phenomenology because it is a population-specific study

focused on a phenomenon (Schram, 2006). I used Creswell's (1998) work on research

traditions. Mertens (2005) defined phenomenology as "the intent to understand and describe

an event from the point of view of the participant… the subjective experience is at the center

of the inquiry" (p. 240). Lichtman (2006) reiterated, "Phenomenology investigates

experiences of those who have lived the phenomenon" (p. 70). The event in this case is the

language program experience and its meaning according to subjects of the study. Using Schram's (2006) interpretive/critical continuum of the researcher's aims ranging from "understanding-making sense of the way things are" to "change-unsettling and transforming the way things are" (p. 47), the research emphasis is at midpoint on "taking issue with the way things are" (p. 47) on the question of bilingual and language instruction programs. Phenomenology enabled me to research gaps in the administration and implementation of bilingual programs, specifically the gap describing the human experience in programs; a different approach to those traditionally dependent on reports centered on statistical data.

Methods

The study was conducted using qualitative, semi-structured interviews primarily with individuals though a few student participants requested joint interviews with peers. Based on their personal viewpoints, the purpose of this study was to gather information on the impact bilingual education has on those involved in such programs as perceived by the interviewees.

Individual and group interviews. With all five groups, I conducted both individual and group interviews to gain the most insight possible considering some individuals might be more forthcoming in groups. Interview questions (Appendices B, C, D, and E) were slightly different for individuals and groups; those designated for individuals had a more conservational approach. Interviewees included those involved in programs including; students, teachers, other school staff as well as staff not involved in programs. A limited number of parents were also interviewed. The interviews provided information on participant origins and meaning of language in their lives as well as student and staff perceptions of language programs, and instructional practices. This included asking students and staff what they thought about language programs and how they were affected by them. I relied on

open-ended questions designed to gather information in more depth and detail. A few open-ended questions can give more information than many closed-ended questions because they are less specific and allow for more discussion (deMarrais, 2004). The questions yielded rich data and served as an excellent method because they collected unprompted information and opinions (deMarrais, 2004).

Information from the literature review, the research questions, the study design, and my own previous experience were used to compose interview questions. Questions evaluated participant reactions and were descriptive in telling about experiences, as suggested by deMarrais (2004).

My original intent was to learn from both focus group and individual interviews, but the small number in group interviews with teachers and parents (two-three) as well as the similarity of my interview and group questions created dynamics that resulted in more of individual interviews within group settings. Subsequently in my findings chapters, I chose to illustrate data from individual perspectives rather than including blocks of conversations as might be more common to standard focus groups. Students, administrators, teaching staff, and parents participated in the groups with the aim of promoting interaction using minimal structure, like a casual conversation, and often generating more questions as the interview progressed (Lichtman, 2006; Mertens, 1998). The staff discussions were the length of one period, 50 minutes. The two parent groups were able to answer questions for only 20 minutes and were informally structured. The student group interviews extended into the next period; one lasting 60 minutes and the other 70 minutes. The group interviews together with individual interviews provided the rich background of both the individual and group

experience and additional insight coming from interaction between group members (Mertens, 2005).

The process for my study began with all participants being interviewed individually and some also being interviewed in group interviews. Some participants spoke freely in groups but most seemed more comfortable in a one-on-one situation. The discussion about language programs and opinions about them required that interviewees feel at ease. This is important because phenomenological research emphasizes the experiences of the individual, perceptions, and the meaning of the experiences, and important for this study, their own personal experience with language (Mertens, 2005).

Sampling / participants. The sampling frame included students, school administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, and parents individually and in groups. Initially, my plan was to follow recommendations for phenomenological studies by Mertens (2005) for a sample size of six for group interviews (p. 328), but the small numbers able to participate, as well as logistics and school schedules did not permit me to conduct focus group interviews. Lichtman (2006) suggested numbers in groups should be limited in size because interviews with larger groups can take too long; participants are more comfortable in small groups, and there is usually more interaction in small groups. Thus smaller groups, imposed by accessibility and school schedules, did provide for a more comfortable and lively interaction.

Data collection continued until the saturation point when answers, themes, and patterns were frequently repeated. It was important to the study that if responses had not reached saturation, sample sizes would have had to be changed during the data collection process (Hutchinson, 2004). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest data and conclusions are

stronger when there is "parallelism" (p. 278) and responses are repeated across data sources. The quantity of data collected had to remain open, a characteristic of qualitative research (Patton, 2002, p. 246).

I used intensity sampling, a type of purposive sampling, because the school site had to fit certain criteria. Intensity sampling requires the researcher to be very knowledgeable about which individuals at the site meet the inclusion criteria (Mertens, 2005). Using documentation provided by the district and school, participants were selected in relation to the research conditions.

Purposive sampling uses a specific set of characteristics to locate possible participants, and supports phenomenology, the tradition of inquiry used for this study, which is the description of experiences of those involved in the phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The school and individuals at the school were living the phenomenon in question; in this case, bilingual education programs (Mertens, 1998).

My chosen selection criteria required that students and parents be Hispanic from two different ethnic groups – recent immigrants and native New Mexico Hispanics. The students were enrolled in bilingual education and in grades tenth through twelfth. Parents were parents of students in programs. School staff members were involved in bilingual programs in some way either currently or in the recent past.

Protocol. Most of the interviews took place in the school library in a meeting room tucked back into a corner. Qualitative research and phenomenology seek to discover what participants think and one of the best ways is to get a holistic picture in a familiar setting (Bailey, C, 2007). The library was located in the upper section of the main building and

there were always students there either with a class or on their own. The meeting room had several tables and chairs and offered a nice quiet place for discussions and interviews.

Throughout the interviews with each group, students, staff, and parents, the goal was to establish what Rubin and Rubin (2005) call "conversational partnerships" (p. 79), referring to the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The authors (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) provide techniques designed to encourage full and explicit participation for thick, rich description.

I facilitated trust prior to all interviews by using some of the suggestions from Rubin and Rubin (2005) such as creating a shared background, particularly in reference to locality and language. I also established trust with immigrants by reassuring them my research topic was bilingual education and their opinions and nothing else. My introduction to all interviewees included my experience in schools and my own personal story to relate from an "insider" emic position (Lincoln and Guba, 1994; Mertens, 1998).

In all interviews, I encouraged discussion, some pertaining to the questions and some not. My goal was to stimulate conversation rather than pressure answers to only questions asked. Lichtman (2006) says it is easy for a phenomenologist to collect sufficient data through interviews, as the researcher tends to talk at length and encourage extended conversations.

The goal was for everyone to participate in an informal conversation and not an interrogation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The concept of conversational partnerships persuaded participants to relate stories about bilingual programs, some even referred to students and staff, by name, positively, and negatively, about which I cautioned them.

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed word for word. Recordings were destroyed after transcription and transcriptions were destroyed after data analysis. Participants were identified by codes and pseudonyms; real names were never used in any of the data collection process.

I also kept a research journal, which supplied additional data. Observations, field notes, and other thoughts about data were written down in the journal as was information compiled during the interviews. Notes were made of all critical comments as well as those requiring further investigation. I mentally reviewed the behavior and reactions of individuals relating to questions and responses during the interviews. This was managed by utilizing time between interviews while the information was fresh in my mind. I also kept personal insights and reflections in the form of memos in the journal. For field notes, I used C. Bailey's (2007) list of six materials included in field notes, "detailed descriptions, things forgotten, analytic ideas and inferences, personal feelings, things to think about and do, and reflective thoughts" (p. 115). Using multiple sources of data is in keeping with the research verification procedure of triangulation recommended by Creswell (1998).

Additional information kept in the journal was my daily schedule, logistical information, methods used, and a personal diary. A summary of key points for the research was kept in the form of a synopsis, which I referred to often. I strived to maintain objectivity by examining the journal often and noting frustrations and what caused them (Lichtman, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data collection also included me as a data collection instrument. In qualitative research, the researcher observes, decides what to ask, when to ask, what to write down, and interacts with the interviewees (Mertens, 1998). I collected and interpreted the data. My

experiences as an English language learner and as a public school teacher provided the underpinnings for the bracketing interview that framed my own perceptions prior to beginning the research to avoid bias and set aside all judgments. Creswell (1998, p. 52) referred to this as an "epoche." Lichtman (2006) suggests that before beginning a phenomenology, a bracketing interview is recommended whereby the researcher is interviewed with the study interview questions to identify subjectivity. This helped uncover any bias, brought out insights an outsider would not have, and served as a trial interview to refine the questions even further (Kramp, 2004). Additionally the use of multiple sources for triangulation offered a more complete picture of the results and remained less biased (Lichtman, 2006).

Data Analysis Process

The experience of collecting data is frightening at the outset but as I began to interview the participants, I became more comfortable with the setting, the interviewees, and the process itself. Analysis of the data however, is a much more complex, confusing, and overwhelming set of steps. Every author, every authority, and everyone who has had experience in data analysis vary in their approach and the procedures they use.

Lichtman's (2006) perspective on the subject is "there is a lack of standardization and few universal rules" (p.160) when it comes to data analysis. She (Lichtman, 2006) summarizes from other authors (Basit, 2003; Thorne, 2000) who share thoughts regarding the absence of thoughtful discussion to refer to in the literature on qualitative data analysis. Lichtman (2006) notes authors fail to mention that it is the most complicated, difficult, and yet most critical step of the research and they often fail to give some uncomplicated methods

for analysis. In addition, she (Lichtman, 2006) points out "creativity and discipline" (p.160) are the most important requirements for a researcher.

I began the task several times and tried several methods for organizing before I found techniques that worked for me. Twenty-nine people were interviewed individually or in groups, totaling forty-two interviews. Interviews included eighteen questions in each and audio recordings from thirty minutes to one and a half hours had to be transcribed, culminating in over seven hundred responses. Added to that, some of the responses were in Spanish and had to be typed in Spanish, and translated into English. Data had to be sifted, sorted, categorized, and interpreted to find similarities, codes, and themes.

In this study, analysis of the data was based on transcriptions of audio recordings and journal entries containing field and observation notes made during all interviews. Observational notes of classrooms, student behaviors in classrooms and interviews, students interacting with one another, staff behaviors, and other field research notes were used to cross reference with interviews and also for writing the narratives.

Data from group and individual interviews was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Responses were coded based on ideas generated in the discussions. By analyzing significant statements and commonalities, a set of recurring themes was identified and developed from clusters of data (Creswell, 1998).

The goal of data analysis according to Rubin and Rubin (2005) is to "understand core concepts of the research and to discover themes that describe the world you examined" (p.245). The data analysis system I used was compiled from several suggested by researchers (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Creswell (1998) describes phenomenological data analysis as "proceeds through the methodology of

reduction, analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings"

(p. 52).

Data analysis included open coding used to arrive at code and category labels by

forming initial categories that were tentative and emerging at the beginning (Creswell, 1998;

Miles & Huberman, 1994). I followed Lichtman's (2006) recommended six steps for the

process. The steps are based on three C's, codes, categories, and concepts (Lichtman, 2006).

They include initial coding, meaning reading responses and assigning initial codes;

modifying codes; developing an initial list of categories and ideas; modifying the initial list

by combining and revising; revisiting categories and identifying critical categories; and lastly

identifying concepts and trying to get fewer but more well developed and supported concepts

(Lichtman, 2006, p. 168). Connecting the categories was accomplished with axial coding,

placing data separated by open coding in new ways to make connections between categories

especially the relationship between categories thus building a model of phenomena with all

aspects included (Mertens, 1998, p. 352). Selective coding, a process of selecting one

category and relating to others at a higher, more discriminating level of analysis than axial

coding was also used (Mertens, 1998, p. 352).

The interviews were transcribed using a word processing program, Microsoft Word.

This process helped conduct the analysis and organize the data. The interviews were read

and re-read, and each trait, method, program, strategy, perception, pattern, theme, code, and

concept was searched for in the data. This method helped me to locate references in text,

identify the locations with highlighter, and count the number of times a word was used. I

was able to access and store the information electronically rather than manually. Lichtman

(2006) suggests using a word processing computer program to make data analysis easier but

she cautions that "the hard work of sifting, coding, organizing, and extracting remains yours" (p. 171). Relevant information from interviews, journal notes, field notes, and observation notes was entered into the program and analyzed (Creswell, 1998).

I also acquired additional student data for the site through the English language assessment for New Mexico – the New Mexico English Language Proficiency Assessment (NMELPA) from the New Mexico Public Education Department website (http://www.ped.state.nm.us). The data provided information on students beginning with the 2005 annual assessments (NMPED, 2006). The website also provided information on AYP school designations and statistics on student populations, all helpful in presenting a complete description of the school chosen for this study.

As Mertens (2005) wrote, "realize that analysis in qualitative studies designed within the ethnographic or phenomenological traditions is *recursive*, findings are generated and systemically built as successive pieces of data are gathered …findings gradually 'emerge' from the data" (p. 420). For this study, this meant changing the interview questions, the number of people interviewed, and the assumptions made prior to collecting data as explained in the section on limitations but still conforming to the suggestions made by Creswell (1998) who said phenomenological studies range from one to 325 interviews with many using from three to ten subjects (p. 122).

Standards of Quality

Different qualitative research methods texts provide lists of criteria used to ensure a study meets standards of quality. I relied on Lincoln and Guba's list (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 195) to assess this study. A priority was honest and authentic disclosure of positionality and self-awareness of my own emotional state in all phases of the research.

Another of equal importance was serving the community for which the research was directed, and giving voice to those participants particularly those who have been or are marginalized. A third included sharing, trust, and respect as part of the researcher/participant relationship as was sharing any reward coming from the research. Standards of quality and ethical research principles are fourth and required using a trustworthy research design, having a competent researcher that understood the research process, assurances that privacy and confidentiality would not be compromised, an appropriate representative sample of voluntary participants, and informing participants of compensation for harm such as loss of dignity or self esteem (Mertens, 2005). Ethical guidelines and standards of quality were adhered to at all times.

Creswell (1998) recommends using at least two of eight verification procedures in any study (p. 202-203). My study included three, beginning with triangulation. All data were triangulated across various data sources from a variety of individuals, sources, and settings including findings from the development of the individual interviews, group interviews, observations, field notes and the reflective research journal. The multiple voices of teachers, administrators, parents, and students, as well as the various methods of data collection, individual interviews, group interviews, written notes, and other documentation all serve as sources for verification of data and thick, rich descriptions.

I scheduled a return visit to the site would be made after the analysis to conduct member checks to share results with participants and to clarify, revise, and ensure interview information collected was accurate (Creswell, 1998). A return visit was made but complete member checks were compromised by the majority of interviewees who were no longer at the school and by the lack of time available for additional interviews. Students graduated,

some staff retired or transferred, and parents were not available at school. During the return visit, short discussions were held with some of the remaining, original interviewees (all identified with pseudonyms): Administrator (Mr. Trujillo); teachers (Mrs. García-Ross and Ms. Sena); immigrant students (Joann and Yvonne); and native Hispanic students (Amanda and Susie). The interviewees were given a list of themes and concepts. They were asked, individually, whether they agreed with the list and whether they were responsible for any of the information on the list. They agreed with the findings and pointed out their personal contributions.

Miles and Huberman (1994) also suggested using feedback as a form of corroboration during the interview. The authors (Miles & Huberman, 1994) use this as a form of member check, asking an informant to comment on a summary of findings as the interview progresses.

The research protocol for this study was submitted for institutional review and was approved with all requirements set by the review board for human subjects. The process for selection of participants and protocols was reviewed thoroughly to be sure that risks to participants – physical, emotional, personal, or professional were minimized. Informed consent was obtained after being explained to all individuals and all participation was voluntary. A review of all documents, lists of participants, and all instruments was made to minimize cultural, ethnic, or racial bias. All materials for the interviews were available in English and Spanish thereby ensuring those selected were able to participate in the language in which they were most fluent. Interview questions were provided to interviewees and interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish depending on personal language preference.

As the researcher, my background in education and involvement with students, teachers, and administrators at all levels prepared me to be ethical, respectful, and honor privacy in congruence with my beliefs about social justice, which I prize highly. My personal goals were fairness, compassion, equity, and producing high quality work. In some instances, my own perceptions, ideas, and convictions were in opposition to what participants thought but I was diligent in keeping my biases out of the study by frequently reviewing my bracketing interview.

I worked to remain open to all opinions about language programs and receptive to ideas for either changing them or keeping them as they are. I know there is a fine line between encouraging discussion and influencing others to say what one might want to hear, so I was careful to avoid that. My goal was to collect data that describes experiences with the functionality of bilingual programs. My hope is that the results will influence how Hispanic and other students in New Mexico achieve academically and attain skills necessary to succeed in today's world. Additionally, it is possible that through the data collected in my study, we can implement culturally sensitive pedagogy to improve academics for all New Mexico's Hispanic students.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. One was the number of interviews, small in comparison to the total number of potential participants at the school and district. The study was limited to the contributions of only four parents. Parents of the participants were not available for interviews either because they worked or for other personal reasons. Four parents who were in the school office, agreed to provide responses individually and in groups

of two, for the period of time they had available. They were parents of other students in bilingual programs; two were immigrant parents and two were native Hispanic parents.

The sample of one school was a limitation because it represented a narrow view of New Mexico schools, although very similar in much of the data to other schools. Data gathered from the two ethnic groups may not be generalizable to all regions of the state and all New Mexico students but extrapolations may be made that are important to the largest group in schools today, Hispanics.

There were also some limitations in relation to myself as the researcher. My work in bilingual education and school improvement influenced my own opinions and I addressed this in the section on standards of quality and with a bracketing interview. In addition, limitations would have included language if I had not been able to speak Spanish, although my native dialect was not same as that of the immigrants, we understood each other perfectly.

On the other hand, the findings of the study are important because up to now no similar has been conducted in New Mexico. The academic achievement of diverse populations in this state is at a critical level and shows no sign of improving. As the researcher, I am aware findings are exploratory. However, I do hope the findings will serve as a resource to assist educators to begin to make progress toward providing a quality education for English language learners. Additionally all students in New Mexico would benefit from curricular, methodological, and instructional improvements.

Timelines

The research process for this study began in December 2009 with completion of the first version of the proposal, the literature review, and the first set of questions. After

revisions, the dissertation committee approved the proposal, the research question, and subquestions in October 2010.

Collection of information on schools began shortly after that and a site visit was made to the school district selected to obtain permission to conduct the study. After meeting with the superintendent, the bilingual coordinator, and the high school principal, the district granted permission by letter in March 2011.

An application for research was submitted to the University of New Mexico (UNM) Human Research Protections Office (IRB) in early April 2011 for approval to conduct research. Approval was granted in late September of 2011.

Visits to the school site to gather documentation for selection of student, staff, and parent participants were made in October and November 2011. Interviews were conducted in December 2011. Written analysis was completed in November 2012.

Summary

I fully agree with Seale (2004, p. 410) that qualitative research requires a commitment to the truth and that research should not be just a political stance but must include thorough researching and a rigorous argument. Seale (2004) concluded it must also link theories and facts, look at all opinions before taking a position, and ask critical rather than insignificant questions, all with the expectation that the public will begin to trust qualitative research.

The study is a phenomenology with the purpose of understanding the experiences, perceptions, and meanings around bilingual education from three groups of program participants. Beginning with students, the most accessible group, I also gathered data from

school staff and parents through interviews intended to gain previously undocumented personal insights about programs.

Data analysis was conducted searching for codes, categories, and concepts (Lichtman, 2006). The final step was to discover and identify themes that describe the world examined with responses to the research questions that are acceptable to the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Collier (2004) summed up the concepts this study was based on:

In sum, 'language is enchanting, powerful, magical, useful, personal, natural, all-important'. The reasons to use this whole range of activities in the classroom is to eliminate all boredom, raise awareness, and make language teaching as well as learning as culturally relevant as possible for students. In this manner, it is hoped that the learning process will not only enrich the life of the student but also that of his or her teacher. (p. 235)

Chapter 4

Origins, Aspirations, and the Meaning of Language

I wanna go back to Mexico because I'm from Chihuahua and I wanna stay there about three months and see what's out there and then I wanna move to Mazatlan, Sinaloa, and work as a receptionist at a hotel at a tourist place right? Like where I can work my English right? Because I'm perfectly bilingual and so I can pay my psychology career, I want to be a psychologist. I actually haven't looked into a "natural" university but the plan is there and bilingual education can help me, absolutely because since I'll have my high school diploma, a diploma from a school here is worth quite a bit over there right? It's really helpful and since I know my both languages perfectly, speak them, write them, and read them, I can win a lot of money right? I'll get a lot of money on just a regular job over there.
                                    Immigrant Student Rosa, (Interview I2, 2011)

I was one of those younger generation kids. Actually, Spanish was my first language; my mother is Dominican and my father is New Mexican. They met in the Dominican Republic when he was in the army, so up until I was four years old all I spoke was Spanish and knew no English. Unfortunately, they were divorced around the same time and my father was remarried to an Anglo woman and Spanish was never spoken around the house anymore. So, I learned English and lost all my Spanish which was a shame. I didn't really seem to mind my dad said, but as an adult I sure do wish I was bilingual.
                            Native Hispanic New Mexico Student Michael, (Interview NH5, 2011)

Introduction

Rosa had been in the US and US schools for the past 11 years. She spoke both English and Spanish well and had plans to utilize them both when she returned to Mexico. Rosa believed staying in this country to continue school would equip her to work in any job in Mexico especially one requiring English. Her hope was that she would be able to save enough money to go to college in Mexico. Considering her more than adequate command of English, it was surprising that she wanted to attend college in Mexico. Possible reasons for that may have been that it would cost much less to attend college in Mexico and coursework might be less difficult. It was also possible the lack of documentation might have obstructed her enrollment in college or she might have wanted to go back home.

Michael had plans to go to college but was undecided about career choices. He said knowing Spanish would be helpful for any kind of employment and lamented the loss of his

heritage language. He identified himself as a native New Mexican although he was part

Dominican. Michael was one of the most fluent of the native New Mexicans.

These two students, from two different cultural groups, had similar opinions about

language and its importance yet they came from very different origins. Both realized the

advantage of knowing two languages, but bilingual education had a different meaning for

each. For native New Mexicans it was a pathway to learning or relearning their heritage

language. To them it was not necessary for student success but was important to cultural

heritage. For immigrant students, bilingual education made significant contributions to their

lives and was an essential course they needed for their future success. Not only did they need

it if they stayed in the US but they realized how much learning English could benefit them if

they decided to go back home.

In this chapter, I provide profiles of students, staff participants, and parents that

include language and ethnic origins, career aspirations and focus areas, and initial thoughts

about the place of language in their lives. I also provide a comprehensive descriptive

narrative of the school environment the students, staff, and parents are part of. The

interpretation of participant profiles is important to understand their perceptions about

language, their experiences with language, and the connections of language to their lives and

aspirations, and the relationship to improving bilingual education programs. Currently

bilingual program design is the same for all students regardless of heritage or nationality.

Cultural heritage is not the same for everyone in a bilingual program even if they speak the

same language. Bilingual education more than any program, must be culturally relevant if it

is to connect to individuals and change their lives, the ultimate goal of education.

Participants in the study provided a multitude of opinions centering on language in their responses to questions relating to bilingual education. The answers in some of the interviews sounded more like life stories and testimonials than simply responses to questions. The emotional intensity, the range of national origins and mixed cultural heritages, as well as the ideas for making programs suitable for the designated population, seemed improbable to find in such a small group of interviewees. However, there it was and it provided the underpinnings and the necessity for making changes to bilingual programs.

All of these narratives reflect the experiences of those involved in this study and all relate to bilingual education. The relationships link students, their origins, where they come from to aspirations, where they are going, and the process, how they are going to get there (or have gotten there), in this case bilingual education.

Irizarry and Nieto (2010) say that up to now a lack of value has been placed on "Latino students cultural, linguistic and existential resources" (p. 109). Bilingual programs are often designed by "outsiders" with a "blatant disregard for the cultures of Latino/a students and a paternalistic approach to their education" (Irizarry & Nieto, 2010, p. 109).

The participants were involved in bilingual education in some way, at some point in their lives, and all were supportive, most were very supportive, of language programs. A few native New Mexican Hispanics did not share the opinion of the need to participate but were supportive. In the past, some may have been exposed to the deficit language theory, that knowing a language other than English was a disadvantage. It is only in the present that we are seeing research that establishes language as a valuable skill and "bilingualism and multilingualism as strengths upon which to build on rather than as problems needing correcting" (Irizarry & Nieto, 2010, p. 114).

School Context

The community and school are high Hispanic density with students in both categories that are the target of my study, immigrant and native New Mexico Hispanics. This district is one of New Mexico's larger districts.

The school is a sprawling building located on the outskirts of a small city. The landscape surrounding the school is strikingly beautiful, with peach colored land formations gradually rising to larger mounds somewhat like small mountains, bordered by a clear blue sky. In the midst, one sees an occasional clump of chamisa bushes and a few evergreen trees; the colors contrasting yet complimenting each other. This awe-inspiring landscape has stirred the creativity of many an artist and is so inconsistent with the small urban area.

The campus is about a mile from the main intersections and is accessed by three nearby streets. The street most frequented is tree lined and peaceful, meandering through an area where older well-kept houses are located. The other two streets are very different; one is the site of a trailer park, some of which is rundown and on the other, one sees a newer housing development. Surrounding street names are all Spanish words.

The building is a large complex of several connected wings, including the school gymnasium, which is the largest high school basketball facility in the state. The school is built of dark adobe colored brick trimmed with the school colors, red and yellow and is a few years old but well maintained. There are signs on the gates, the main building, the gym, and some of the external classroom doors, designating the school or building name, and room numbers, all in English. The name of the school, Mesa High School, is in Spanish and English. The compound is encircled by sidewalks bordered with small retaining walls, also

trimmed in school colors. Between the sidewalks are several benches that students sit on to carry on conversations in both English and Spanish, before and after school and during lunch.

The area is secured with a chain link fence and well protected by security guards who patrol the school both in student areas and at the entrance. As you enter the grounds, you must stop at a small structure that houses one of the guards at all times. This person asks your reasons for visiting, contacts the main office, obtains clearance, and issues a lanyard with a pass. All the security guards I observed were able to converse in both English and Spanish. Despite security guards in hallways and on the grounds, there is a relaxed atmosphere and students seem comfortable in their surroundings.

As I walked around the school, I heard students and staff speaking to each other, mostly in English. Instances where I heard another language were the immigrant dialect of Spanish between immigrant students and the distinct northern New Mexico dialect spoken to each other by staff members. I did not hear any students speaking the NM dialect. Before and after school, there were parents with students and/or staff also speaking in one of the three languages/dialects, English, immigrant Spanish dialect, or northern New Mexico Spanish dialect.

When I entered the building, some students made eye contact and others did not. If they did, I smiled and if they acknowledged me, I greeted them in English and they responded in the same. Everyone was friendly and helpful when I asked for directions. All my interactions were in English except for the walks to the interview room with some of the immigrant students, which were in Spanish.

Inside the main building lobby, there were more benches strategically placed against the walls, which were painted white and decorated with school colors, the mascot, the name

of the mascot, and a variety of advertising signs, all in English. On my visits, I always signed in at the glassed-in reception area and explained my visit to the clerk. There were students and teachers in the reception area, which served as an entrance to school administration offices, all open and appeared inviting. Languages spoken were always one of the three mentioned previously.

Classroom interiors were very different from the appealing nature of the outside, although they were typical of most high schools. Walls, ceilings, and tile were neutral off white. There was no natural light, no windows or skylights, and each entrance was covered by a heavy metal door with a small window. The walls were block and concrete and completely unadorned except for a few sheets of paper with schedules, some in Spanish and English. There were also posters in two of the rooms; one had a few travel posters for other countries, one was Mexico. The other room had advertising posters for class rings. The rooms included about 20 student desks arranged in rows, a teacher's desk, a computer desk, file cabinets, and a bookshelf. Despite the impression of solid impenetrability, the classrooms and the people in them radiated open friendliness expressed through smiles, laughing, and the speaking of both languages to other students, staff, and to me. You might have hesitated to come in but once you were in, you felt at ease.

My visits to the classrooms seemed to liven up the students. When I first presented my research in English and Spanish, the students seemed excited about participating. I talked to them about my experiences as a high school teacher and administrator and shared some anecdotes to provide some humor to soften the seriousness of the subject. Students asked questions including, "Will we be famous and will you put us on YouTube"? The answer, of course, was no video tape, no YouTube, and all interviews would be confidential. Consent

forms were passed out and explained in detail. I emphasized the required signature of a

parent and the option of exiting the study at any time. A second visit was made to collect

forms and answer any other questions.

After the first two visits and for the next seven, I began interviewing students one at a

time, for about forty minutes each. I picked them up in the classrooms and we walked the

short distance to the library meeting room. We talked about subjects they liked such as

sports, school and class activities, and classes they liked.

The library was located across a courtyard and up a flight of stairs and although the

meeting room had two windows looking out into the main room, the participants never

seemed distracted. By escorting them to the library and back and having sociable

conversations in both Spanish and English depending on their preference, I was able to

establish rapport.

I used the same friendly conversational approach when meeting with individual staff

participants, some who I knew from previous interactions. I asked about bilingual education

and their roles and shared my background and experiences. Using this approach, I found we

had many things in common. All staff members were cooperative and relaxed during

interviews. One exception was the principal whom I did not interview but did meet with. He

expressed a concern for the process, the number of visits, and the use of the information. I

provided a copy of the district approval letter, the syllabus, and the consent form, and he was

less apprehensive.

In my observations, students and staff were respectful of each other and worked well

together. They congregated in small groups to socialize while they waited for bells, buses,

and other transportation. During these breaks, teachers, staff members, and an occasional

parent conversed with one another or with students. The image was one of tranquil energy and peaceful interaction with the only noise, a loud hum, coming from voices within groups. Often I heard the sounds of laughter, joking, and observed playful shoving. Everyone was in their place, a 900+ student, 9-12 high school. During these visits, I never observed any instances of negative student interactions either with each other or with staff members.

The bilingual programs at the school were categorized by maintenance and enrichment designs. Maintenance programs are for English language learners and have three-hour plans composed of Spanish, English language development, and social science or fine art. The enrichment plan is a two-hour program for fluent English proficient students. It includes Spanish and social science or fine art and does not teach English language development. Eligibility for state funding requires bilingual programs to include a Spanish language class.

Informing Bilingual Education through Student Profiles

The extensive diversity of backgrounds of study participants proved to be highly unusual considering the small geographic area, the limited sample size of possible interviewees in the school, and the small number of participants actually interviewed. This study collected significant data reported by participants themselves that painted portraits of them and their personal and cultural strengths. The portrayals are a key to understanding how the students and the diversity of their perspectives, backgrounds, and origins are essential information to how bilingual education is designed, practiced, and governed.

Students. Two groups of students were interviewed – nine native New Mexico Hispanics and seven immigrant students, for a total of sixteen. According to NMPED (2010)

and rural census data (RUPRI, 2006), the majority of students in this school are from low socio economic level families.

Students' origins' included Latin American countries, Mexico, and New Mexico, and several were of mixed heritage. Immigrant students were all from Mexico but two were born in the US. The origins of native New Mexico Hispanic students were not as predictable. One was born in Guatemala, and another in the Dominican Republic. The two who had Latin American roots, considered their heritage to be native New Mexican because one parent was New Mexican or they were raised in New Mexico. The student, whose mother was Dominican, had a native New Mexico Hispanic father, and a stepmother who was Anglo. Another student was mixed heritage Native American and native New Mexican and family members who resided at the local pueblo. Three others were also mixed heritage; one whose mother was an Anglo and father a native New Mexican, considered herself more Anglo because of her cultural upbringing, but New Mexican because of her last name. She also said that sometimes it depended on the situation. The other, Andrea, had a native New Mexican mother and an Anglo father but considered her culture to be New Mexican. The third mixed Anglo/Hispanic, Susie, also considered herself a native New Mexican, although many times she felt Guatemalan was a better description for her since she was born there. Of the nine native New Mexican students, only four had both parents who were native New Mexico Hispanics.

As it turned out all those who were selected to participate had informed opinions, gave well thought out answers, and were very serious in their comments. Regardless of group, the students were similar in appearance and actions and even in the vernacular of high school students. I transcribed interviews word for word to truly reflect their beliefs, down to

the use (and overuse) of such words as "like", "you know", "I mean", and "amazing". Some of the immigrants' code switched between Spanish and English.

This section includes narratives provided by both groups of students. Included are the stories of four students, two immigrants, Aurora and Arturo and two native New Mexicans, Christine and Susie.

Immigrant students. The value of language is different for each group of students as it is for each group of participants. For immigrants it means more opportunity and is necessary to be able to live in the US. For them learning English and learning it well is the main reason for attending school. These students saw a critical value for bilingual education programs. They all struggled with academic and social problems because at some point, they could not speak any English. Each of the seven emphatically stated that to achieve long-term personal, social, and economic success in an English speaking society, they must be proficient in English.

Joann, a tenth grader, had been here for the last five years. She was born in the US but was taken back after birth and raised in Mexico until age eleven. She was very competent in both languages, citing the importance of knowing both. She said:

> I mean, like, two languages is always better than one especially like when you go to jobs, communicating in general with social people. That's why language is very important. Others don't think so. No, they just like mess around in class and stuff, like learning bilingual, like learning a second language it can take you places. You always have like more advantages. (Interview I1, 2011)

Joann saw a distinct value for knowing two languages both for jobs and socially. She was upset because in some of her classes students were out of control, disruptive and interfering

with the English language learning process for her and others. They interrupted instruction and this was a loss for her and others.

The student immigrant group included seven students, four females and three males (See Table 5). They had all been placed in a class for English language learners although two were fluent in English. They said they had been placed in Spanish classes as well. All were eager to take part in the interviews and were disappointed when they were over. Four students, Joann, Rosa, Manuel, and Arturo, were very outgoing, had opinions about everything and everyone, and sometimes had to be reminded to respond to interview questions. Three students, Aurora, Angelo, and Yvonne, were more recent arrivals and more hesitant in responding. They were assured that they could provide answers in Spanish and as a result, two of them, Aurora and Angelo, had the interview conducted in Spanish.

Table 5

Immigrant Student Profiles

Interview #	Pseudonym & Gender	Origins	Grade	Career choice	Yrs in US	Interview Language	Language Proficiency*
I1	Joann - F	US born	10th	College- US Criminology	5	English	FSP FEP
I2	Rosa - F	Mexico	10th	Psychologist College – Mexico	11	English	FSP FEP
I3	Manuel- M	Mexico	11th	College -US "Be Somebody"	2	English	FSP LEP
I4	Arturo- M	US born	11th	Radio DJ Biling. College –US	3	English	FSP LEP
I5	Aurora-F	Mexico	11th	Don't know College –US	-1	Spanish	FSP NEP
I6	Angelo- M	Mexico	12th	Mechanic VoTech School	-1	Spanish	FSP NEP
I7	Yvonne- F	Mexico	11th	Professor College- Mexico	1	English & Spanish	FSP LEP

* FEP-Fluent English; FSP-Fluent Spanish; LEP-Limited English; LSP- Limited Spanish; NEP-No English

Participants, including students, were never identified by name during interviews or in transcriptions, however for purposes of personalizing profiles and allowing connections across various narratives, I created pseudonyms for each.

Despite the possibility that immigrant students might be considered vulnerable because of questionable citizenship/legal status, they were not worried and it was never an issue. They were provided assurances that the interview focus was only bilingual education and their experiences, and they responded candidly when asked demographic questions. This established the trust necessary for them to be able to speak freely

Although interview questions did not include any reference to immigrant status, citizenship, or place of birth, some of the students discussed the subject openly and mentioned it at some point in the interview. They related bilingual education and speaking English to becoming citizens. They were proud of their accomplishments and their knowledge of English despite their origins. One young woman, Joann, said:

> Spanish is my first language and I was born here. But my parents are, they're
>
> Mexican, but they moved here for a short time then went back. I was raised there and
>
> then like, when I was in middle school they came back and became citizens, uh, I
>
> mean residents. I have family over there and here, a few uncles. (Interview I1, 2011)

Joann hesitated after saying the word citizens and self corrected to residents. It is unclear whether her parents had established permanent residency or just lived here from time to time. It is interesting that her comment about them being "Mexican" separated her from them as an American when she stated she was born here.

Another student Rosa commented: "I was in Mexico and born there and then they brought me here. Then we went back and forth and I was there in first, second, and part of

third. Then here since then" (Interview I2, 2011). For these students the journey to an

education has not been an easy process. Not only had they been in and out of US schools but

also schools across borders. Most had attended school in Mexico and in the US and

alternated throughout the years thus experiencing an interrupted education. In their short

lives, they had suffered through what Huerta and Brittain (2010) call a "transnational" (p.

394) educational process; certainly not a positive experience what so ever. In their own

words, they recount how little they learned. Manuel said:

> I in bilingual because I come from Mexico. I have two years in bilingual one right
>
> here and one in (other place) I went to school. But I dident learn English, because I
>
> failed one year in the (name) school (in another state). They tell me you don't talk in
>
> Spanish only English. We don't teach bilingual here in this state. My brother was in
>
> Mexico that year; I was in English school this and the last one. I was in Juarez I take
>
> three class in English. Learn? Umm no mainly from kids cuz I have cousins in my
>
> home and I practice a lot with them, with my brother I talk in Spanish. (Interview I3,
>
> 2011)

The determination of these students to attend school and graduate was tested continually;

many others would have given up.

Five students, all except Angelo and Aurora, wanted to be interviewed in English "to

practice" their English, again demonstrating their resolve to learn the language by going

beyond the classroom setting. Arturo said, "I need to speak more English and learn it better,

so I want you to ask questions (in English) and I will answer in English" (Interview I4,

2011). The five spoke English on a continuum ranging from beginning level to fluency; two

were identified as fluent in English. All five were very animated and enthusiastic about

participating in the interviews and eager to speak out about all aspects of bilingual education. In one of the five interviews, Yvonne's, we occasionally had to switch to Spanish to ensure a clear understanding of the questions. She had been here a year, was able to understand basic English, but had difficulty giving detailed responses therefore her interview was conducted in both languages. All the students displayed self-confidence regardless of language ability. This may have been because I, as a Spanish and English speaker, was able to understand and speak to them in either language.

Students stated they usually spoke Spanish in the bilingual classroom, although two of them were very proficient in English. Were it not for the language they spoke, one would think they were native New Mexico Hispanics; their appearances and actions were so similar.

The following section includes the narrative portraits of two of the immigrant students, Angelo and Arturo. They were different in their origins, their personality, their aspirations for the future, their backgrounds, and in their verbal interactions

Angelo's story. One of the two students who recently immigrated to the US, Angelo, was new to the school and unable to speak English, but could understand it some. He was in twelfth grade and he talked about the problems he encountered in not being able to understand or speak the dominant language. He especially felt humiliation when others asked if he could speak English and he had to say he could not. I conducted his interview in Spanish. He was not as outgoing in his conversation as others, possibly because of language, immigrant status, or his personality. Initially he gave limited answers to questions but with additional probing, he elaborated:

> Entiendo algunas cosas en inglés pero para hablar no sé porque no sé qué decir. No sé
> las palabras y tengo miedo decir pero si entiendo algunas palabras. (I understand

some things in English but to speak it I don't know because I don't know what to say.

I don't know the words and I am afraid to say but I do understand some words.)

(Interview I6, 2011).

Angelo took three years of English in Mexico, but could not speak English and

understood very little. Parent influence and expectation was the reason Angelo came to the

United States. Knowing that his parents invested in his journey to the US and were unable to

do the same for his siblings made Angelo more appreciative of his education. He said:

Bueno, me mandaron a venir para que yo pudiera aprender. Yo también quería venir,

pero mis padres querían que yo viniera aquí para aprender inglés, para poder estar

más superior, y que podía tener una mejor carrera y un mejor trabajo. Mi hermano

nunca tenía la oportunidad de venir. Y yo soy el bebé de la familia, son siempre los

consentidos en todo. Tengo una hermana que sabe inglés. Ella nunca fue a la escuela

y no sabe mucho inglés, menos lo que necesita para el trabajo. Ella entiende a sus

hijos. Mis sobrinos saben español y inglés muy bien. Me regañan porque concoen

bien el idioma inglés y español. Viveron aquí toda su vida y saben inglés y español

muy bien. (Well they sent to come so I could learn. I wanted to come also but my

parents wanted me to come here to learn English so I could be more superior and I

could have a better career and a better job. My brother never had an opportunity to

come, just me. And I'm the baby of the family; they are always the spoiled ones in

everything. I have a sister who knows English. She was never in school, so she

doesn't know much English except what she needs for work. She understands her

kids. My nephews know Spanish and English very well. They scold me because they

know English and Spanish well. They lived here all their lives and they know

English and Spanish very well. (Interview I6, 2011)

Angelo saw the necessity of learning English and the advancements possible in jobs

as well as being able to help others. He voiced his concern about students who could not

complete assignments, both English and Spanish speakers, and he told me he could help them

in both languages, although he knew very little English. He said:

> Sí, saber dos idiomas es mejor. He estado en la clase de inglés y español pero tengo
>
> que aprender más inglés. En Nuevo México, en Nuevo México ayuda más porque
>
> aqui hay muchos latinos y hablan mucho español. Hay personas que no hablan inglés
>
> o español y puedo ayudarlos. Hay muchos chavalos que no saben español y les
>
> podemos ayudar con el trabajo de español. (Yes, knowing two languages is better. I
>
> have been in English and Spanish class but I need to learn more English. In New
>
> Mexico, in New Mexico, it helps more because here there are many Latinos and they
>
> speak a great deal of Spanish. There are people who do not speak English or Spanish
>
> and I can help them. There are many boys who do not know Spanish, and we can help
>
> them with Spanish work.) (Interview I6, 2011)

Angelo described what he thought about teachers, their knowledge of languages, and

the importance of language in schools with non-English speakers. He was troubled about

teachers not being able to speak Spanish. He needed help in Algebra but because the teacher

could not explain in Spanish, it made the class his most difficult class. Angelo said,

> En la escuela los profesores me ayudan mucho, pero el álgebra es muy difícil sólo
>
> porque el profesor no habla nada de español" (In school the teachers help me a lot but

Algebra is very difficult only because the teacher does not speak any Spanish) (Interview I6, 2011).

Arturo's story. The other two young men in the immigrant group, Manuel and Arturo were brothers but they did not come here at the same time. They attended school in Juárez, El Paso, Las Cruces, and here in this district. Arturo was proficient in Spanish and at a beginning level in English. His goal was to enroll in dual credit classes at the high school and community college, but had not been able to for various reasons. He took three years of English in Mexico, one in El Paso, and one in Las Cruces, where he said he learned the most. He practiced speaking English with all his friends and family because he wanted the benefit of a better job. Arturo was born in El Paso but raised in Mexico. He joked that his mother "brincó el charco" (jumped the puddle) to make sure he was a United States citizen. He said:

> I am Mexican I was born here but my mom came just to have me born here. 'Brincó el charco'! But I am Mexican I say my heart is Mexican, my body is Mexican. I do not forget my family is Mexican. Even if I was born here everyone says 'you are Mexican and do not forget it. (Interview I4, 2011)

Arturo was very emotional about his love of his culture, traditions, and most importantly his language. He was unwavering in his love for his language and in his comments; he voiced his opinion that language and identity cannot be separated. Arturo was aware of the problems newcomers were having and tried to help them, he observed, "One boy here his name is Jorge, they don't understand and you need to translate. Sometimes I don't know but I try to understand and help. I wanna learn because I want to be a ciudadano (citizen)" (Interview I4, 2011). About the issue of translating, Arturo also said:

Humm, my parents and rest of the family needs me to, (translate) that was because

they speak Spanish. They need it a lot because all they work with others. My aunt

clean house and they need to talk to the old people because she clean for old people.

And then she need to practice but my uncle he works in construction. But the people

that want he to do construction, they speak English. Well he knows English but at

home, he speaks Spanish. I speak English here at school but with some people in the

streets or down town or when I go to the market (Wal-Mart), or something I speak

Spanish, and English if I have to. (Interview I4, 2011)

Arturo's statements expressed his thoughts about the value of knowing two languages

for him. He was the most vocal concerning language. From his comments we can be certain

he will never lose his home language and no doubt, will pass his opinions to friends and

family. For him language means life. He described his feelings about English, "To speak it

and communicate to another person and I learn a lot because I'm practice all the time. That

way I talk to all people" (Interview I4, 2011).

Native New Mexico Hispanic students. The second group of students interviewed

were categorized as native New Mexico Hispanics in this context and consisted of nine; eight

females and one male. Origins of the students were complicated and although all had been

placed in bilingual education and Spanish language arts, only two could speak a few words to

carry on short conversations. They all understood Spanish but only Rachel and Valerie were

speaking at a beginning level, even though they both thought they were proficient.

Eight of the nine students thought speaking their background language was important

but not necessary. One, Andrea, said she really did not think she would ever use it and

probably would never learn it: "I haven't really had the need for it. I think it (learning

Spanish) is of medium value" (Interview NH4, 2011).

Table 6

Native New Mexico Hispanic Student Profiles

Interview #	Pseudonym & Gender	Origins: Parents	Grade	Career choice	Yrs in SLA	Language Proficiency
NH1	Christine-F	NNMH NNMH	12th	Teacher – MS College- UNM	2- ES 1-MS 2- Hs	ELL-LEP LSP
NH2	Valerie-F	NNMH NNMH	12th	Bilingual teacher College – NMHU	2- ES 2- HS	ELL-LEP LSP
NH3	Amanda-F	NNMH Anglo	11th	Bank or Business Business School	0-ES 1-HS	FEP LSP
NH4	Andrea-F	NNMH Anglo	12th	Airline or Military	2- ES 1-HS	FEP LSP
NH5	Michael-M	NNMH Dom. Step: Anglo	12th	Business/ Computers	3-ES 1-HS	FEP LSP
NH6	Julianne-F	NNMH NNMH	11th	Medical/Nurse College	2-ES 1- HS	FEP LSP
NH7	Rachel- F	NNMH NNMH Step: Mexican	10th	Artist /Fashion Designer-College or Art Institute	3-ES 2-MS 1-HS	ELL-LEP LSP
NH8	Susie- F	NNMH Anglo B: Guatemala	10th	Dental Hygiene College	0-ES 2-MS 1-HS	FEP LSP
NH9	Samantha-F	NNMH Native American	11th	Cosmetology College – UNM	2-Tewa 3- Span	ELL-LEP LSP

FEP- Fluent English; FSP-Fluent Spanish; LEP –Limited English; LSP-Limited Spanish; NNMH- Native New Mexico Hispanic; Step-Stepfather or stepmother; Dom-Dominican; B: Guatemala-Born in Guatemala.

The others saw a second language as beneficial to careers, for financial reasons, to be

able to speak to and understand others especially family members, and to help to translate for

others. None of the students in the native New Mexican group thought the knowledge of two

languages was a critical need, as did the immigrant students.

The following stories told by Christine and Susie described their thoughts about language and bilingual education and the meanings they attached to the two subjects. It seemed Christine and Susie were years apart in maturity, ideas, and behavior, yet it was less than two years. The difference in maturity may be because one is graduating and is faced life changing decisions regarding her future, and the other has two more years in high school. One has already decided to attend college and become a teacher herself while the other had only ideas in mind. They were different in aspirations and also in origins.

Christine's story. Christine was in twelfth grade and was in Spanish class for two years in elementary, one in middle school, and was in her second year in high school. She understood Spanish and could read a little but did not feel confident speaking because of a lack of practice. Although her opinion was favorable regarding knowledge of two languages, she did not speak Spanish and for her it was secondary to English. She said, "We live in an English speaking country. If I lived in another country where they spoke another language I would work diligently on learning language to be able to communicate" (Interview NH1, 2011). She also mentioned her parents did not want her to learn Spanish because they were not allowed to speak it when they were in public school. She said:

> My family spoke Spanish but never wanted to translate Spanish conversations to help me learn more of it, wish they had. They felt it wasn't good, might interfere with my English learning, and they wanted me to speak English good. We, I understand some Spanish but cannot speak it fluently or even barely. My family never helped me with it and I never learned it in school. Families should be encouraged not to be afraid to have kids learn Spanish. No one really encouraged me, I wasn't encouraged at all. (Interview NH1, 2011)

Native Hispanic students such as Christine thought it was very important to know other languages to be able to communicate across cultures and be able to connect to their own heritage, but it was not critical to their survival as it was for immigrants. She said,

Spanish has many benefits, most importantly the connections to your culture if you are Hispanic. It is very important to your heritage but not so much to everyday living. The ultimate goal is the ability to communicate in another language and talk to others. ((Interview NH1, 2011).

Although Christine articulated a desire and willingness to be able to speak Spanish and she was given several opportunities, she did not take advantage of any. She claimed to care about her heritage language and associated it with her culture, but she failed to demonstrate the aspiration.

Susie's story. Susie, a tenth grader, was one of the last three students interviewed, Susie, was in 10th grade. She was born in Guatemala but was considered native New Mexican in this context because she was raised in New Mexico and her father was a native New Mexico Hispanic. She also identified herself as Hispanic, but because of her skin color, said she was mistaken for other races. Susie said some people had an attitude about something, in this case, skin color and you could not change their minds, giving an example:

It's probably like racism, some people are ignorant when they ask me if I am black or Native American just because of my skin color. I tell people (Guatemalan) and they say, 'No, it's Mexico'. I have been called every racist name and like, it's kinda funny because they didn't ever get it really, what I am. They're calling me Mexican and Japanese and everything like that. They're like, 'What are you, Hispanic or what?' and I'm like, 'Well, I'm Guatemalan'. And they say, 'Ok, Mexico' and I say, 'No

I'm not Mexican, it's a totally different country', and I've always gotten 'What?'

Like they're not worldly and they don't know, they think Guatemala is in Mexico and

I keep saying, 'It's totally different'. (Interview NH8, 2011).

Susie came to the US with her mother before she began school. The first elementary

school she attended did not have bilingual education so her first class was in middle school.

She took two classes there and one in high school. She learned Spanish as a young child

when she lived in Guatemala, but was unable to speak it although she could understand a

little. About value for a second language, in this case Spanish, she made several comments:

Yah, it can because then I'd be able to speak a different language that, like in my

culture. Like all kinds of already, people are like losing the way we speak it. My dad

was Spanish and fluent but no, I can understand and like a little bit, I can give simple

answers and stuff but I can't talk or give big old long answers. My mom is Anglo but

she speaks fluent Spanish. (Interview NH8, 2011)

Susie was the youngest student interviewed and along with Michael, one of the most

articulate English speakers of all students. Susie and Michael were both raised by Anglo

mothers (or stepmother) and whether that had any bearing on their English fluency, is

unknown. Christine, Susie and other native Hispanics were bothered when referring to their

inability to speak Spanish after years of instruction at all grade levels. They were frustrated

with the instruction, the strategies used, and the lack of a sequential curriculum. They

complained about the continuous repetition in most Spanish classes. Susie talked about her

ability level and how others made her feel humiliated when she tried to speak Spanish. She

said:

Like when I went to teacher to ask how I was doing and she said I was doing good,

but I tried speaking it and I'll be like, stupid, 'Tell them to shut up (speaking to other

students). They're laughing because I'm not doing it good'. (Interview NH8, 2011)

Another value of knowing more than one language for Susie was for social justice,

being of assistance to others, and for employment. She stated:

In every day life with people around you, it would help. You can be the one people

turn to and you're like, 'You need help?' Then you go and translate and everything.

Like also with getting a job. It was always hard for me growing up because my mom

and dad owned like a business where we took chile to Mexican restaurants in

Colorado and Utah and all that. So, when I'd have to get the money from them and

deliver it, I knew what they were saying. I just couldn't like talk to them back but my

mom, and dad, my dad was fluent, and my mom would understand it. I still knew

Spanish back then but I kinda forgot already. (Interview NH8, 2011)

Knowledge of language and its' use in helping others was a common theme repeated

by many students. They wanted to learn a second language to translate for family and others,

to help fellow students do their assignments, and help strangers in various social situations.

Understanding the students and their viewpoints informs us about bilingual education,

program designs, practices, and policies. Listening to them can help us in our understanding

of their perspectives, on language, on their self-identity and origins, and on what the future

might hold for them.

School staff. I interviewed nine members out of a school staff of twenty-five. The

interviewees had all worked in bilingual education in a variety of roles, most as teachers.

Six were currently teaching either English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual education (BE). Two, Mr. Trujillo and Mr. Martinez, had changed roles from being bilingual teachers to serving as school administrators.

Staff saw past and current roles as integral to the school bilingual program. One, Mrs. Sosa, was an educational assistant working in the bilingual program and was in her last semester of college pre-service classes to become a teacher. All were fluent in both Spanish and English except one, Mrs. García-Ross, who could understand Spanish but did not speak it. They had from three years to over twenty years of teaching experience.

Table 7

School Staff Profiles

Interview #	Pseudonym	Gender	Yrs in Bil. Ed	Role & Importance	Ethnicity	Language Fluency
SS1	Mrs. García-Ross	Female	None	ESL Teacher Important	NNM-Hispanic Anglo	English
SS2	Ms. Tafoya	Female	5	ESL/BE Teacher-Extremely	NNM-Hispanic	Both
SS3	Ms. Gallegos	Female	12	BE Teacher-Absolutely	NNM-Hispanic	Both
SS4	Mr. Trujillo	Male	29	Vice Principal Former BE Teacher Important	NNM-Hispanic	Both
SS5	Mr. Herrera	Male	6	BE Teacher-Important	NNM- Hispanic	Both
SS6	Ms. Chávez	Female	3	BE Teacher-Important	NNM- Hispanic	Both
SS7	Ms. Sena	Female	14	BE Teacher-Critical	NNM- Hispanic	Both
SS8	Mrs. Sosa	Female	6	BE Ed. Assistant-Important	Mexican Immigrant	Both
SS9	Mr. Martínez	Male	64	Counselor/ Bil Coordinator Former BE Teacher- Very	NNM- Hispanic	Both

Other roles for the bilingual teachers included translating for other teachers and helping immigrant parents who could not speak English. All viewed the most critical role in their daily work as instructional – teaching language, either English or Spanish, depending on the group. Their interest in the discipline resulted in their certification and they all commented on their support of the current direction taken by the district and school.

The performance of school staff is integral to the implementation of all educational programs. Therefore, in this context it is important to understand the perspectives of staff at a deeper level relating to bilingual education because they are instrumental to motivation or lack of motivation of students as well as to instruction in the subject.

Following are comments from the interviews of two staff members. One is an ESL teacher who does not have a bilingual license because she cannot speak Spanish. The other is the vice principal and formerly was a bilingual teacher. Listening to their responses informs program implementation and gives us a first person perspective of the teacher. This provides a foundation to understand what staff thinks about how programs are designed, implemented, and what practices are used. They also tell us what they think about the students in programs and what they have heard from students. This information provides essential information for recommendations to make bilingual education a course that can transform the lives of students.

Mrs. García-Ross' story. Mrs. García-Ross was the English as a second language (ESL) teacher, and wanted to learn to speak Spanish but up to now had not taken classes or other instruction. She saw her role as important to the bilingual goal of helping students learn to speak English. In her eyes, programs should accommodate and modify instruction for Spanish speakers. She said:

The role as a teacher is very important to me, assisting children through their

education is my goal. I hope to learn a second language, Spanish, to meet the

necessary accommodations and modifications so all my students receive the same

education. I do not want any to feel left out or behind because of my teaching

methods. You don't need to speak Spanish but it would help if you did. It is important

to have some one who speaks Spanish for the necessary accommodation but that does

not mean that you have to speak the language. It would always help and eliminate that

middle ground but it is not mandatory. (Interview SS1, 2011)

She said there were other students who could translate although she did understand

Spanish. She also talked about the difficulties faced by those students who could not

understand any of the language being spoken in the classroom or in social situations. She

related their situation to a similar situation she experienced. She said:

Those students who dominantly speak Spanish most definitely feel left out when the

others are English dominant. I know that when I was in a position with all Spanish

speakers I felt left out. I even felt picked on, I didn't know what was being said. It

gave me anxiety, made me nervous, and really sad. I didn't like it so I assume

Spanish students feel the same. (Interview SS1, 2011).

Mrs. García-Ross said her family background had Spanish from her father's side, but

her family never spoke it and did not want her to speak it. She was sensitive to the loss of the

language because of her teaching role and said:

Parental support is needed or family support. I wish my parents would've taught me

Spanish. Minority groups lack the support for their students' education. They rely

heavily on the teacher and the school and assume they're not needed or don't need to follow through at home. (Interview SS1, 2011)

The teaching staff struggled to show students the value of being bilingual but they said values and attitudes learned at home were hard to overcome. Mrs. García-Ross mentioned:

I don't think that many students (native NM Hispanics) are aware of bilingual education and the effects of learning two languages. Because they are not mandated to learn I don't believe they necessarily comprehend what's going on. They look at students who don't speak English in a different manner and down on them rather than helping them learn. They expect them to be like them and already know. They look at Spanish as a handicap. (Interview SS1, 2011)

Mrs. García-Ross contradicted herself in several instances concerning language. She said native New Mexico Hispanics should learn Spanish, something she herself had not done. She commented on the value of the home language for students. She said:

When students' home language is valued, they have a good attitude. It is very important to allow students to communicate and learn in their native language. Whether it is Spanish, English, French, whatever; students feel valued and important when they know what one is saying and what is being taught. If they can feel supported and valued, they all feel pride and want to learn and better themselves regardless if they are immigrant or Hispanic. Knowing two languages promotes value for students and helps them succeed in life. (Interview SS1, 2011).

She claimed the knowledge of two languages had great value for everyone. She cited the need for equity for second language learners yet she was unable to provide it as their

teacher by speaking their language. Based on the information she gave, we must question her place in bilingual programs and her desire to provide comprehensible instruction for students. It is not required that ESL teachers speak the students' language but it provides a more meaningful and additional level of instruction. She did not comprehend the meaning of the students' home language to them and in some of her comments gave the impression she did not relate to her students.

Two former bilingual program teachers were now serving as the vice principal, Mr. Trujillo, and as the counselor/bilingual coordinator, Mr. Martínez. Both viewed the change in roles from teaching to vice principal and counselor/bilingual coordinator as very positive for bilingual programs. They had more decision-making authority over students and teachers and felt they could make a difference in program direction.

Mr. Trujillo's story. Mr. Trujillo, the vice principal, in addition to working with students, also had the responsibility of overseeing program delivery and instructional strategies. With the increase in immigrant populations, he said it had become more difficult for all school staff. In relation to his current assignment in bilingual education which gave him more control over bilingual teachers, he said:

> I believe my role is significant in that I provide support and direction to instructional staff both in the regular and bilingual program. As I see immigrant students or any other students for that matter, if students believe in themselves, have academic support, and parental encouragement, especially parental encouragement, it is easy. Without that, our hands as educators are tied. They feel disenfranchised, unable to understand, and participate. And it is teachers job to get them past that. (Interview SS4, 2011).

Mr. Trujillo's approach and the meaning of language for him, was different from that of Mrs. García-Ross. He saw significant value in the language of each of the student groups, while she modeled English only. He wanted students to see the same value. He indicated he worked to be sure all students were treated with respect and above all, encouraged them to believe in themselves in order to experience academic success in their lives. Mr. Trujillo said he thought about student perceptions relative to knowing both languages, and the necessity of knowing both in order to navigate society effectively: Mr. Trujillo stated:

> If they don't understand it, either, (Spanish or English), they probably look at it as a handicap in most classes, especially the students who speak only Spanish. Those who speak English don't think anything of it (Spanish); it's not important. They both need to realize knowing both would broaden their horizons, enabling them to understand more in both languages. Many students are challenged in bilingual courses; although motivation is a key factor in second language learning. The process requires discipline and continual effort. (Interview SS4, 2011)

Most teachers expressed disappointment in the disinterest of native Hispanic students and parents in bilingual education and their heritage language. According to the teachers, most native New Mexican students had limited Spanish language proficiency and sometimes presented a problem with attitudes concerning native language instruction. Teachers were very honest in their opinions. One teacher Ms. Tafoya, pointed out New Mexico Hispanics demonstrated little value for any language contrary to immigrants who saw the importance of both. She said:

> For many of them especially immigrant students their home language is very dear to them. For the Hispanic students they don't think Spanish is their home language.

They don't care. Any of the students I work with don't really care about bilingual education. They don't see it as valuable except immigrant students who do care, probably bring the parent attitudes to school, all of them. They think their home language is English because that's what they speak and parents speak at home. Parental perception is very important to how the students see the language and whether it's important to them either Hispanics or immigrants. Some see it as useful to communicate with their abuelos and the elders. The home situation and support systems at school and at home, those are the most important things. Even intelligence, economics don't make as much of an impact on success as what parents think about school and how much they support it. (Interview SS2, 2011)

Staff said they relied on parents to guide students and encourage them to do well in school. Especially critical were student attitudes. Immigrants had good attitudes and language was very important and dear to them.

Parents. Four parents were able to take part in the study although they could only participate for a limited amount of time. I interviewed each individually and in groups of two. All four expressed their support for bilingual programs in a variety of degrees. Three, Mr. Romero, Mrs. Solis, and Ms. Molina, were very insistent on enrolling their children in bilingual programs and a fourth, Ms. Gonzales, thought it would be good but not essential. Immigrant parents were appreciative that English as a second language was a required class.

Parents varied in age from late thirties to early fifties. Both native Hispanic parents said they had several generations of New Mexican heritage. Ms. Gonzáles cited the fact that her grandparents remembered and spoke about their great-grandparents and great great-grandparents, making her a seventh generation New Mexican. Mr. Romero said his family

tree had eight generations documented in New Mexico. Despite the similarities the two

parents had differing opinions of programs that ranged from extremely necessary to not

necessary for every day life.

Table 8

Parent Profiles

Interview #	Pseudonym	Gender	BE for Child	Home language	Value of BE	Employment
NHP1	Mr. Romero	Male	Yes	English	More opportunities Maintain Heritage language- Need in NM	State with transportation department
NHP2	Ms. Gonzáles	Female	Yes	English	To communicate For grandparents Better job	Home Health aide
IP1	Mrs. Solis	Female	Yes	Spanish	Need English/ To Translate and help others	Service: Motel Restaurant
IP2	Ms. Molina	Female	Yes	Spanish	No barriers/Spanish & English are important	Service: domestic help

Both Mr. Romero and Ms. Gonzales, were English speakers and spoke Spanish, one

very fluently and the other at an average conversational level. Mr. Romero had completed an

associate degree and Ms. Gonzáles had only finished high school. They came from homes

where parents spoke mostly Spanish and some English.

Mr. Romero's story. Mr. Romero was the only male parent in the study, a native

New Mexico Hispanic who spoke fluent Spanish and believed it was critical that his children

be placed in bilingual education. Mr. Romero said it was valuable for heritage, cultural

background, and additional job opportunities. He observed:

> In this day, I think it's very important for my children to understand and speak
>
> Spanish because society demands we do. Also it's my children's heritage and we
>
> can't forget it. As I parent, I would demand it or change schools if it was not available
>
> to my kids. I use Spanish every day especially with the older people and immigrants
>
> who have moved to New Mexico. I also think not knowing what others say can cause
>
> tension and racial problems. (Interview NHP1, 2011)

Mr. Romero was determined that his children learn to speak Spanish well. He taught

them at home by using the language often. He said they practiced Spanish during meals, in

assigning chores, and in general conversation. He was frustrated that they had not learned a

lot in school. He grew up speaking it at home and realized society had changed and young

people were primarily English speakers now. He was prepared to do all he could in his

power to ensure his children were Spanish speakers. He shared the beliefs of most of the

teaching staff that language was part of a person's identity.

Ms. Molina's story. Immigrant parents felt their children could not succeed without

programs to teach them English. Both Ms. Molina and Mrs. Solis and members of their

families came to the US in recent years and had learned enough English to understand it and

be able to find jobs, although mostly service jobs.

Neither of the immigrant parents had completed high school either in the US or in

Mexico. They came from underprivileged families and began working at an early age to help

their families. They had children at an early age, and had to continue to work to support their

children. Both had come to the school to pick up their children. I talked to them individually

and they agreed to give me some time to answer interview questions. The interviews were conducted in Spanish.

The two immigrant parents were supportive of bilingual education and expressed the opinion that in order to be able to secure a well paying job above minimum wage, their children had to be able to speak English. Ms. Molina had two children, one in high school and one in elementary. She said they spoke English at a beginning level but were learning more every day. They learned from friends, classmates, teachers, and through social situations. Ms. Molina did not want her children to lose their home language and insisted that they speak Spanish at home. She also did not want them to experience any communication barriers and be able to speak to anyone in the appropriate language. She remarked:

> Las escuelas deben enseñar español a los que no lo saben. Una escuela ideal tiene que tener medio dia de inglés y la otra mitad de español. Me aseguro de que mi familia habla español en mi casa. (Schools need to teach Spanish to those who do not know it. An ideal school needs to have a half-day of English and the other half in Spanish. I make sure my family speaks Spanish at home). (Interview IP2, 2011)

Family, customs, and traditions were very important to her and her children; those came first. English was important also for school and employment but not for use with family and at traditional events.

Parents, immigrant and native New Mexicans, in response to a question about how parents could help students, shared the belief that parents had to impress on students the importance of education. They said education at what ever level a student completed, was the foundation for their life and without it, the child did not have much of a future. At least

three of them were in agreement with the requirement that their children be enrolled in bilingual education.

Themes

The major concepts emerging from the data were:

- o Diversity of ethnic/national origins

- o Culture and family

- o Meaning of language

- o Aspirations and language

The themes answered the research question and subquestions that grounded the research: From the perspectives of teachers, students, administrators, and parents how do language programs, methods, and/or instructional strategies influence students culturally, linguistically, and academically?

Research Subquestions:

1. What meaning do participants make of the relationship between language and their national, familial, and cultural origins; future aspirations, and schooling?

2. What do participants identify as helpful and unhelpful to the process of language acquisition, to academic achievement, and to overall student success?

Diversity of ethnic/national origins. At no time in the developmental stages of this dissertation was there any expectation that the participants/interviewees would come from such diverse backgrounds as they did. The original scope was immigrants and native New Mexico Hispanics; however, many had international roots, which was completely unanticipated.

Out of nine native New Mexico Hispanic students, five students had a mixed heritage and only four had two parents who were both New Mexican. Two had Anglo and native New Mexico parents and another was raised by an Anglo stepmother. The mother of one of these students was from the Dominican Republic and his father was a New Mexico Hispanic. Another student was born in Guatemala from an Anglo mother and a native New Mexico father. This student's best friend was mixed heritage as well, one parent was a Native American and the other, native New Mexican. The one attribute the native New Mexico students had in common was their self-identification as native New Mexico Hispanics.

The immigrant students all crossed borders without question at some risk, to come to the US from Mexico. Two of them were born in the US but raised in Mexico, one came at age eleven and the other was thirteen when he was brought back. They all shared their self identify of being Mexican not considering their birthplace.

Mr. Herrera noted students had different feelings about language depending on their origins and nationality whether immigrant, native New Mexican, Native American, and dominant language group. He said:

> They all have mixed feelings. Some Hispanics feel pride and empowerment if they can speak two languages but also embarrassment and frustration. Immigrants feel their culture is beautiful, but they are stressed, and feel as if it's baggage and devalued. Strangely enough, the Native American students look at their home language the same as the Hispanics. On the other hand, dominant language students see English as expected, the norm, comfortable, the only one, and 'in charge' in social situations. All groups see their home language as free; a way of expression yet unpredictable. (Interview SS5, 2011)

Students had much to say relative to their perceptions about origins, language, and bilingual education. Student Aurora said as a recent immigrant who spoke only Spanish, she needed much more practice to learn English well and thought it would be very helpful to her if she could learn it. She added bilingual education was the one reason she was learning. She described her observations:

Porque no sé inglés estoy aqui para que yo pueda aprender y poder hacer cosas y entender algunas cosas. A veces puedo entender pero todavia tengo que aprender mucho. A lo mejor hay mas oportunidades si sabe uno las dos idiomas. Sé más que antes pero escribir no puedo hacer eso. Los programas son buenos porque ayudan a aprender mucho, mucho. (Because I do not know English, I am here so I can learn and I can do things and understand some things. At times, I can understand but I still need to learn a lot. It is better because there are more opportunities if one knows two languages. I know more now but writing I cannot do that. The programs are good because they help you to learn a great deal, a great deal.) (Interview I5, 2011)

Aurora continued:

A veces tengo que saber inglés bien así que las cosas que no entendemos bien – puestos de trabajo que no entendemos y a veces lo que se puede hacer, y en la escuela. (At times I need to know English well because for things that we don't understand well – jobs and at times what we can do and in school.) (Interview I5, 2011)

Aurora said she had no way to learn English at home since her family members spoke very little. She learned at school socially and in class, and at work in the pizza store she worked at. The reality was that without a bilingual program she understood that she would

be unable to learn much English; for her a bilingual program was vital to her future in the US.

Valerie, a native New Mexico Hispanic, was a senior and member of a band that sang Spanish music. She is Hispanic but up until recently, she had not been able to speak Spanish, her heritage language. Her remarks were in agreement with Aurora's about the advantages of knowing another language, although she did not credit her knowledge of Spanish to bilingual education. Like most of the other native Hispanics, Valerie did not assign the same importance to knowing a second language as her immigrant counterparts until recently. She identified herself as a Mexican American unlike the other students who identified themselves as Spanish or Hispanic. She said she learned Spanish through her part time job in the band. Valerie said:

> Yes, I am a Mexican American and have had the privilege of re learning my native language of Spanish. I can speak Spanish fluently in conversation although not all my grammar is correct. I learned a little growing up listening to my parents and grandparents talk to each other. But I learned most of what I know from songs and singing that I like to do in my spare time like mariachi and I have also taken classes for it. I've been exposed to many Spanish speaking people and had to communicate with them both socially in my classes and in my music because most members of the band are Spanish speakers. I hadn't thought much about bilingual before but now as a singer of Spanish music, bilingual is very important to me. I have very close friends and family that are older who would have done a lot better in school if better and more bilingual ed programs were offered. (Interview NH2, 2011).

Valerie's beliefs about language, origins, and identity were different than most of the native Hispanics. She had determined she needed to learn Spanish to help her with her music and she said she learned it quickly. Her prior knowledge had provided a basis for the knowledge and she built on that.

Most of the immigrant students reacted to the denial of origins and the lack of pride in heritage, exhibited by native New Mexico Hispanics. Rosa told us how some students, immigrants and native New Mexicans needed to change their attitudes about language and heritage. She was proud of her origins and nationality and could not understand how some students would not claim their Hispanic legacy. Somewhat of a contradiction was the statement she made about hanging out with the "Mexicans". She called herself a Mexican but then made a distinction between herself and the others; separating her origins and her adopted nationality. She lived in the US for 11 years, longer than any other immigrant student had, nevertheless, she identified her cultural roots as Mexican and she chastised those who did not, labeling their actions as "horrible". She said:

> I think that anybody that denies their roots where they actually come from, it's just, I mean, it's horrible. I don't think anybody should; I think, I mean, me that I came at five years old I'm still as Mexican as any kid that lives over there, you know. I mean, I haven't, it's, there's a difference; there's people that come from down there, they refuse to adapt. I mean, I listen to my Spanish music, I love my Spanish music, and I'll speak Spanish. I mean, I hang out with the Mexicans. I will speak Spanish here at school with my friends and I speak it at home. So, I just think you have to learn how to balance it. To learn to adapt, you know, but also not to let go of where you actually come from. (Interview I2, 2011)

Joann, another immigrant student, was also critical of Hispanics who did not see any significance in their unique culture and language. She spoke English fluently but still placed great emphasis on her heritage and her language. She said:

It's really important when the fact that you grew up, you don't want to say when you're Hispanic and should be proud. And be proud of yourself in your daily life and stuff. So when you're Hispanic you should never forget your Spanish cuz that's your heritage. (Interview I1, 2011)

These insights from students and staff describe the implications of ethnic and national origins, and relationships of each group to language and bilingual education. Immigrants understood bilingual education was the pathway to a successful future for them. From their statements, it was evident that without bilingual programs they would not have had an opportunity to learn academic English, as opposed to social English. The students described their experiences as students in English classes in Mexico. They concluded they learned very little and in fact, learned more in social interactions in the US than in English classes in Mexico. Yvonne said, "Now that we are learning, we know more or less what we have to do. Not knowing English, you will not understand things but problems would be about education not social but maybe you need both to be ok" (Interview I7, 2011).

Immigrant parents had much the same ideas. Ms. Molina said, "Me gustaría poder aprender inglés y me gustaría poder aprender junto con mis hijos (I wish I could learn English and I wish I could learn together with my children)" (Interview IP2, 2011). Mrs. Solis remarked, "Inglés es muy esencial en los estados unidos. Es el idioma más importante, pero necesito saber las dos idimoas" (English is very essential in the United States, it is the most important language but I need to know both) (Interview IP1, 2011).

From interviews of native New Mexico Hispanics, one can conclude that in their opinions, bilingual education should not be mandatory. Most were of the belief that it was not essential to their own academic and future success. They felt it should be a choice for them and their parents. Some also said if you come to this country, you must learn to speak the mainstream language. One of many statements on the topic came from Amanda:

Unfortunately, I cannot speak or write another language. I do have background in Spanish but cannot speak it. It is great to learn a second language and be fluent in both. But if you come to the US, it should be essential that you speak English just as if we went to Italy we would be responsible for learning their language if we want to communicate. I am only fluent in English and only slightly understand in Spanish. (Interview NH3, 2011)

Culture and family. For all participating students culture and family mattered to their origins, their language, their aspirations and bilingual education. Parents were the family that meant the most to both groups of students and a huge influence in their lives. When asked who had influenced them about bilingual education and what their parents thought about it the majority gave credit to parents and family.

Nearly all of the immigrant students were in the US without their parents, living with siblings, aunts, uncles, or other family. They were grateful for the family support but they understood they could not count on them for emotional support as they did their parents. They also recognized how much their parents had given up so they could have the opportunity to come and learn English. More than the other group, immigrants demonstrated powerful emotions when they talked about their parents. We can only imagine the void in their lives that came from being alone, far from home, in a strange county, without a mother

or father around to ask for help, advice, and to cry to. Immigrant student Manuel said his mother and father thought coming to the US to learn English was:

> Good because you learn something you need to work. They tell me to learn but no they don't know how, except my mom he knows, but she lives in Mexico and we miss mom. I live, we, brother, live with uncles and we teach them English. They bring us to here to go to school but sometime I want to go home. (Interview I3, 2011)

Native Hispanic students knew their parents supported them in whatever they did. They could depend on their parents to be there for them. As a result, there was less emotion and gratitude demonstrated. They were appreciative of parents with one exception. Several blamed parents for not teaching them to speak Spanish. They thought they should have been brought up speaking Spanish. They did not have a close relationship with their elders or abuelos because of this. They thought they would have had a connection with them through the generational bridge of language. When they visited them, they were unable to communicate, they could not speak Spanish and their grandparents could not speak much English. They also said knowing a second language would have been an enhancement to employment qualifications and could get a better job if they knew another language. Julianne said:

> The best influence on my own bilingual education was hearing my grandparents speak Spanish and some of the classes I took in school. My parents should have talked to me in Spanish but I wish I had more and better opportunities to learn at a younger age to communicate better. I can understand a very limited amount of Spanish I learned from my grandparents growing up and in school but it is not enough to be able to communicate sufficiently. I plan to learn more as soon as possible but

there are many benefits. It will break language barriers; teachers are able to provide

the same learning opportunities for all students; knowing a second language allows

for more learning opportunities for everyone and we can get better jobs and speak

more to our grandparents, that's what I miss the most. (Interview NH6, 2011)

Meaning of language to bilingual education. Thoughts about the meaning of the

home/heritage language and bilingual education were different for each group. For both

groups of students the heritage language was Spanish but their feelings about the heritage

language were in stark contrast to each other. Another factor that made an obvious

difference to language meaning was the amount of time immigrants had been in the US; a

longer time paralleled the behavior of native Hispanic students. Mr. Martinez said there was

a distinct difference in the attitudes of immigrants who had been in the United States for

some time and those who had recently arrived. Once they have learned English, they spoke

only English most likely to fit into the dominant culture. He said,

> Students, immigrants, see Spanish as an asset and they love their language and are
>
> willing to teach others; they are so proud of it. But, one difference I noticed, if they
>
> have been here long they don't want to speak Spanish. If they are recently arrived,
>
> they speak Spanish and are comfortable with it. (Interview SS9, 2011).

Ms. Sena mentioned:

In classroom instruction, native Hispanics, many see the local dialect as inferior to

Spanish spoken in other countries. Immigrants are most proud of their language; they

see it in a very positive attitude. They prefer to use their native language in social

settings and sometimes struggle with English in school. In social situations, (New

Mexico) Hispanics, they don't use it. They feel they don't need it and don't use it

socially or in school, and they rely on English completely. Native Americans, many

do not speak their language at all, so they can't use it in social settings. For those

who can, it is perceived as much more valuable than English especially in their own

culture. (Interview SS7, 2011).

Ms. Chávez said:

If they don't speak the dominant language, they feel very handicapped in being able

to function in school. Some feel ashamed especially of their accent if they are

Spanish speakers or if they are English language learners and don't know Spanish,

but come from a background of Spanish speakers. (Interview SS6, 2011)

These comments described what staff observed about the meaning of language for each of

the student populations found at Mesa High School.

Native Hispanic students considered English to be their language. These ideas were

substantiated by what school staff said as well. The value of Spanish for them as a heritage

language was not for themselves and their culture but for other reasons. They placed

importance on employment opportunities, on communicating with others, especially older

family members, and on helping those who could not speak English. Students, Rachel and

Michael thought it would be useful in a variety of situations. Rachel said, "My stepdad is

Mexican and all he can speak is Spanish. He's learning a little bit of English but I have to

translate sometimes, yah, like at Sonic I have to order". (Interview NH7, 2011). Michael

remarked, "The reasons to learn Spanish are varied. One is to be able to be mobile and travel

to other countries and get by linguistically" (Interview NH5, 2011).

These students did not see the value as personal and necessary to their own cultural

identity reflective of who they are. Many had lost the connection to their past and to their

roots just as most Americans today, but there was also no cultural connection to English in any way. It was a tool for communication with no ties to any heritage or culture.

Most of the students were remorseful at not being able to speak Spanish. They blamed parents, language programs, methods of instruction, and societal dynamics previously in place that discouraged and even punished their ancestors for speaking Spanish. Attitudes about learning Spanish are influenced by misconceptions held by some parents. Some, both native New Mexican and immigrant, believe that their child will be harmed by learning two languages. The belief English is compromised by learning or improving Spanish, somehow imagining the brain is only capable of one language (Gándara & Contreras, 2009), still exists today.

Bilingual advocates have spent years trying to convince these same people of the advantages of learning Spanish, without much success. The perceptions that speaking Spanish is something to be ashamed of and the New Mexican dialect is incorrect, has been hard to eradicate. Families give more credibility to the myths they have passed down than they do to research and educational literature. Native New Mexico Hispanic parent Ms. Gonzáles, said, "I believe some parents really want their children to learn a second language but for some reason don't put them there. My parents speak it but for some reason they think it is somehow demeaning" (Interview NHP2, 2011). In addition, biases are still very much a part of everyday reality. They continue to be promoted, consciously or unconsciously, by speakers of the dominant language.

At the same time, educators continue to fight the battle by trying to change the thinking of students and parents and impressing on them the value of being bilingual. When families continue to promote English only and have no value for Spanish, it makes bilingual

education a complicated program to implement. If students do not assign the same importance to Spanish as they do to English or any other core subject, it will eventually become a remnant of the past. Additionally the dialect, the culture, and the traditions will not be able to survive without the language connection. Can we reverse this trend? There might still be a chance, but it hinges on making changes to the program that is responsible for reviving the heritage language for native New Mexico Hispanic students, bilingual education.

For immigrants, losing the language is not the case. The language is intricately linked to their culture, their identity, and their life, completely and totally. They react very emotionally when describing their feelings for their first language. We heard previously how Arturo called his language a part of his "heart" and this closely related to what Ms. Molina, an immigrant parent, said about language and what it meant to her. She said children should always be able to speak Spanish because it was important to the spiritual life. She stated, "Español es portador de los valores de la cultura, la religión, y la familia" (Spanish is a carrier of the values of culture, religion, and family.)" (Interview IP2, 2011). To immigrants, language is rooted deep within.

The students and their parents did not want to experience language loss as the native New Mexicans had. Parents forbade the use of English at home. Not only did some think the students would lose their language but they also may have thought the child would become estranged from the culture and the family. It may be that parents believed not speaking Spanish was denying their heritage and roots and because of the close connection to family, would become distant to parents and other family members.

Bilingual education programs for immigrant students are not in any sort of dilemma. For them the program is geared towards teaching English, making it very different regardless

of the similarity of the plan. The goals mirror the serious need this population has for

learning English. There are many places and things that immigrants cannot utilize because

they do not speak English. The home language for them is not in danger of being lost for at

least the first or second generation. However, they must learn English and learn it quickly in

order to continue to participate in society in the US. The bilingual education design currently

in place in all school venues meets the need of these students more than it does for native

New Mexico Hispanics. For them the framework is applicable but needs a revision and

refinement of what is being implemented. Revisions should center on teaching students

English and doing that as rapidly as possible. Students cannot afford to take three to five

years to learn English especially at the secondary level. In the end, these students will be

bilingual unlike native New Mexicans who have had the privilege of bilingual instruction for

years but for reasons out of their control, have not been able to take advantage of it.

Aspirations and language. Immigrant students who come to America do so with

one goal in mind, to learn English in an American educational institution. We heard the story

from Angelo about feeling guilty because as the youngest child the "baby", he was sent here

to receive an education while his older brother never had the opportunity. Angelo was

grateful to his mother and father for the sacrifice they made to be able to send him to this

country. Students in this group all indicated the primary reason for learning English was to

continue in school, graduate, go on to higher education or get a job, possibly a good job.

Knowledge of the language, English, would make this possible.

From Rosa's standpoint, her family all believed in the connection between the

English language and the job market. They worked to make sure everyone in the family that

wanted to come to the US did. Those who did not had no need because they attended high

school and college in Mexico. Success in the form of financial success meant leaving their home and their country. Most of her immediate family lived close by with one exception, her uncle who attended college in Mexico. She said:

> I don't have the typical Mexican life where your family, my mom's family, her parents, and her brothers they all live in Phoenix. So we see them often and my dad's family, some live here and his sister they don't come, like they don't come to live here because her husband has a perfect education over there so there is no need for them to leave over there. I mean, like I said I don't have the typical story that you stay away from your family and you miss them because we see them really often. They all came to work and my mom's brothers they're bilingual themselves also you know, not perfect English, you know, they have that accent but it's really understandable. I mean, you know, they write it and everything. (Interview I2, 2011)

Seven immigrant students were interviewed and seven wanted to attend either a college or a vocational school to continue their education. Being in the US gave them the option they did not have in Mexico. Utilizing every advantage they can get is the objective for the students, who may be forced to leave this country at any time. They all share the belief that while they can continue to learn, they will. They believe American schools will provide them with a better education than those in their home country.

New Mexico Hispanic students totaled nine and out of those nine, two did not want to attend college or vocational school. One wanted to work in a bank and another wanted to join the military. They did not see the urgency of attending college perhaps because the opportunity was there for them at any time. For them learning a second language had little to do with higher education and getting a job; knowing English would make that possible.

Their parents however, were optimistic that their children would learn and utilize a second

language. Both native New Mexican parents talked about the value of knowing two

languages in relation to jobs. Ms. Gonzáles said, "Language is very important because it

impacts future job opportunities" (Interview NHP2, 2011). Mr. Romero's opinion was,

"Language is very important depending on the job of course. I work a lot with Spanish

speakers mostly from Mexico and I really use it a lot" (Interview NHP1, 2011).

Julianne, a Native New Mexico Hispanic, was a junior who wanted to go to college,

take nursing classes, and become a registered nurse. She could not speak Spanish but her

parents and grandparents did and used it often. She understood Spanish but did not speak it

despite three years of bilingual education at different levels. Julianne stated:

> I can speak very limited amounts of Spanish, I learned from my grandparents growing
>
> up and in school but it isn't enough to be able to communicate sufficiently. I plan to
>
> learn more as soon as possible because there are many benefits. I think knowing a
>
> second language allows for more learning opportunities for everyone and even gives
>
> one the opportunity to help others. I think it'll help me as a nurse since there are
>
> many Spanish speakers around here. (Interview NH6, 2011)

Native New Mexico Hispanic students shared the opinion of immigrants that

language would help them get a better job, but did not perceive it as critical and mandatory.

Immigrants recognized they had to have a knowledge of English or they would not be able to

get a job at all in the US. Most students wanted to continue their education after high school,

understanding higher education was necessary to take advantage of better job opportunities.

Immigrant student Aurora, had been here less than a year and was very shy compared

to other immigrant students. She was in eleventh grade but had not decided what her career

goals were, although she wanted to attend college. Aurora took English in a Mexican school, half a year here, and an evening course at the community college, but said she learned more from her peers. She said she came to the United States specifically to learn English because "Puedo hacer más con dos idiomas y puedo ayudar a las personas que no saben hablar inglés" (I can do more with two languages and can help those who do not know how to speak English) (Interview I5, 2011). Her goal was to learn English well because she needed it to work and to help others, especially her family members, most of whom still live in Mexico.

Another student Manuel, also an immigrant, was in the eleventh grade with his brother Arturo, although he was younger. Manuel was born in Mexico and had been here for two years. He was also very outspoken and not in the least bit bashful or quiet. He attended school in Juárez, El Paso, Las Cruces, and here. He took English for five years in Mexico and two years here but was still at a beginning level. He insisted on answering all questions in English with which I helped him along, suggesting English words he might want to use, based on the Spanish ones he used. Manuel was unrelenting in his opinion that he would not accomplish anything and would not know anything if he did not learn English. He said he wanted to and needed to be fluent in English to make money for his family. He wanted to go to college at NMSU but did not know what he would study. Manuel said he was teaching his uncles how to speak English. He said:

> So I can understand and know other language, to be something right here in every
>
> state. So I can be something big – important – un grande (someone important).
>
> Because if you don't know, you won't understand. If you don't learn you don't
>
> understand. I want to be like others, to have friends, to talk to other people because
>
> those who don't talk English don't know anything. (Interview I3, 2011)

Study participants pointed out what they perceived as the value of bilingual education. A majority of the comments fell within one of the values listed in the table below.

Table 9

Participant Values of Bilingual Education and Language Programs

Values of Bilingual Education from Participant Perspectives	
• Support literacy in first and second language	• Improve vocabulary
• Positive effect on all course subjects	• Enhance higher order thinking skills
• Enable and support student success	• Provide a bridge between two languages
• Empower students	• Aid in standardized testing
• Promote a connection to cultural identity	• Support English proficiency/articulation
• Provide assistance to others	• Break language barriers
• Improve career opportunities	• Facilitate communication with Spanish speakers

Summary

Study participants were representative of groups that are typically found in many school districts in New Mexico. They had much to say regarding bilingual programs and their administration and implementation. I spent the most time with the students who never ceased to amaze me with their maturity and thoughtfulness. They made the interview process enjoyable, entertaining, and most importantly very informative. They gave meaning to my topic much more personally than I ever expected. When I reread their comments, I can visualize them describing their journeys and I hope my readers can do the same. The powerful, emotional retellings of their experiences are findings that cannot be ignored. One

of the most unanticipated and thoughtful comments, came from immigrant student Rosa. She was discussing how she felt being in the middle of a different culture:

> Here you know anywhere in the US, you are a Mexican and you automatically maybe divide yourself or you get divided you know by someone else. So I think pretty much the hardest part of not being in your place is having to be like two people sometimes yourself as you are in your place, and the other one in the new place, and you get divided in two by yourself and others. (Interview I2, 2011)

Rosa expressed the underpinnings of the feelings experienced by minority group members trying to be equivalent to peers in the dominant society. The narrative resonated with me and with probably many others from diverse cultures. Rosa explained that deep down you cannot change yourself but you do have to pretend to be someone different or you do not fit in. Amos (Gay, 2003) explains this feeling when she says, "having to think, talk, write, learn, and live in two languages and cultures is often a demanding challenge" (p.306). Elenes and Bernal (2010) label and describe that sentiment of the individual experience as a "hybrid identity" (p. 67), how Latinas/os negotiate life and make sense of their positions in society, the "metaphorical borderlands" (p. 67). Those who must exist in two different cultures must negotiate the process of entering one and leaving another and try to remain the same but yet different, to fit the moment and the environment. This is only one dilemma articulated by all participants who have to survive and achieve in a culture socially and linguistically, very dissimilar from their own.

Staff members were always professional and willing participants who gave helpful and honest responses. Several were formal at the outset but gradually they delved deep into their awareness and gave their true feelings. Some described the desperation they felt in their

classrooms as they tried to teach language. Language something so crucial to every one's life, something so meaningful and such a part of the self-identity yet unrecognized by some as such.

Parents provided still another aspect on the subject. Through their eyes, one can see their children and their needs. One can see parents doing their best to provide for those needs to make them understand and experience language: the power, the heritage, the importance, and the cultural need to carry it on.

The next chapter presents the findings responding to the second research sub question: What do participants identify as helpful and unhelpful to the process of language acquisition, to academic achievement, and to overall student success? Findings in the form of themes and concepts were developed from participant perceptions during the interview process. Quotations from the participants serve to support the findings. The chapter includes the four general themes that emerged from participant narratives of their experiences as well as their opinions on the topic of bilingual education.

Chapter 5

Reengineering Bilingual Education: Participant Perspectives

But the questions came – What can I do? How can I help?
It is not enough just to be heart felt.
How can I support children who are often forgotten?
When I am so imperfect and my gifts still to be begotten?
I would have to become a new creation
My cultural collisions became a connection
Pointing me and my core in a different direction
A spiritual conviction has made a deep incision
In my heart, my soul, my mind and my vision
I'll continue to embrace my crystallizing multicultural core
Even when people tend to ask why and what for?

Jackson (2003, p. 52).

Introduction

Jackson (2003) is a multicultural educator whose research interests include literacy. Like many teachers who have students from diverse backgrounds, Jackson is on a track to find what she can do and how she can help her students. Educators must be committed to their profession and most importantly to their students. Using the words of the students themselves, they can begin to discover teaching practices that can develop the hidden potentials of all students. Educators can use students' prior experiences to build culturally relevant teaching techniques and curriculums that are sensitive to heritage and culture.

This research uses the words of students, teachers, and parents to begin that process. Findings from data collected through interviews with insider perspectives, has produced concepts and themes that connect to the research questions, seeking answers about the effectiveness of bilingual education. Concepts and themes were specific to the question: What do participants identify as what worked and what did not work; what was helpful to

their learning and what was not; all for the process of language acquisition, academic achievement, and overall student success. Their observations offer understanding and insights in relation to currently implemented bilingual education programs.

Four major concepts emerged from over sixty themes and codes in relation to what participants felt about their experiences in bilingual programs. In my study, the four concepts were Nationality and origins, Culture and family, Meaning of language, and Relationship of language to future aspirations. All the concepts centered on the focus of this qualitative study, bilingual education students. Added to the four concepts are secondary themes that describe bilingual program implementation. The themes are teaching strategies, support and resources, communications, and academics. There are instances where some of the concept themes overlap with other concept themes.

This chapter presents an overview of what participants said, aligned to the importance of who they are, and how this mattered to restructuring the framework of bilingual education, the program we use to provide language instruction to second language learners. A program framework that has to be reflective of the culture of the student group it is intended for yet also has to be structured towards improving student proficiency levels in the target language of the specific design. Bilingual education is a complex curriculum that must be tied to the research and relevant to the intended population, in order to enable them to reach maximum educational potential.

Overview

All New Mexico bilingual education program models operate under a specific format and differ only in the number of hours taught. If students are English language learners, they receive three hours of instruction as opposed to English proficient students who receive two

hours. The target language in a bilingual education program for an English-speaking student, who has identified a home or heritage language other than English, is Spanish. For a Spanish-speaking student, the target language is English. When participants were asked what parts of a bilingual program support literacy, responses included not only teaching strategies, the quality of materials, but also the actions of students, teachers, and parents. Statements were made about procedures, behaviors, and resources that were helpful and those that were not helpful. The research data provided information about the current process of instruction and the meaning of the experience.

All the data can be grouped into two categories, What worked and was helpful, and What did not work and was not helpful. Within these two categories, I grouped bilingual program practices- teaching strategies, support and resources, communications, and academics. Teaching strategies include instruction and teacher behaviors. The theme of support and resources includes textbooks, materials, resources, and supplementals necessary for best practice implementation. Communication includes the practical uses for communication within bilingual education. The fourth secondary theme in bilingual program practices is academics. It includes student learning, study skills, curriculum, and instructional programs.

What Worked and What Was Helpful

Comments from students on the subject of program implementation began with the subject of instructional strategies. They included:

❑ Teaching strategies and teacher behaviors

- Full immersion in the target language

- Using visuals

- Vocabulary instruction

- Teacher fluency in the language of instruction

- Positive and caring teacher behavior and attitude

- Including students in instruction

- Fidelity in instruction

❑ Support and resources

- Audio visual materials- songs, video and audio tapes, and other visual aids,

- Computer programs in Spanish and English for language instruction to the

    appropriate group

- Supplemental resources with high interest

❑ Communications

- Parent involvement

- Speaking and practicing in the target language for outside activities

- Expressing value for students, language and culture

- Including parents and grandparents in classrooms as additional resource persons

❑ Academics

- Dual language

- Articulated and culturally relevant curriculum

- Multiple intelligences

- Language rich learning experience

- Cooperative learning

- TPR – Total Physical Response instructional method

Teaching strategies and teacher behavior. Students and staff had several remarks on instructional methods that helped them learn language. The primary method was a full class period of instruction using the target language. Strategies useful for target language practice included singing songs, translating songs, incentives for speaking in class, role-playing, and practicing on their own. Both groups of students were insistent that practice and speaking only the target language during class, was the only way to learn a language. Immigrant student Arturo noted they needed:

> Practice, practice, ways to practice, like movies in English to get the ear 'acostumbrado' (accustomed) because we need to understand and what words mean and more songs because all young people like them. More practice like in the other school (that he attended previously). If we speak in Spanish we lost points there and over here no. We always talk in Spanish and no practice in English. (Interview I4, 2011)

Another suggestion was paired conversations or discussions between students who had different first languages.   This would teach students to share culture and language, improve interaction and tolerance, and support peer group instructional methods. Other best practice methods for teaching language were visuals such as word walls and cards to identify objects in the classroom and help students learn new words.

Students and staff suggested teaching vocabulary would help students learn language. Christine, a native New Mexican student, speaking about the value of vocabulary instruction said, "I believe learning vocabulary plays a significant role in being able to communicate in another language" (Interview NH1, 2011).

Arturo had attended several different schools in two states and two countries. He had a wealth of information about strategies he had seen utilized that contributed to learning language. His comments:

I don't know because I can't think but that teacher would put us to work and give us a lot of vocabulario, a lot, a lot, vocabulary in English. Uh huh, this girl (current teacher) sometimes gives us vocabulary but sometimes not enough. Uh uh, we need more. (Interview I4 2011).

His peer Aurora said, "Vocabulario es lo mejor" (vocabulary is best) (Interview I5, 2011).

A majority commented on the importance of teacher fluency in the target language and caring teachers in programs. Immigrant students expected teachers to be bilingual if they had immigrant students in class. Arturo said:

Like in the other school when I go there and didn't know anything, it's ok, and we help you, and that was so good because they translate me the instructions and you need to do this. They put like more people who speak English and Spanish and they helped us un chorro (a lot). (Interview I4, 2011)

Immigrant students Yvonne and Rosa, when asked about positive influences, talked about teachers. Yvonne said, "Teachers are (positive influence) because the family doesn't talk English" (Interview I7, 2011). Rosa had much to say about teachers:

I think she (one teacher) had just enough (materials) and I think she was an amazing teacher herself, yah. I remember others of my teachers like for example in first grade I had a lot of troubles, I, because like I was never able to turn in my homework, because I mean, it, it was hard and I couldn't read it. In second grade, I had another

teacher, she had, she was like bilingual herself, right? And she used to teach bilingual

to another class so like she would come and switch with this other teacher that taught

a class. She would switch, and she was good, yah, that's what I remember. And like

my ESL teacher was a really good teacher. I mean, I remember her perfectly she was

always prepared. Like, she was never missing anything it was perfect, her class.

(Interview I2, 2011)

Amanda, a native New Mexico Hispanic, had an idea that was based on a personal

experience. She said one of her teachers in middle school knew how to teach the immigrant

students by having them say words in Spanish and relate them to English. She said,

One of the biggest methods in teaching students is to include them in instruction. If

they feel the teacher cares and values their education, they will put more effort to

learn rather than be blown off. It gives the kids the chance to stay in class and learn.

They are not excluded or taken out of class. (Interview NH3, 2011)

Teacher Ms. Chavez provided a summary of most of the individual comments:

I have seen many programs and classes taught in bilingual ed and I think the need is

for programs which require fidelity to the target language during instruction; also

activities which require a high level of student verbalizations. The students must

learn to speak the language first regardless of which language it is. Teachers must

also include students in lessons to connect to their language. In my opinion language

learning requires active practice, practice, practice, without relying on translations

and that requires them learning vocabulary to be able to comprehend without

translation. (SS6, 2011)

Support and resources. Technology played a big role in students' lives so using IPods to learn songs in the target language; watching movies in the language, and computer use were mentioned several times. Suggestions for computer use included looking for target language sites to improve reading, and using YouTube and other sites in the target language, to learn vocabulary and pronunciation. One student suggested a computer program to teach Spanish language to native New Mexico Hispanics. Yvonne remembered another method using the computer:

> I don't know how to answer, maybe the materials and the work that we do; also write vocabulary and also on a program where we read and we answer the questions. We do it on the computer. That's when we come to the library to use the computers. I learn the words and then it teaches how to pronounce them and you follow. (Interview I7, 2011)

Andrea a native Hispanic student also thought using computer software that taught Spanish would be made use of by her group just as the immigrant students did. She said:

> The other class works on the computer to learn English and they like that. They say they learn words and that's fun, in the library.. I think we should have a computer with Spanish so we could learn and practice. (Interview NH4, 2011)

Communication. The theme of communication included parent involvement as the central program implementation indicator. Strong parent influence and involvement were traits that affected attitudes of students and as a result, program effectiveness. All four parents interviewed believed in and supported bilingual education. They understood the benefits of bilingualism in their children. Parents were needed to provide support for the

program and in turn, this would motivate students to be engaged in learning. This pertained

more to native New Mexico Hispanics than to immigrants.

Engaging parents would include educating them about instructional strategies and

methods, and teaching them how to support and assist in their children's' learning. Native

New Mexico Hispanic parent Mr. Romero said, "I don't really know, maybe I haven't

listened, but I trust they do things the kids are going to learn from" (Interview NHP1, 2011).

He also said, "Listening to parents and grandparents speak is a good way to learn" (Interview

NHP1, 2011).

About the same topic immigrant student, Joann said, "But like there's nothing like

home, like you don't understand and something, you're not too shy to ask what exactly. She

(mom), like more than gladly, explains" (Interview I1, 2011). Some of the statements

suggested a need to provide training activities for parents to take an interest in the child's

schoolwork. Activities at open house and parents' night would be a good use of required

parent contact time especially at lower grades. Sessions could provide opportunities for

family/teacher/school collaborating and would not only inform parents about bilingual

education but would also give them a chance to connect with their child, something some

parents do not do.

Academics. Academics as a theme in bilingual education implementation for this

study focused on instructional programs and general methods used for implementation. In

this section, practices listed are those that participants specified were helpful.

Staff members and students discussed dual language instruction and an appropriate

curriculum both incorporated as part of program design. Dual language is similar to full

immersion instruction; both require dedicated target language instruction. Mr. Martinez

former bilingual education teacher and now the counselor said, "Of course dual language programs are the most effective but can only be used in elementary school because of the plan and the self contained classroom" (Interview SS9, 2011). Student Michael said his father was a bilingual educator and he occasionally heard him speaking about successful methods. He said, "Dual language is a very successful program because both groups of students teach and support each other in learning language" (Interview NH5, 2011).

Curriculums are required in all districts and schools that are funded for state programs; however, some are not aligned to the specific population with whom they are used. Cultural relevance in standardized testing would also provide more accuracy in test scores. One said the most effective programs had relevant curriculums. Staff members had many suggestions for methods that had proven effectiveness. Mr. Martínez, discussed methods he had used or had seen used successfully:

> Some of the most effective that make the most difference in student learning, are cooperative learning and a hands on approach, because children learn concepts better through involvement and interaction than through the lecture, seatwork, or written assignment methods. The use of the multiple intelligences approach is also very effective as is repetition. (Interview SS9, 2011)

Language rich learning experiences were the most effective from the standpoint of teacher Ms. Chavez. She said,

> The key to attaining student proficiency is providing language rich learning experiences in a research based, culturally sensitive manner so that students can bridge their personal life experiences to learning how to communicate in the language being taught. Everyone must be involved in the learning experiences of students to

have a common working definition that is clearly explained to all parties including

students and parents, and discussed throughout the learning process. (Interview SS6,

2011)

An additional instructional method described by Ms. Sosa was TPR – total physical

response. She explained,

TPR is the use of kinesthetic behavior incorporated with fun. First because this

method lessens the stress level of learning a new language, then for the language

learner to understand the idea of what is being said to him/her, the use of body

movement, points, and cues. It helps the language learner better remember

vocabulary words and terms. (Interview SS8, 2011)

What Did Not Work and What Was Not Helpful

Participants also shared information about what they felt were ineffective methods

being used in bilingual education programs. This was not an interview question but was

volunteered by students and staff. The aspects of program implementation in the four

categories that were identified as not being helpful and not working were:

❑ Teaching strategies and teacher behaviors

- Use of the home language and not language of instruction

- Seatwork and written assignments

- Lack of teacher fluency in the language

- Instruction in grammar before students learn to speak

- Instructional methods inappropriate to grade and instructional level

❑ Support and resources

- Inadequate teacher professional development and training for ESL and bilingual education

- Insufficient amount of materials

- Culturally irrelevant materials for student groups

- Inappropriate level of language materials- too difficult or too simple

- Utilization of funding for other programs

- Teacher shortage and overloaded classrooms

❑ Communications

- Lack of inclusion of community and parents in programs

- Ineffective promotion of bilingual programs

❑ Academics

- Use of Spanish curriculum designed for Latin American countries

- Irrelevant curriculum for language/heritage group- native Hispanics or immigrants

- Pullout programs

Teaching strategies and behaviors that were not helpful. The most repeated method that did not work was teaching language in the student's home language, rather than in the language they were trying to learn. "My mom" said Joann, an immigrant, "makes us talk in Spanish at home cuz she says schools have this habit, we be talking in Spanish then next English. She's like, turning on hot water and then cold water, that's her idea" (Interview I1, 2011). Joann was speaking about the lack of consistency in target language instruction during classes.

The data indicated this finding was the most significant for students. They all complained about the lack of practice in the language. One student said practice would help

students feel good about the language and themselves because they would learn to pronounce correctly. This was an unexpected comment since it related to emotions and perceptions rather than methods. Surprising also was that only two school staff members said full immersion in language was effective. It was the method students thought was essential for learning how to speak a language; but was not seen the same by most staff members.

Vice principal Trujillo, agreed with students saying consistent instruction in the target language was one of the most critical needs for bilingual programs to meet goals. His position as administrator required his observation of classroom instruction. He said several teachers said they could not use the target language because students did not understand it, however he disagreed saying that was not true. In his thinking, they would never learn if they were not exposed to it during class time. Sharing his insights, he said:

> Language immersion and consistency in teaching are critical. Teachers need to teach in the language throughout the class and immerse students totally in the language which ever it may be. In our school, we have immigrants who need English immersion and Hispanic students who need Spanish immersion in order to learn the (target) language. (Interview SS4, 2011)

Native Hispanic student Susie discussed using language in the classrooms at length. She said,

> I think we need to practice but we don't do any. No speaking, just conjugating and all the stuff like that. We have to learn to speak it before we can write it, right? I haven't really learned; all we do is worksheets and stuff and we never like interacted (in Spanish) , which we needed to do. I didn't like that. (Interview NH8, 2011).

Rachel was also frustrated with segmented language instruction in the target

language, she said:

I remember like, they would give us like a test (in Spanish), or like they would have a

book (in Spanish), or tell us like a sentence (in Spanish), and then put it down and it

would be, 'where's the pencil now', and you would say, 'on the floor', all in Spanish.

Using language in class is most helpful- yes – all in Spanish. That's what the teacher

kind of tried to get us to do like when we say 'here' we have to say, 'aqui en asiento'–

trying to make it all Spanish class but doesn't do it really all the time. (Interview

NH7, 2011)

A second common observation of what was not effective was the use of handouts,

simple word searches, crossword puzzles, and work sheets, cited by both student groups.

Students said these assignments made classes extremely boring and did not teach anything

since students shared answers. Even immigrant students, who were very committed to

learning English, complained and suggested strategies (mentioned in a previous section) that

would keep them engaged. Also discussed by native Hispanics was the dislike of teaching

grammar and conjugation before teaching students how to speak. They thought practice

speaking had to be taught first as previously mentioned by Susie, a native Hispanic student.

She pointed out that variety was needed to keep student interest and offered her own critique.

She said,

Because like in my seventh and eighth grade, all we did was worksheets and I just

really lost interest in it even. The grammar is ok; it's just not for them to give us so

much. So also, vocabulary to access the dictionary and like when we get in the

grammar book it asks us a question with the pictures and we have to answer in

Spanish. The school just wants us, to just do it, so they get money yah, so just do it so

we can get out of it. (Interview NH8, 2011)

Describing typical classroom activities that occurred on a daily basis, Rachel, a New

Mexico Hispanic, rolled her eyes as she said:

The work she (teacher) assigns is like mostly defining words and basics like colors,

and too many handouts, yah. Our textbooks and work sheets, they are just extras.

Some of the stuff is ok but I just get bored with it, cuz I already know everything

they're talking about. Others (students) some of them I know, can speak it and

understand it. Then in the books, what she assigns us, it's like mostly just defining the

words. And, in other grades, it was just teaching us basics. (Interview NH7, 2011).

Andrea said:

It has to be a lot of practice stuff so we can learn to speak the language. If we don't

practice and someone does not teach us how to say words we can not learn. All of

these classes have been boring because we don't do much. We get grades from paper

work and that's it. I understand most in Spanish but mostly from my family and some

of my friends and at work there are Mexicans, and they speak only Spanish so I learn

some from them. But at elementary we had some things that were good, like singing

songs and then teacher made us translate the songs, so we learned new words and

what the songs and the words meant. Some of the teachers just do work sheets like I

said before, but I'm glad I'm not in the other class where they can't even move or

talk; just write all the time. This class is more relaxed. (Interview NH4, 2011)

Students, especially immigrant students, were also concerned about staff abilities in

the area of fluency in Spanish. Patience and the ability to accommodate and modify

instruction were traits students thought teachers needed to have. Arturo recounted his story

about his teacher's lack of knowledge of language. It was unfortunate that when the student

failed to understand the explanation that the teacher gave, he was reprimanded. The teacher

demonstrated her frustration with her own language skills by becoming upset with the

student. Arturo said:

> But here if you don't understand too bad, the senora gets mad. Umm, here and the
>
> other school so different. That teacher was 'como mas en focus' (like more in focus)
>
> and this girl is like one year of practice and has taught us very little and maybe less
>
> experiences. I don't know. Maybe the other had more, so it's more practice, practice,
>
> practice in the other school, yes. And if we talked in Spanish, we lose points and over
>
> here no; we always talk Spanish, sometimes, only sometimes we speak English.
>
> (Interview I4, 2011).

Teachers also had concerns about not knowing the students' language and were

truthful about their own lack of language skills. Statements about them not being prepared to

teach ESL or the home language signifies the extent of the problem.   Ms. Chávez said she

was glad she could provide both bilingual and ESL instruction within her classroom but said

she could not speak Spanish fluently. Although Ms. Chávez herself was a native New

Mexico Hispanic and she understood Spanish since she was a child, she had only recently

become a Spanish speaker and was at beginning level. She realized she was working with a

deficit because of her lack of language skills. She stated:

> As a teacher (bilingual education and English as a second language), I would love to
>
> be much more sufficient in my Spanish language skills because so many students in
>
> this area speak very fluent Spanish as a first language and I can function but not to the

extent they can. But also, I think they feel very handicapped in being able to function

(in English) in school. (Interview SS6, 2011)

Mrs. Sosa, also speaking about the language fluency of teachers, remarked:

Many teachers have bilingual endorsements and yet they are not capable of carrying

on a conversation in Spanish – I wonder how they got to that point and passed the

assessment for the license. Perhaps they crammed just before; I don't know but I

think universities need to be more adamant about requiring more language, especially

Spanish, classes if they are on a bilingual track. (Interview SS8, 2011).

Mrs. García-Ross described her thoughts,

After I completed my (college) classes, I had only taken one ESL course and it helped

with a better understanding but did not give the proper education needed to be an

effective teacher. Because of the higher rate of Spanish students in our state, it should

be mandated that there be at least two or three ESL courses over the degree term.

(Interview SS1, 2011)

Most participants thought the lack of teacher fluency in Spanish was an impediment

to enabling immigrants and native Hispanics to meet proficiency in both core subjects and

bilingual education. Most spoke about regular program teachers who could not speak

Spanish and could not provide instruction to immigrant students. Even some of the native

New Mexicans thought teachers should be able to help immigrant students by explaining

lessons in Spanish. One cited that as reason she needed to learn Spanish, so she could help

students who could not speak English. Some also spoke about teachers who were in bilingual

education implementing programs and could not speak Spanish at an appropriate level.

Christine, a native Hispanic student thought a teacher should be able to speak immigrants'
language and she said it better than anyone:

> When a teacher cannot effectively communicate with his/her students; it also impacts
>
> the school concerning testing (high stakes). If students cannot understand the
>
> language of the test, it is not a valid assessment of that student's understanding of the
>
> material. (Interview NH1, 2011).

Another concern with teaching strategies was the use of instructional methods that
were inappropriate to the grade and the instructional level of the students. Samantha, when
asked about bilingual programs, expressed concerns about instructional strategies not
matching learner needs. She said:

> They (bilingual programs) are very important to me but I haven't learned anything
>
> there, even in all the classes I have had at elementary and middle school. The work is
>
> too easy, like numbers and colors all the time or it's too hard like big long stories in
>
> Spanish. The other students are right. We only work on worksheets to do all the
>
> time, handouts, and stuff like that and that's stupid all the time. Sometimes also
>
> puzzles that are better to learn from but still we don't do any practicing and we won't
>
> learn like that. (Interview NH9, 2011)

At this point it has become critical that we listen to students and staff members about
what we as teachers can do to ensure that classroom instruction is pertinent, engaging, and
effective. We are missing opportunities to utilize their experiences, to get "inside" their
minds, to see education through their eyes, resulting in bringing out their maximum potential.

Support and resources. Students and staff were very adamant about the necessity of
having good materials as well as sufficient amounts of materials. Everyone thought materials

were desperately needed but not funded. This was evidenced by such comments as "uninteresting and insufficient materials", repeated by students eleven times. Staff comments included,

> I personally don't believe there are enough materials offered for teachers to teach in an ESL classroom. There are by far not enough accommodations given to them to modify the lessons for English language learners. The funding is also not there, were statements made by Mrs. García-Ross. (Interview SS1, 2011)

Ms. Tafoya, a bilingual teacher, complained:

> Sadly, never enough materials, also, if there are materials available, they force teachers to order materials that students cannot use. Teachers need to be given more power to be able to order books and materials in the classroom that are feasible for students. Students are very challenged and incapable of being able to understand and work with what is available in the classrooms now. (Interview SS2, 2011).

> Mr. Trujillo also complained, "Available materials are neither relevant nor developed for appropriate levels. Something needs to be done, at least for high school and middle school, if these students are to learn" (Interview SS4, 2011).

> Coming from Mr. Herrera was the comment:

> Culturally relevant materials are not available at my school. There are materials useful in Mexico or other countries but not for our students, thus they have a hard time learning Spanish. For the immigrant kids there are a lot of materials since they are in English and some limited Spanish. (Interview SS5, 2011).

Mrs. Sosa said:

Not enough, in all the years I have worked in bilingual programs, I can't remember

not having to make my own materials or having to go buy some or get from other

teachers to copy or get from the internet. There was never anything ordered for high

school classes. I have Spanish books good for immigrants but not for Hispanics,

either they are not made or there's no money for them. (Interview SS8, 2011).

Ms. Chávez, another teacher added: "Some are good; others are not correct level.

Most are not a good source for local students; there are no local materials, only foreign

language materials are really out there. Sometimes funding to purchase materials is not

available" (Interview SS6, 2011).

Students had many complaints concerning materials. Native New Mexicans Andrea

and Samantha gave their views on materials and methods used in bilingual class. These

students were very interested in learning language unlike some of the native New Mexican

students that staff had described. They expressed interest in learning and even being able to

utilize materials at home to increase their learning. Andrea said:

The materials usually in all bilingual classes were just sheets, hardly ever used books

or games or other stuff maybe they didn't have any. Other stuff would have been

more interesting and we would have learned more. They need to buy materials to

make it fun and interesting; learning different words and being able to define them

too. There aren't and weren't enough books to take home when we did have them so

there was no homework and homework helps especially when you are young.

(Interview NH4, 2011)

Samantha shared additional thoughts. She said:

All they gave us was worksheets and worksheets and it all affects us too, like

memorize things but they don't talk to us, just writing things down. We have to learn

how to speak it first and they don't allow us to talk like at home. I talk with my

uncles, they're older and they know the language. They talk to me in it but I can't talk

back; I never got taught it but I do understand. We should have interactions and

discussions with each other. I don't know it. I think the school doesn't think it's

important enough to learn and they don't buy stuff for it. And about the pictures used

for words I say I like the auditory part too. They should have tapes or things like that.

If the teacher was saying it and she was saying it correctly and I'll just say I'll

remember how she said it, because I know. Like, I'll be reading it and I'll go like, it's

easier when you hear someone say it and then you hear how to say it. But the way

they say it, like the grammar is necessary but it's not as necessary as speaking. You

need the grammar, but first the speaking. (Interview NH9, 2011)

Students described materials that discouraged them from reading because someone

had damaged them. Joann, an immigrant student, commented:

Some were interesting except for one thing pretty much there was writing on the

books and they were torn. That's why some, like, kids were, like, turned off, yah.

And there was something interesting you wanted to read but there were like drawings

all over there and on the printing, and pieces missing so you couldn't read it at all and

a lot of graffiti, so you give up. (Interview I1, 2011)

Other factors relating to resources and support of bilingual programs cited by

participants were overloaded classrooms caused by a shortage of teaching staff. They said

the shortage of bilingual and ESL certified staff caused an overload in classrooms, which in turn hurts students. With large groups, teachers cannot help those students who need some one to one instruction. Ms. Tafoya stated:

> Best ways are one to one and small classes but shortage of teachers causes an overload in classrooms, thus hurting students. But teachers work hard. Programs need to be funded if they are going to be successful; trying to do it on a budget and use money for other things is not going to develop a good effective program despite how hard teachers work and how successful they are with their students. (Interview SS2, 2011).

> **Communications.** Emerging as factors that did not help the status of bilingual programs was a lack of inclusion of parents, family, and community in the design, planning, implementation, and promotion of programs. Participants, especially staff members commented on the need for parent involvement in bilingual programs. Most immigrants did not have parents here in this country to support them in any way, but if they did, parents and other family members were very supportive.   Ms. Sena described her feelings on parent involvement:

> I think other important characteristics that need to be in a program, one is parent involvement. Without parent support there can be no program so much of this requires that the students' background and family be brought into the instruction. If the parents are not interested in the students' learning this subject, you can't be effective. This family support is very integral to student success in academics and probably in most everything. Students, which come from English speaking only homes and good parent involvement, seem to do better in school overall. I have

determined this through observations and parent teacher conferences. This is the key to helping students succeed, and do well in school and later in life. (Interview SS7, 2011)

The previous statement seems to make an implication that coming from English speaking homes is important to success in school. This teacher apparently equates English only and parent involvement with doing well in school. Where does this leave immigrant students who are determined to learn English and graduate and who do not have the privilege of having parents available in some cases? The immigrant students alone are responsible for their own accomplishments. This teacher's attitude is even more detrimental to bilingual education than the parent and student attitudes of indifference.

It is fortunate that in New Mexico most parents are pro bilingual education and support language instruction. Ms. Chavez said in other states parents have been responsible for eliminating bilingual education and instruction in the home language. She said:

In some states, schools have tried to introduce and teach language and have been unable because parents have been against it. Some parents want their children to get good jobs and they feel (that) if they learn Spanish or study Spanish they will not be able to. (Interview SS6, 2011)

Mr. Trujillo, assistant principal, said bilingual education could not succeed if certain aspects were not included. In many schools, these were not in place. He spoke about involving parents, making them part of the planning, and in this way they would take ownership and motivate their children. He said, "An effective program is one that has successfully engaged the community, staff, and students in the development and delivery of

the program to give a way for parents to buy in and support programs" (Interview SS4, 2011).

Some participants perceived this to be so critical to supporting bilingual programs the school had to take steps. The question was why have parents not been brought into schools for activities and events when most staff viewed parent involvement as important to students' learning the language. Several spoke about the attitudes of students and thought they were reflective of parents' attitudes. Bilingual programs are not meeting goals and objectives, and are not connecting with parents and family. Could the two be linked? Beginning the process of convincing parents of the benefits of learning Spanish will most definitely help change native New Mexico Hispanic students' biases towards Spanish.

Academics. Staff members talked about the need for teaching all classes especially bilingual education classes through a culturally responsive program. The findings for this factor overlapped in several of the elements of bilingual program implementation. It is such a vast issue with so many different aspects that it was included in several categories.

The biggest problem was the availability of materials that are applicable to the culture of native New Mexico Hispanics. In addition, native Hispanics speak a dialect of Spanish that other Spanish speakers call "slang". Native New Mexico Hispanic students face some confusion in identifying with and relating to the people or traditions in textbooks and supplementals, geared towards Latin American students. Culturally relevant and grade level appropriate resources for native Hispanic students are in effect, non-existent. It is discouraging for teachers that instructional materials for bilingual programs are not commonly available and in most cases do not parallel the populations or the dialects.

Linked to that was the fact some materials were translated from English to Spanish and were inaccurately translated. Materials were very available for foreign language instruction and for immigrant students but not for native New Mexicans. Lack of a consistent, culturally relevant, and articulated bilingual curriculum was cited by five staff members.

Another element of bilingual program implementation in the academic category was the use of pull out programs where students are taken out of class and given instruction in a small group or individually. Immigrant students said this was negative and made most feel segregated. One student, who had been in several schools before coming to Mesa High, said he was taken from his classroom to another and a teacher assistant would help him one to one. He did not like the idea that during the time he was gone from the regular classroom, students and teacher had continued to work and in some cases even had fun. He felt like an outsider, as if he did not belong with the rest of the class, and he was too dumb to be with the rest of the class. He said it was hard to make friends so he asked his family to put him in another school.

The student was able to understand the traumatic effects this instructional method had for him. Yet, there are many who suffer through this humiliation. This type of program does nothing for the self esteem of diverse students; students who feel like outcasts as it is because of the way they are treated solely for speaking a different language. Teachers themselves also said students got behind in other subjects and were unable to make any noticeable gains in academics. Nether group wanted any involvement in pull out programs and we can be assured parents would not either.

Summary of Findings

The findings from this qualitative study may help us improve how bilingual education is taught in schools. The chapter answered the second research sub-question:

 What do participants identify as helpful and unhelpful to the process of language acquisition, to academic achievement, and to overall student success?

Participant commentaries were thought provoking and eye opening. Some of their observations were completely unexpected and provided quantities of information to utilize in this study. The commentaries also gave meaning and visual representation through descriptions of the lived experiences of students, staff, and parents. All had a multitude of statements on many subjects, some on topic and others not. Along with the positive responses, participants also talked about the negative aspects of programs. The comments about negative elements generated varied emotional responses about some of the topics. These realities in the form of words and sentences, some very emphatically stated, formed units of meaning to provide the findings of the study. The ideas created layers of concepts and themes centered on language and finally reduced to four concepts: Nationality and origins, Meaning of language, Relationship to aspirations, and Culture and family. Subordinate themes are elements of bilingual program implementation: Teaching strategies, Support and resources, Communication, and Academics. Even now, concepts and themes seem to overlap and repeat but distinctiveness comes from the perspectives of subjects.

Ms. Tafoya contributed a summary of characteristics an ideal bilingual program must have incorporated in a culturally relevant framework. She said:

Effective bilingual programs usually have all support systems in place. And sadly, I have not seen an effective one yet. There have been good teachers and good classes

with good teaching but not a complete program in any school I have worked. That takes a lot of coordination and teamwork. Also, one thing necessary for teachers is training. Good relevant training designed for our own student populations and it has to be ongoing not a one shot program. This will improve instruction and will provide more resources for instruction. (Interview SS2, 2011).

School staff separated their ideas on what students thought about language by student group. Most saw distinct differences in the two groups and even within the two groups in relation to home language. The data is displayed in the table that follows:

Table 10

School Staff Observations on Student Perceptions Regarding Language

Immigrants	Native NM Hispanics
Pride and love of language and culture	Some have pride for heritage language
Asset and value of knowing Spanish	Good if parents support it
Secure cultural identity	Think dialect is inferior
More important than English	Use dominant language only (English)
English important for financial success	Reflective of parent attitudes
Need to know both	Not aware of benefits
Peer and sibling support are part of culture	Only value is for connection with elders
Very thankful for bilingual education	No peer support
Ashamed about accent	Not interested in language revitalization
Feel handicapped not knowing English	Does provide more job opportunities
Stressed, baggage, and devalued	Embarrassment and frustration

Immigrants	Native NM Hispanics
Good for socializing with friends	Good for future careers
To help others	Not a real asset – no need for it
English is empowerment	English expected, norm, and "in charge"

Amanda, a native Hispanic student provided a very mature and introspective reflection of the meaning of language and its relationship to bilingual education for Hispanic heritage students in New Mexico schools. She said:

> Language can be a barrier for students. For Spanish speakers they feel left out and blown off if they don't get the attention they need and for English speakers it can be difficult not knowing what is being said in Spanish. And it causes a lot of tension between the two cultures. I think it's essential to allow students to come in and learn in their native language. If we want them to learn English, we have to accept their language they are proficient in. It is important for them to speak Spanish because they are able to connect both languages and I think it will eventually lead to the success of learning English. (Interview NH3, 2011)

Chapter 6

Summary and Discussion

Too many educational leaders are mystified about finding instructional strategies that will improve the academic achievement of under achieving students of color. In their search for the "best programs and practices" throughout the country, we believe they are overlooking the obvious the personal experiences of successful individuals. Some researchers are demonstrating the answer lies with the lives of teachers, and within teachers telling their own stories.

Gay, (2003, p. 7).

The Overall Challenge in Bilingual Education

The problem addressed in this study is to understand what is needed to provide an equitable education to Hispanic students in New Mexico, through bilingual education with adequate resources and staff, using appropriate methods with respect and value for the students' language and culture. Stakeholders recognize there is a need for change indicated by the failure of language programs to prepare English language learners to parallel the proficiency of fluent English students. New Mexico and the nation as a whole are facing a huge hurdle in the education of the growing minority majority of Hispanics in meeting the goal of academic achievement. The structure and methodological framework of programs can no longer be the same for all Hispanics in New Mexico and elsewhere; for students whose needs are different. The days of a "one size fits all" program that can address the needs of all students, is over. Munoz and García (2010) say policy makers have finally met with the realization that reviewing and revising educational improvements and aligning to data to address the persistent underachievement of Hispanic students, means one size does not fit all.

In New Mexico, native and immigrant Hispanics share a language background and a limited cultural and religious heritage but are usually in different social networks. Differences may include racial/ethnic group, dialect, resident status, national origin, and socio economic level. Yet in spite of the differences, they have many of the same educational challenges (San Miguel & Donato, 2010). Continuing to implement programs in the same way for all groups will continue the downward spiral for Hispanics categorized as immigrant or native New Mexican. One most interesting comment came from native Hispanic student Andrea who said, "I'm confused is bilingual education to teach Spanish to English speakers or English to Spanish speakers which is it about bilingual education" (Interview NH4, 2011). She said someone should clarify the goals. This remark demonstrates the misunderstandings that exist in bilingual education.

Reframing Bilingual Education

My study yielded several areas of findings that support the theory that language programs affect students in many ways. I was able to collect powerful narrative data from the experiences and meaning making of participants regarding two critical areas of understanding needed to reframe and improve bilingual education. First, is the importance of understanding influences of national and ethnic origins, the meaning of language in the context of families and culture, and the relationship of language to individual aspirations. This points to ways we need to educate students based on what they bring to school from their backgrounds. Second, it is important to understand what is specifically helpful and unhelpful within current bilingual education practice including methods and strategies used in language programs and characteristics that are indicators of a strong program. Participants contributed their perceptions about what is helpful as well as what is not helpful in the

acquisition of language through bilingual education. Although questions in interviews were written as positive inquiries, many of the responses were concerns about weaknesses.

Findings emerging from the study were grouped into several themes, from which the four primary concepts were developed. The concepts center on the students who are the reason for bilingual education. The following figure (Figure 1) is a visual interpretation of the study findings, a concept circle. It illustrates the major concepts of nationality and origins, culture and family, meaning of language, and relationship of language to future aspirations, circling the bilingual student at the center. Supporting the circle are the elements of bilingual education program implementation- themes: teaching strategies, support and resources, communication and academics.
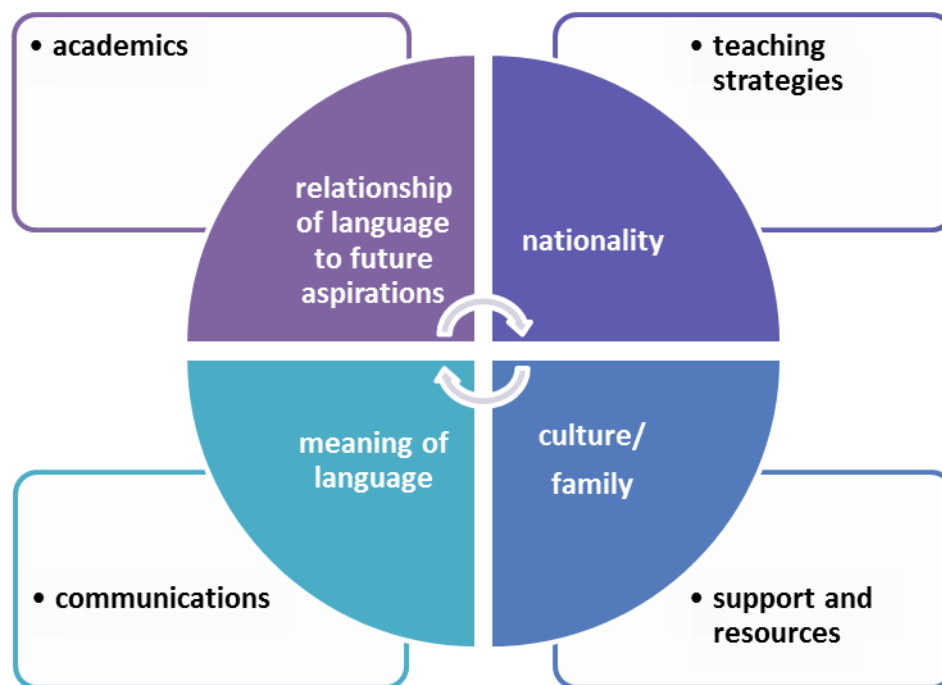

Figure 1

Research Study Concepts and Themes

Research Study Concepts and Themes

The central research focus of this study is language. Aligned with the concept of language because this is a study about bilingual education, is the question of who bilingual education students in New Mexico are, where they come from, what language means to them, and how that relates to their hopes for their future. As it should be in a qualitative study, the person/persons, in this study the students, are at the center, surrounded by the concepts emerging from the findings and supported by the variables in the framework of bilingual education programs.

Nationality/origins. Before beginning the study, I was under the impression study participants would be from one ethnic group Hispanic, in two Hispanic cultures distinctly classified as Hispanics, either immigrants or native New Mexico Hispanics. When I went into classrooms to ask for volunteers that met the study criteria, I still thought I was going to interview students that were clearly immigrant or native New Mexican. After conducting the demographic interview, I found immigrants were all from Mexico but some were born in the US and others were raised in the US since early childhood. I found native New Mexicans could not be easily placed into one neat group of US born New Mexico Hispanics. They self identified in the category but originated from a multitude of ethnic groups. This was a complete revelation to the idea that all native Hispanics would be native New Mexicans in the traditional sense.

It was also a surprise to discover that students in the two groups shared their ethnicity but did not think the same about language and in direct relation to their nationality. Immigrant students and their parents had a deep emotional connection to their nationality and origin, and language was an important connection to that.

Respect and value for each other's diversity was an issue for some students. Some had been exposed to racism at school and in the community. They were proud of who they were but felt others did not respect them and as a result this misconception caused tension. One immigrant student said some Hispanics thought they were "Anglo" or "Americano" and did not want to speak or learn Spanish, nor associate with immigrant students. Negative perceptions from native Hispanic students were that language was important for heritage but not to everyday living. Samantha said, "I didn't like the class, terrible books, I didn't want to be there, I didn't participate, and I lost interest in learning it, besides this is an English speaking country" (Interview NH9, 2011). Amanda stated, "I think bilingual is essential but definitely not mandatory. The world socially in education can't revolve around teaching Spanish speakers English. This takes a toll on English speakers, modifying is the key" (Interview NH3, 2011).

Some native Hispanics were proud of where they came from while others did not think they were very different from other cultures. Three saw their language as English not Spanish and did not think culture and language were linked. Native Hispanics assimilation into the American culture has been inevitable and unavoidable. For immigrant students, assimilation is not likely for some time, primarily because of language. Four of the native Hispanic students talked about wanting to learn about their heritage, their ancestors, their past, and along with that, the Spanish language. Some observed traditions and were fully integrated in their culture but could not speak the language and did not see it as required.

Pride in who they were was very evident in conversations with immigrant students. They talked about their roots, the pride they have in where they came from, and the love they have for their home country and language. All immigrant students had a positive self-

identity and pride in their background, a critical issue for populations from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

In all interviews, immigrants demonstrated pride in their heritage and roots. Staff and parents supported this opinion. Some of the other students did not care about cultural pride or language. Although one New Mexico Hispanic student, Amanda, said she would probably never use the Spanish language, not at school or socially. She thought it might be helpful to understand others and learn to translate but definitely was not required.

Immigrant students thought language could cause tension and social problems, because of kids who are ignorant and racist. Rosa thought it was more about race than language saying, "Even when you know English perfectly and you face someone that just doesn't like your race just doesn't like Mexicans, they're not going to care if you can speak their language perfectly or not" (Interview I2, 2011). Andrea, a native Hispanic, repeated the concerns, "Sometimes they may not understand the language and assume you are talking about them and they feel devalued when someone asks if they can speak English and automatically assume if they cannot, then they do not know anything" (Interview NH4, 2011).

Staff member, Ms. Tafoya, said being able to speak the students' language was an issue of social justice. She said, "It's important to me because we are all one people and whatever help we can give to someone is a positive thing. Again I can only speak for myself because I do know others who don't think the same way" (Interview SS2, 2011). In Mr. Herrera's view, "If I speak their language I can break the language barrier between us, whatever language they may speak" (Interview SS5, 2011). "I feel very valued in my role in

school because I can speak to all students, and make them all feel they are part of the class and the school" was a statement made by Ms. Sena, (Interview SS7, 2011).

Recommendations. Study subjects unknowingly, gave many suggestions for improving bilingual education and instruction in each of the main concepts. Language fluency was one way to connect with immigrant students according to several staff members. Some native Hispanic students wanted to learn Spanish to be able to help those who did not speak the mainstream language. A majority of participants thought racism could be eliminated by educating specifically about culture, ethnicity, and language. Value of bilingual education could be taught by constantly and consistently, providing discussions, materials, presentations, and role models to impress on native New Mexicans and immigrant students if necessary, the beneficial aspects of knowing two languages.

Culture/family. The concept of culture/family emerged from the data early in the research. Participants thought language was an integral part of their culture and family and could not exist separately. Heritage, pride, and roots were three words both student groups, staff members, and parents said were imbedded in their identity and an integral part of the family system. One immigrant student stated it was, in here "the heart", so much a part of him it could not exist in isolation and apart from him.

Parents and family members had great influence on students' perceptions of bilingual education. If parents set high expectations, children set their goals as high or higher. Parental support and involvement were also a big factor in how native Hispanics felt about learning Spanish in a bilingual program. Most cited support for language from families as a motivating factor in their education. Immigrants in particular would never think of opting out of English classes because families would not allow that. Most immigrants did not share the

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opinion that bilingual education was a method for maintaining their culture and ethnicity, but primarily as a vehicle for learning the dominant language, English.

Native New Mexicans' language, in this case the heritage language was a part of the lives of their elders and the family background but not so much for them at this stage of their lives. Knowing Spanish would help them to speak to family members who did not know much English; it was useful to serve as generational bridge to the older members of their families. For them English was their language and the main method they used to communicate. It did not bring out any emotion from them; it was simply a tool.

The words culture and family invoked an emotional reaction in participants because they are the essence of self-identity of who we are as human beings coming from diverse cultural environments. They associated culture and family with pride and heritage.

The subject of culture was of interest to several. One native Hispanic student said she did not know much about her culture and background. Her connection to the past was through her parents and grandparents, rather than through her own knowledge of her cultural identity. Immigrant students especially the newcomers, wanted to learn about other cultures. One mentioned if you live in a certain place you need to know about traditions, holidays and religions. They needed to learn about this because they now lived in America, which had different holidays and traditions.

Samantha, a native Hispanic, had strong opinions about cultural diversity and respecting each other. She observed:

Well culture, like religious things, I think it might be helpful to know like to the point. I would like to know not to say something and offend her about her religion. I think things like that would help. It would help to know that if you don't take their

food, they're offended but not go into a whole detail on culture. And well also maybe holidays, because like English is the biggest spoken language in the world and that would be helpful for them to know that. (Interview NH9, 2011)

Recommendations. Suggestions included using a subject like New Mexico history to motivate students to be proud of their heritage and see the benefits. An immigrant student thought parents needed to stand up against language and culture loss and not allow that to happen; his parents would never allow that. One parent proposed inviting parents and elders to discuss their life stories. The suggestion included that they specifically discuss language, culture, and the value for them. School staff repeatedly cited the need for parent support of language programs if programs were to survive and thrive and providing activities for parents was one way to gather support.

Native Hispanic students thought teaching cultural history and incorporating multicultural education would infuse pride and value for everyone's ancestry and roots. Another said connecting language to culture might help increase interest. This is repeated in studies that tie heritage language to ancestors and extended families, making them rich with family and community connections (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

One teacher, Ms. Chavez, recommended:

Bilingual programs should teach the cultural history of the Spanish language so that the students understand where it came from and how it has become common today in our world and state. Also most schools are implementing time to teach Spanish as well because of the importance of learning a second language such as Spanish, especially living in a state that has become more populated with a Spanish speaking population. What students think about their home language depends on what level

they are at. Different levels think differently. At elementary, they are more

cooperative but as they go up more levels, they become less and less. Middle school

kids change attitudes, and in high school, they are really not positive. They see it as

work they don't want to do. They don't need it and don't want it; they don't see it at

all. They may not see the language as useful and they may not care one way or

another if their language is used. (Interview SS6, 2011)

A difference in cultures sometimes increased tension because individuals did not

share an understanding of one another. Several participants were of the opinion that a goal of

bilingual education should be to teach respect and appreciation for other cultures.

Meaning of language. Most native Hispanic students, parents, and staff, discussed

the loss of the home language and the lack of knowledge of roots by these students. Some of

the students themselves understood the importance of language to their parents and

grandparents in relation to their heritage but they did not connect that to themselves. Some

spoke about their Spanish-speaking grandparents, and other family members, and the desire

to learn Spanish just so they could communicate with them. These students had little or no

contact with the elders, which was attributed to not being able to understand each other.

Language as a generational bridge had ceased to exist for them.

Immigrant students in contrast, expressed the love they had for their primary

language. Most said they would never lose their Spanish and moreover, their parents would

never allow that, a comment the parents repeated. They also suggested that native Hispanics

needed to learn Spanish because their heritage should be important to them also. They talked

about the ability to communicate in both English and Spanish and how it eased tensions and

erased language barriers that could lead to racial confrontation. Being able to understand

what others were saying was sometimes a weakness because you could understand everything, including what they say about you. However, they said if others knew you could understand, they hesitated to talk about you.

Immigrant students desire to learn English overwhelmingly overrides the attitudes they see displayed by native Hispanics, most of whom have little desire to learn Spanish. Research has found that immigrants are most positive toward education and as a result outperform native-born students, in bilingual education, even when the native-born students are more proficient in the dominant language (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Staff discussed attitudes of students toward language, influenced by parents and other students. Students talked about attitudes of other students as well as attitudes of staff. All discussed concerns in reference to districts and schools demonstrating support or lack of reflected by investing in and promoting bilingual programs. To them this indicated the meaning of language was unimportant to the administration and community at some schools.

Recommendations. Language meaning and bilingual instruction was different for the two groups of students. Main points made by all participants cited the need to turn around attitudes where language instruction was concerned. Immigrant students noticed disruptions and resistance and felt every day in school for them, was a huge opportunity. They wanted school officials to take a stand against the behavior. Staff members described how attitudes determined whether instruction was possible and effective and attitudes had to change.

Instructional staff said family support for bilingual education was a strong indicator of motivated students. Support meant good parents who were involved and who valued bilingual education programs. Regardless of which ethnic group they represent, parents had to require that their children be responsible.

Comments about native Hispanic parents not caring about language programs were made several times, by staff, students, and parents. Although some parents did want programs, others did not and saw it as an impediment to English proficiency. Staff members felt the only way that would be changed was to re-educate parents about the importance of knowing two languages and most importantly remembering their roots. Most staff strongly believed in acculturating not assimilating and believed students could be bicultural.

Family support was integral to student success in all subjects especially one so connected to one's personal background as language. Parental involvement was also a commentary in several staff interviews but not regarded as essential as it is in elementary. They did feel it would help teachers and students if parents came into classrooms. Staff member, Ms. Tafoya said, "Everyone has to provide help for students so they can do well, whether it be motivation, special programs, financial help; whatever, but everyone has to be involved with students and parent support is the most important"(Interview SS2, 2011).

According to most participants, parents of immigrant students were supportive of bilingual education and primarily depended on it to teach their children English. Students and staff indicated for immigrants, bilingual education was essential to successful integration into American culture. Staff and student group members suggested family members could be brought into schools to help teach language. Parents and grandparents could come in as volunteers to teach culture and traditions along with language, and serve as mentors.

Relationship of language to future aspirations. Students in bilingual education programs planned their future just as any other students. Students, parents, and staff cited various aspects of employment as a valuable benefit in bilingual education and a great influence on the need to learn another language. Opportunity, higher income, and enhanced

career opportunities related to fluency in two languages. Some native Hispanic students were interested in specific careers where bilingualism was an added bonus such as translation and education. Students thought about their future when they were told bilingual teachers were in short supply and most schools paid an added increment for a certified teacher.

Students had plans to become teachers, criminologists, bilingual disc jockeys, psychologists, mechanics, college professors, nurses, artists, fashion designers, dental hygienists, work in banks or businesses, work in the airlines, join the military, and just "be somebody- un grande". All of them affirmed the benefits of knowing two languages with fluency. They all said they would be able to do their jobs more efficiently especially because of the large numbers of immigrants that make up New Mexico's population.

Immigrant students stressed the critical need to learn English to help others in their ethnic group by translating and conducting business for those who cannot speak Spanish. They expressed the willingness to help family, friends, and co-workers with translations.

English language fluency could help students get better jobs and enhanced future career opportunities with higher salaries. The need was different for the two student groups. For immigrants being able to communicate in two languages was perceived as a great advantage. Native Hispanics agreed that knowing two languages was useful when applying for jobs in areas with large immigrant populations but not necessary for them at this time.

Native Hispanics mentioned the growing immigrant population in New Mexico and the need to be able to serve them. This was one reason some native Hispanics gave for trying to learn to speak Spanish at their high school or later in college. One thought she should try to get into a community college class to learn Spanish because she thought that would provide a more structured method. Another student wanted to be a teacher and did not want

to exclude any student in her classes because of not being able to speak the student's language. She may have experienced exclusion in school since many of her classmates were immigrants. She recognized that others being excluded would produce the same feelings she had felt.

Recommendations. Suggestions and recommendations for this concept are embedded throughout the data from interviews by the participants themselves. When they indicated what their plans for the future they had thought out how they would meet their expectations. The ideas included attending community colleges, vocational schools, and universities. Participating in job skills training was another method that could be utilized to meet personal goals. After school tutoring sessions would be an excellent way to receive one to one instruction in any subject and in either language. Peer group support and teamwork strategy in the classroom would help students improve language skills. Providing many opportunities to practice the language in classes and in social situations is another way to enhance second language knowledge.

Implications for Educators

Why are bilingual programs a topic worth investigating? The answer may lie in other questions:

- What programs are model programs that demonstrate English language learners can achieve proficiency?
- Is there any data that can tie student proficiency to bilingual education programs?
- Can these programs be replicated and how?

Along with these questions, come more. What are some of the problems educators are encountering in implementation of programs? Are programs failing because of relaxation of

standards, student enrollment, untrained staff, institutional conditions, or insufficient funding? Is there a need for change aligned to current educational innovations tailored for local students?

Studies indicate education is the single most effective way to integrate the growing population of Hispanics into the US economy and society. Research (Gándara & Contreras, 2009) indicates there are a disproportionate number of English language learners and minority students in schools not meeting AYP and shows English language learners are underserved in many ways among those are:

- They attend schools where facilities, conditions, and overcrowding are worse than in middle-income schools

- Teachers have less training and receive little instruction in working with English language learners

- Inadequate books, materials, and assessments fail to meet the needs of English language learners

- Time required for correct placement cuts short the academic year

- Daily instruction is ineffective because there is little explanation causing a lack of understanding of the lesson

- They do not have the opportunity to have a teacher who speaks their native language. (p. 31)

Specific recommendation for practitioners. A bilingual education program that would incorporate the major findings of this study would not be so different from what current program design requires. However, all the elements would undergo a transformation

towards improvement and meeting the objective of producing fluent language speakers of

both English and Spanish relevant to their cultural heritage. They include:

- Consistent full immersion in the target language of instruction

- Methodological, sequential, and culturally responsive program

- Parental choice with placement and instruction

- Training in culturally relevant approaches

- Implementation of programs with fidelity

- Staff training in intensive program with periodic follow up.

- Staff training in language fluency and ESL

- Knowledge and fluency in native language by instructional staff

- Classroom population -50% English and 50% Spanish to provide peer support

- Engaging representatives of all groups in planning and developing

- Clear vision and goals within a theoretical framework

- Respect for multiple realities, sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences, and
  incorporating cultural history to elevate value of language

- Sufficient amount of materials with progressive levels of instruction

- Relevant to the specific ethnic group

- Textbooks, resources, and equipment available and appropriate to culture and grade
  level

- Voluntary choice to participant in program aligned with assessment data

- Sequential and relevant curriculum

- Fit the model of bilingual education used in New Mexico

The ideal program would remove the biggest obstacle in language instruction according to most students in this study, the small amount of time spent in classrooms where students were required to speak the language. Critical elements to be incorporated are positive and consistent immersion in the language of instruction and providing extensive opportunities for modeling and practicing. Immigrants adamantly complained about not being required to speak the target language in their bilingual classes. Students said they needed the practice but they were not given the opportunity.

This was an atypical response when you review literature that says language instruction must be in the students' native language for five to seven years while providing some subjects in English or sheltered English, before transitioning fully into English (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Students in this study disagreed with that, especially immigrant students who said they needed to practice all the time and made many suggestions for instructional methods. Native Hispanic students also mentioned the lack of practical interaction they have had in speaking Spanish in their bilingual classes.

This is supported by studies in Gándara and Contreras (2009) that discovered that language students were only able to use the target language for less than ten minutes in a four-hour block (p. 126). The studies concluded that not only is the school day a small amount of time in a child's life but the amount of time for interaction in the language of instruction is very limited within that day. This concern was echoed many times by both groups of students.

A recent New Mexico study indirectly concluded that as well. This was reflected by the finding that native Hispanic students lack fluency in Spanish despite the many years in bilingual programs (NMLFC, 2009). In other studies (Smiley & Salsberry, 2007),

opportunities for practice is at the bottom of lists of effective instructional practices. Gersten (1999) maintains bilingual educators are shifting their focus to more instruction in the target language citing several studies indicate English language learners are learning academic English in less time than previously thought. Gersten (1999) also noted parents thought they should have a choice and instruction should capitalize on discussion and communication as instructional strategies.

Because of the large amount of repetitive data collected around this theme, this would be the first and foremost instructional strategy required in a bilingual program aligned within this study. Using the target language for most of the school day is the basis of a two-way immersion model (Smiley & Salsberry, 2007). The sole use of the target language in class is the closest a secondary school can come to having a full immersion design that still fits into course requirements and schedules. Full immersion instruction in the form of dual language is the most effective oral language development model in place in the US today (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

It is well documented that schools with high Latino populations have less resources, are more crowded, have staff with less experience, and as a result more underachievers because of an inequitable education (Murillo et al., 2010). In many states, bilingual programs are designed as resource room/pull out programs due to the lack of qualitative staff. In New Mexico, qualified staff is not as much an issue as is training. A large part of that training should be in the use of culturally relevant approaches and implementation of programs with fidelity (Smiley & Salsberry, 2007).

Staff must be provided sustained, consistent, and practice oriented professional development. In the eyes of staff and parents, a good program would give good teachers

more time to teach, within a methodological, sequential, and culturally responsive program. One request from staff was that they should be trained in an intensive program with periodic follow up. The training needs to include language fluency as well. Study participants agreed that all instructional staff working with particular ethnic groups should be able to speak or at least understand the native language. Immigrant students complained about some teachers not being able to explain the lesson and assignments so that students could complete the work correctly. Mr. Martínez, said, "Teachers need to learn to speak Spanish to lower the affective filter of Spanish speaking students. Teaching concepts in their own language is more easily comprehended and they learn better if we value prior knowledge" (Interview SS9, 2011).

Another less important concern was the composition of classroom population. An ideal classroom would be populated similar to a dual language program with 50% English speakers and 50% Spanish speakers to provide peer support. One Hispanic parent thought there should be an 80-20 population; the larger percentage would be English speakers.

A factor that concerned staff and parents was that the program would be tailored to the specific group participating. Designing a program would engage all players in the planning and developing stages. Mr. Herrera described his theory,

A complete program must include a natural, methodical, sequential approach to second language acquisition that takes into account both academic and social language and allows students to risk take in both of these avenues through consistent oral and written language production. All successful programs implement the above concepts. This type of language program builds upon prior knowledge, consistently challenges students with a high degree of rigor, both methodical and random with

respect to language acquisition. This is a humanistic approach that never under

estimates but rather empowers the students. Included must be a planning state with

involvement of all stakeholders. (Interview SS5, 2011).

A clear vision and goals within a theoretical framework would be priority as

specifically expressed by Ms. Sena, a staff member, who said:

Any combination of language programs methods or instructional strategies work

effectively in teaching native language or for ESL, if the teacher understands the

theoretical framework of teaching students who speak a language other than English

and if the teacher engages students in learning experiences that are culturally relevant

and go hand in hand with mainstream learning experiences. It is important that the

teacher discuss similarities and differences between them – culturally and

linguistically. In addition, when language-learning experiences are provided in a

research based culturally sensitive manner bilingual native language programs help

students bridge their personal life experiences and gifts to ultimately learning how to

communicate and learn in English. Yes, there is a definite relationship between

proficiency in the home language and proficiency in school subjects. (Interview SS7,

2011)

The program must respect multiple realities, be sensitive to cultural and linguistic

differences, and teach cultural history to elevate the value of language. Another quote from

Mr. Herrera describes this:

Quality alternative language programs enhance ideally, the depth and ease of literacy

development in English for English language learners. This in turn serves as the

bridge to second language acquisition in a powerful and meaningful way. In addition,

a quality ESL program dedicates itself to culture and language sensitivity while at the same time building upon social and academic English language development. (Interview SS5, 2011)

An effective program must have a sufficient amount of materials with progressive levels of instruction relevant to the specific ethnic group. Textbooks, resources and equipment would be available and appropriate for the culture as well as grade level. Former teacher Mr. Martínez, and now bilingual coordinator and counselor said:

In my experience, there have been some materials available. Sometimes the levels are not appropriate; they are either too easy and don't challenge students or too hard, made for students who know Spanish or English already. But if you approach your colleagues sometimes they can give you some. Definitely not as much as for any other course. Math, English, social studies, and science have many textbooks as well as supplementals but Spanish and bilingual education is lacking in appropriateness for students' culture and instructional levels. (Interview SS9, 2011)

Native Hispanic students complained they did not want to continue to receive the same lessons from first grade to twelfth grade. They explained they were taught numbers, colors, and days of the week every year they were in a bilingual program. Immigrant students criticized computer based language programs that did not provide sequential, advanced levels and thus were no challenge. Bilingual and ESL instruction would be integrated to address educational objectives for both English language learner and non-English language learner students. To this end, a sequential and relevant curriculum is fundamental, and it must be adaptable to be applicable for each student group whose requirements differ greatly.

Another big issue from students was having choice. Students thought mandatory placement in classes should be replaced by voluntary choice and they should be allowed to choose whether they want to be enrolled in bilingual education or any other class. This came mostly from native Hispanics. Amanda said:

> Students should be placed in a program if their English proficiency is really low, then maybe yes it should be their choice and parents' choice for one and also educational understanding. If they are not understanding in English, they should be accommodated so they won't fall behind. If their English proficiency is not low then maybe it, yes, it should be their choice and their parents' choice. (Interview NH3, 2011)

Student Christine agreed and said, "Volunteer and only if you want to be there" (Interview NH1, 2011). Susie said, "Both the school and you should decide where you have to go, what you have to take because if the school puts you in there you still have to be volunteering to do your work" (Interview NH8, 2011). One immigrant student, Rosa, contributed her thoughts on the question:

> I think that, I think it's better when you volunteer for something because you don't feel like it's an obligation and you want to learn it. You know, if I volunteer to want to learn it, I would do really good. There kids that don't want to be there. Probably because you know, as when you are learning something new you kinda have to be taught slowly so sometimes as a person you are going to say oh, they are taking me as an idiot, because they are talking to me slowly. But maybe sometimes that may be discouraging like not because you are being treated like an idiot. It's just I mean,

they have to teach you slowly and they have to be patient for you to be able to learn

it. I guess it just depends on the person. (Interview I2, 2011)

The observation was reiterated by school staff who said it was difficult to teach when students did not want to be there. The issue of choice also influences attitudes of students in programs. Other students and parents had the opinion that guidance should be provided by school staff and the final decision should be in the hands of students and their parents. One parent said it should be required because students do not realize how necessary it is until later on in life as he/she did.

Participants voiced many beliefs about what elements would support the learning of language for both groups of Hispanic students. The groups shared some of the patterns and themes and also had a variety of others. The following table lists the elements.

Table 11

Patterns and Themes Emerging in Support of Language Success

School Staff	Students	Parents
Parent Support	Positive Influence of Family	Strong Family Support
Value for Heritage Language	No Pullout Programs	Connection to Past
Student Motivation	Multicultural Education	Positive Parent Attitude
Articulated Program	Value for Bilingualism	Support for Programs
Committed School and District	School Commitment	Value for Bilingualism
Parent Involvement	Student Motivation -"Ganas"	Committed Staff
Parent Educational and Income Level	Quality Curriculum	Qualified Staff
Focus on Cultural Pride	Unbiased Instruction	Tutoring
Teacher Commitment	Teacher Commitment	Committed School and District
Teacher Fluency	Teacher Fluency	Culturally Relevant Materials
University Preparation	Goal of Proficiency	Belief in Language as Carrier of Heritage, Culture, Traditions and Religion
Community Support	Respectful Environment	
ESL Courses for all staff	Appropriate Level Instruction	
Small Classes or More Staff	Cultural Pride	
Textbooks, Materials Equipment and supplies	Interesting and Adequate Materials	
Tutoring and Other Resources	Tutoring Programs	
Inclusion not Pull Outs	Acceptance of Cultural Diversity	
Focus on Communication	Progressive level of instruction	

All of the elements participants provided as ideal to a bilingual education program that have emerged from this study have to fit the model of bilingual education used in New Mexico. The program requires native language instruction for state financial support, something unheard of in most states. If New Mexico can do that, then anything is possible. Change can come if we challenge the existing instructional framework to be more accountable to the needs of our New Mexico student populations, who are as unique as our funding structure.

Suggestions for Additional Research

My hope is that the findings from this study extend beyond into the future and set the foundation for new research. One thing to think about is the message from immigrant students, unlike native Hispanics, that they want to retain their cultural uniqueness but still blend into American culture. A future possible research question might investigate why, only recently, have native Hispanics begun to lose their cultural attachment when it had survived for hundreds of years. Additionally will the same thing happen to newcomers as well? Will it also take hundreds of years or will it take place in much less time?

Conclusions

The study also provided several conclusions resulting from convincing data; evidence to guide changes that must occur to improve language instruction programs relevant to at least one school, and possibly provide a starting point for others similar in population and structure. Significant statements that developed from the results are:

- Every element of a language instruction program has an impact on students and their academic success including instructional methods, teaching strategies and materials, instructional staff, and attitudes of all involved.

- The ability to communicate in two languages helps students translate for others, eliminates cultural barriers, and provides a bridge between generations.

- Employment and all the benefits associated with it is one advantage of being a part of a successful bilingual education instructional plan and needs to be emphasized continually.

- Language programs and their relation to ethnicity/culture link students to their past, strengthen family ties and values, maintain cultural and religious heritage, and aid in connecting with others who speak the same language.

- Parents and family are key factors in the success of students in language programs especially in the areas of support and involvement, influence on students, and setting high expectations for their child.

A study by the National Research Council (August & Hakuta, 1998) on improving student learning through strategic plans that utilize education research, says the nation has made a huge social and financial investment in education and education research, but has failed to utilize it with scientific rigor or quality control. Utilization of the research would empower students; serve as a bridge from prior knowledge, and challenge students with a high degree of rigor in a humanistic approach.

In our future endeavors as educators especially for those students who are underserved, we must continue to seek out exemplary practices and implement them with fidelity and commitment. We must focus on sustainable change to improve the educational experience with a clear mission of being responsive to minority students in New Mexico, opening pathways, and building bridges of hope. Students must not just survive but they must

thrive and end their struggles with academic achievement. In the words of Muñoz and García (in Murillo et al., 2010):

> We conclude that educational programs, initiatives, strategies, and policies that assist Latino students and attend to their language and culture be Respectful, Responsive, Responsible, Resourceful and Reasonable. . . Educational policies and practices that respect who Latino students are, respond directly with a sound knowledge base, hold themselves responsible for academic outcomes, and provide for and maximize new and existing resources organized in ways that are reasonable can make a real difference. We need no more excuses and enough is enough (p. 279; p. 283).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Informed Consent/Assent Form

ATTACHMENT B- INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT
The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB
Consent to Participate in Research

ENDING THE STRUGGLE:
BILINGUAL & ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS &
STUDENT SUCCESS IN NEW MEXICO

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Phyllis S. Martinez, who is the Principal Investigator from the Department of Educational Leadership. This research is studying the impact of language programs, methods, and materials used, and what students, parents, and school personnel think about programs and their cultural and linguistic impact.

This study is new and has not been previously conducted.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your experience as a participant in a bilingual or alternative language program. Approximately 25 to 35 people will be taking part in this study at Española High School, Española, New Mexico.

This form will explain the research study and will explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask the Principal Investigator.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

You will be contacted by the Principal Investigator to arrange a convenient time and location for a two meetings, a focus group interview and a personal interview. The interviews will take approximately one to one and one half hours and may be followed by correspondence concerning points of clarification. The interviews will be audio taped and only the Principal Investigator will have access. Before the interview, you will be presented with this Consent Form and the contents will be reviewed with you prior to beginning any interview questions.

How long will I be in the study?

Participation in the study will take a total of one to three hours over a period of 1-3 days.

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APPROVED: 9/15/11	OFFICIAL USE ONLY	EXPIRES: 9/14/12
UNM	Human Research Protections Office	
The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (HRRC/MCIRB)		

What are the risks of being in this study?

- There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks, ask the study investigator.

What are the benefits to being in this study?

There will be no benefits to you from participation in the study. However, it is hoped that the information acquired from this study will help gain an understanding of the relationship between language programs and student academic performance from the perspectives of school staff, students, and parents.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

Participation is voluntary and you may choose against participation in the study. You also have the right to withdraw your participation at any point in the study without any consequences.

How will my information be kept confidential?

We will take measures to protect your privacy and the security of all your personal information. Your name and personal identifiers will be deleted from the final notes of the study and, at no time, will your name or organizational affiliation be listed in the final publication. All references to specific schools or individuals by name will be eliminated from the recorded notes and final publication.

Information contained in the study will be only be used by Phyllis S. Martinez, Principal Investigator. The University of New Mexico IRB that oversees human subject research may be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

All documents will be secured in separate locked cabinets. Consent documents will be separated from research materials to ensure responses and identity cannot be connected. Signed documents will not be copied and will remain in their original form.

What are the costs of taking part in the study?

There are no costs to you for participation in this study.

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Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

There is no payment to you for participation in this study.

How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating. At all times you have the right to withdraw at any point in the study.

Can I stop being in the study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting any other circumstances.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Phyllis S. Martinez   or Dr. Alicia Chavez   will be glad to answer them at the phone numbers provided or by e-mail at   If you need to contact someone after business hours or on weekends, please call

        and ask for Phyllis S. Martinez. If you would like to speak with someone other than these persons in regards to any complaints you have about the study, you may call UNM IRB at   -

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call UNM IRB
        The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at
http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/HRRC/maincampusirbhome.shtml

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Consent

You are making a decision whether to participate (or to have your child participate) in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your (or your child's) legal rights as a research subject.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. I understand a copy of this consent form will be provided to me.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Subject (print)   Signature of Subject   Date

Child Assent
You are making a decision whether to participate. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you).

_____   _____/_____
Name of Child Subject   Signature of Child Subject/Date

_____   _____/_____
Name of Parent/Child's Legal Guardian   Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian/Date

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE
I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

_____
Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix B

Student Interview Questions – Individual and Group

STUDENTS: This interview is being conducted to gain an understanding of the relationship between bilingual education and student academic performance. I am very interested in your opinions as a student and your experiences in/with bilingual education programs. I will read the questions and explain. If you have any questions please feel free to ask. Take your time and think about the answers. Do not worry about saying what you think. There are no names involved in this and only I know what you are responding. If you feel better writing the answers you can do so on the back (no name). There are no right or wrong answers and all opinions are very important to the research.

1.   What grade are you in? What do you want to do when you graduate?

2.   Do you think bilingual can help you with that?

3.   Why are you in a bilingual program?

4.   How important are bilingual education programs? Why?

5.   What or who has had the most positive influence on you in relation to bilingual education? Why?

6.   Can you speak another language? Which? Can you speak fluently? How did you learn it?

7.   What are some of the best ways used to teach in bilingual education?

8.   How has bilingual education helped you? Has it helped you with English?

9.   Describe your bilingual education materials. Enough? Useful? Variety? Interesting?

10. Along with language should bilingual programs teach culture? Why?

11. How should students be placed in bilingual education? Why? (volunteer, placement based on what criteria)

12. Does being in a bilingual program make you feel different? How? Why?

13. What do your parents think about bilingual education? Why? Have they been involved?

14. Do you think language relates to any problems at school? How? Why?

15. How important is the speaking of Spanish for Hispanic students? Why? What are some benefits?

16. How important is it for other students from Native American or Anglo backgrounds? Why?

17. What can schools do to help students do well in school?

18. What can families do to help students do well? What about communities?

19. Do you have anything else about bilingual education that you would like to talk about?

Appendix C

Student Interview Questions – Spanish Speaking Students

ESTUDIANTES:
En esta entrevista quero sus opiniones entre la educación bilingüe y el académico. Estoy muy interesada en sus opiniones como estudiante. Voy a leer las preguntas y explicaciones. Si tiene cualquier pregunta no dude en preguntarme. Tómese su tiempo y pensar en las respuestas. No te preocupes por decir lo que piensas. No hay nombres en esto y sólo yo sé lo que usted está respondiendo. Si se siente mejor puede escribir las respuestas. Piense acerca de sus experiencias en programas de educación bilingüe y responder a lo que usted piensa. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas, y todas las opiniones son muy importantes para la investigación.

1. ¿En qué grado estás? ¿Qué es lo que quieres hacer cuando te gradúes?

2. ¿Cree usted que bilingüe puede ayudar con eso?

3. ¿Por qué estás en un programa bilingüe?

4. ¿Qué importancia tienen los programas de educación bilingüe? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Qué o quién ha tenido la influencia más positiva sobre usted en relación a la educación bilingüe? ¿Por qué?

6. ¿Puedes hablar otro idioma? ¿Qué? ¿Puedes hablar con fluidez? ¿Cómo aprendenites?

7. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las mejores maneras para enseñar en la educación bilingüe?

8. ¿Cómo ha sido que la educación bilingüe te ha ayudado? ¿Te ha ayudado en Inglés?

9. Digame de sus materiales de educación bilingüe. Suficiente? Útil? Variedad? Interesante?

10. Junto con el lenguaje es que los programas bilingües enseñan la cultura? ¿Por qué?

11. ¿Cómo deberían los estudiantes ser colocados en la educación bilingüe? ¿Por qué? (voluntarios, la colocación sobre la base de qué criterios)

12. ¿Es ques en estar en un programa bilingüe se siente usted diferente? ¿Cómo? ¿Por qué?

13. ¿Qué piensan tus padres sobre la educación bilingüe? ¿Por qué? Han estado involucrados?

14. ¿Cree usted que el lenguaje se relaciona con problemas en la escuela? ¿Cómo? ¿Por qué?

15. ¿Qué tan importante es el que habla de español para estudiantes hispanos? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles son algunos de los beneficios?

16. ¿Qué tan importante es para otros estudiantes de orígenes nativos americanos o anglosajones? ¿Por qué?

17. ¿Qué pueden hacer las escuelas para ayudar a los estudiantes hacer bien en la escuela?

18. ¿Qué pueden hacer las familias para ayudar a los estudiantes hacer bien? ¿E las comunidades?

19. ¿Tienes algo más sobre la educación bilingüe que te gustaría hablar?

Appendix D

School Staff Interview Questions – Individual and Group

SCHOOL STAFF:
This interview is being conducted to gain an understanding of the relationship between bilingual education and student academic performance. I am very interested in your opinions as a staff member and your experiences in/with bilingual education programs. I will read the questions and explain. If you have any questions please feel free to ask. Please relax, take your time and think about the answers. Do not worry about saying what you think. There are no names involved in this and only I know what you are responding. If you feel better writing the answers you can do so on the back (no name). There are no right or wrong answers and all opinions are very important to the research.

1. What is your role in bilingual education?

2. How important is that role to you? Why? To others? Why?

3. What are the characteristics of effective bilingual education programs? Why?

4. How do language programs help or hinder students academically? Why? How do they impact literacy?

5. How do you think those who do not speak the dominant language feel? Why?

6. What countries are represented in your school enrollment? What is majority?

7. Do you need to speak Spanish to communicate in school? Is it important? Why?

8. Do universities adequately prepare teachers for teaching bilingual education? Why?

9. Give your perception of materials available for bilingual education programs? Available, adequate, appropriate, interesting, useful, other?

10. In your experience what methods, strategies, materials, other (used by yourself or others) have proven to be excellent in improving bilingual education program effectiveness? Why?

11. From your experience what do students think about bilingual education programs?

12. How do students perceive their home language in the classroom during instruction?

13. What do you think makes students academically successful in schools? Why/how?

14. How can schools make students more successful? Families? Communities?

15. What patterns or themes identify successful students from minority groups?

16. Would you like to add anything else regarding bilingual education and language programs

Appendix E

Parent Interview Questions – Individual and Group

PARENTS:

This interview is being conducted to gain an understanding of the relationship between bilingual education and student academic performance. I am very interested in your opinions as a parent and your experiences in/with bilingual education programs. I will read the questions and explain. If you have any questions please feel free to ask. Please relax, take your time and think about the answers. Do not worry about saying what you think. There are no names involved in this and only I know what you are responding. If you feel better writing the answers you can do so on the back (no name). There are no right or wrong answers and all opinions are very important to the research.

1. What can you tell me about your childhood and elementary school?

2. What is your highest education level –ES, MS, HS, or Higher Education?

3. Do you speak your native/heritage language at home to your children? To your spouse? Friends? Family members? And what for? (stories, family communication, etc)

4. How do you feel about bilingual education classes for your children? Beneficial and how? Are you involved? How do you motivate him/her to learn?

5. How does the district support bilingual education? Can you give examples?

6. What has your child learned in bilingual classes? Has he/she learned to speak English or Spanish? What language does he/she use to speak to you? Would you be concerned if he/she didn't learn the home language?

7. What do you think is the biggest problem with bilingual education classes? (Materials, school/district support, finances, time, tutoring, use of language, community support)? you think (know)

8. Does your child like being in bilingual class and how do you know?

9. What is the best about your child being in a bilingual class? What is worst?

10. How can your child's education be improved so that he/she will be academically successful? (learning language, English, etc)?

11. What kind of work do you do?