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University of Nevada, Reno

ELL Practices from Teachers' Perspectives within a Two-way Immersion Program

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science in Integrated Elementary Education with a Specialization in English as a
Second Language and Early Childhood and the Honors Program

by

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**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, INTEGRATED ELEMENTARY EDUCATION WITH A
SPECIALIZATION IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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Abstract

Northern Nevada has a growing number of English Language Learners entering its school districts. As a result, teachers must find and use the best practices and techniques to teach these students. In this thesis, best practices are defined as “a set of guidelines, ethics or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action” (Best Practices, 2013). This thesis examines the English Language Learner (ELL) practices of three teachers and the principal at Green Academy. Each of the participants spoke on three common themes. The interviewee’s responses fell under the themes of the overall supportive practices, the importance of students, and the overall language and literacy practices. This research benefits teachers searching for appropriate and effective practices to use in the classroom with their ELLs. This thesis examines the perspectives of the teachers and principal within a two-way immersion school to determine the strategies that they argued were most effective in teaching their English Language Learners language and literacy.

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Introduction

Educating children within the United States and more particularly those in Nevada is of the utmost importance to creating a brighter and more prosperous future for the students and for the country. Looking closely at today's students, it is evident that there is great variation among them. The children that enter the schools of this nation do so with a range of cultural, familial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, a number of students enter school speaking very little English. One way that schools have found to support students whose home language is not English, also known as English Language Learners, is to offer additional instructional support.

Webster and Chunlei (2012) defined the English Language Learner (ELL) as a student who is a "language [learner] in the novice stages of English language development, in comparison to same-grade peers, for academic purposes in the schooling context" (p. 83-84). According to the National Institute for Education Statistics (2012), in the year 2010-2011, 9.8 percent of the national total student population participated in ELL programs. With nearly a tenth of the entire student-population of the United States comprised of children who do not speak English as their first language, it is essential to provide these children with adequate support in the classroom. Nevada itself must work to improve its English Language Learner (ELL) programs, as 19.4 percent of the Nevadan student population needs language-based services (National Institute for Education Statistics, 2012). Due to the rise in ELLs (National Institute for Education Statistics, 2012), a variety of programs have been developed to allow students to integrate into U.S. school systems, and to become proficient in the English language as they learn other content areas (Honigsfeld, 2009).

However, like all aspects of education, ELL programs vary in style and intensity (Honigsfeld, 2009). Despite the costs, one of the most effective programs that allows a child to

become proficient in not only English but also a second language, two-way immersion, gives students the most academic and linguistic benefits (Honigsfeld, 2009). According to Honigsfeld (2009), a two-way immersion program is defined as a classroom where “one or two teachers use both the native language and English in approximately equal amounts of time” to teach the students in their academic subjects (p. 110).

Two-way immersion is considered a balanced program because children receive instruction in both their native language and in a second language but at separate times (Honigsfeld, 2009). The day, timed schedule, subject matter, or teacher could determine specific instruction in each language (Honigsfeld, 2009). This type of program attempts to help children become bilingual in both English and another language (Honigsfeld, 2009). Despite the success associated with the two-way immersion method of teaching when working with ELLs (Honigsfeld, 2009), there is little research that examines the perspectives of teachers within these classrooms.

The research conducted in this study consists of describing the ELL practices used by teachers in a two-way immersion program. Interviews were conducted at a small two-way immersion elementary school, Green Academy, located in Northern Nevada. The charter school teaches students in both Spanish and English. Green Academy made Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2012-2013 school year; demonstrating that their students made adequate academic gains as measured by English only assessments. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is defined as “the requirement under the No Child Left Behind legislation for schools and districts to show annual improvement towards Federal goals in a number of areas. These [areas] range from teachers' qualifications to students' test scores” (Adequate Yearly Progress, 2013). Through the interviews of three teachers and the principal, I determined the particular practices that these teachers used

to make AYP. During the interviews, participants were asked to share the practices used in their reading and writing instruction, and the strategies taught to students to allow the student-body to be effective speakers in both Spanish and English. This study examines the teachers' perspectives of effective language, literacy, and participation strategies in a two-way-immersion program with supporting communication from the principal.

The results contain similarities and differences among the actual techniques that each of the teachers used. This study is significant because it moves beyond describing effective strategies and provides the insight of teachers actually using these practices. This thesis examines the perspectives of the teachers and principal within a two-way immersion school to determine the strategies that they argued were most effective in teaching their English Language Learners language and literacy.

Literature Review

Based on the various ELL programs presently used throughout the country (Honigsfeld, 2009), determining the most effective program for students success in language and literacy is necessary for this study. A review of past studies indicates that two-way immersion programs result in higher levels of achievement in language and core subject matter, including math and reading, when compared to English-only programs (Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass 2005). This literature review begins with a comparison of English-Spanish bilingual education programs to English-only programs. The review then discusses several forms of bilingual education and establishes the two-way immersion program as the most effective method of bilingual education in terms of producing individuals with proficiency in two languages and producing academic success in the other core curriculum subjects. Finally, specific ELL teaching strategies and best practices are discussed in terms of reading, language, and participation. In this thesis, best

practices are defined as “a set of guidelines, ethics or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action” (Best Practices, 2013).

Bilingual Education versus English-only Programs

Over the years, research has been collected on the effectiveness of various ELL programs. In a meta-analysis of program effectiveness research on ELLs, Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass (2005) analyzed the results from 17 previous studies that each examined achievement test scores of English Language Learners in bilingual school settings and compared those students to an English-only or English as a Second Language instruction setting. The test scores of each study, whose outcome measures were derived from standardized testing, were used to determine which programs for ELL children were most effective (Rolstad et al., 2005).

To understand how the students learned in each of these settings, Rolstad et al. (2005) defined the following terms. Transitional bilingual education was a program where the child’s native language was used until the child no longer required the language in order to function normally within the classroom setting and can simply use English (Rolstad et al., 2005). As the child gained English, the use of the native language was gradually phased out of the classroom setting (Rolstad et al., 2005). The other type of bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, was defined as “programs designed to develop academic use of both languages for children with a minority language” (Rolstad et al., 2005, p. 591). English as a Second Language (ESL) based instruction was defined as a setting in which students spent most of their day within the general English-only classroom, but had a period each day in which they received instruction on learning English in a more concentrated setting (Rolstad et al., 2005).

By comparing the results of each study of ELLs in the two types of settings, Rolstad et al. (2005) determined that “bilingual education [was] more beneficial for ELL students than all-

English approaches such as ESL and [standard instruction]” as the students scored higher in math and reading (p. 590). Moreover, they concluded that bilingual education surpassed English-only instruction because it increased students’ achievement in both English and their native languages (Rolstad et al., 2005). Based on the academic testing scores, the study demonstrated the importance of the use of bilingual education in the success of ELL students in terms of academic achievement.

Bilingual Programs

In addition to the variety of programs available in terms of ELL instruction, the title bilingual education also branches into several different programs that vary in style and intensity. Below is a comparison of transitional bilingual education programs, maintenance bilingual programs, and structured immersion programs in terms of ELL academic success (Honigsfeld, 2009).

Honigsfeld (2009) reviewed several previous studies to determine effective programs for ELLs. Honigsfeld (2009) determined that there were several different types of bilingual programs and established the most effective programs in terms of academic achievement. Based on the category bilingual education, she examined the success of transitional bilingual education programs, maintenance bilingual programs, and structured immersion programs to determine which provided ELLs with the most support (Honigsfeld, 2009).

As defined before, transitional bilingual education was a program in which the child received ESL instruction, while being taught in his or her native language. Over time, the instruction moved from the native language to English only (Honigsfeld, 2009). Honigsfeld (2009) defined a maintenance bilingual education program as a program in which children received ELL instruction and regular instruction in both English and their native language.

Instruction in both languages continued even as the child mastered English (Honigsfeld, 2009). Falling under the category of a maintenance bilingual education program, the two-way immersion program was defined as a setting in which the teacher used English during a part of the day and Spanish during a different part of the day (Honigsfeld, 2009). Analyzing previous studies of the transitional bilingual education (Thomas and Collier, 2002) and the maintenance bilingual education, Honigsfeld (2009) determined that student's academic achievement in a transitional bilingual education was lower than that achievement of students within a maintenance bilingual education program.

Dual language immersion program. After determining the maintenance bilingual education to be most effective, Honigsfeld (2009) reviewed several studies that established that dual language programs, also known as two-way immersion programs, was the superior form of maintenance bilingual programs. Dual language programs fell into two categories, minority-language dominant programs and balanced programs (Honigsfeld, 2009). Honigsfeld defined a minority-language program, or 90/10 Two-Way Bilingual Immersion, children received instruction in their native language "for 90 percent ...of the time" (Honigsfeld, 2009, p. 170). In a balanced program, 50/50 Two-Way Bilingual Immersion, instruction time was evenly distributed between English and the minority language (Honigsfeld, 2009). Day, subject, or teacher divided instruction in each language (Honigsfeld, 2009).

Honigsfeld (2009) found after reviewing research that 90/10 Two-Way Immersion (TWI) and 50/50 TWI allowed students to hit the "50th percentile (scoring above 50 percent of the other test takers) in both their native language and English in all subject areas as well as to maintain that level of high achievement" or a higher level by the end of their secondary education (p. 170). In contrast to the students attending a TWI school, the ELL students enrolled in an English

only setting had a decrease in math and reading achievement by grade 5 (Honigsfeld, 2009). By middle school, all children within TWI programs tested at the same levels as those students solely working in English or ESL based instruction (Honigsfeld, 2009). By high school, all TWI participants surpassed the English-only students in reading achievement (Honigsfeld, 2009). Honigsfeld concluded that various programs worked for various types of school settings. However, according to her results, TWI gave students the most benefits in terms of both language acquisition and academic achievement (Honigsfeld, 2009).

In a similar study, Marian, Shook, and Schroeder (2013) found that minority-language and majority-language students in TWI programs outperformed students in transitional programs and monolingual programs in math and reading achievement in the elementary years through a cross-sectional study of 2,009 students in third, fourth, and fifth grade (Marian et al., 2013). The study looked at Spanish-speaking students who were part of a TWI program or who were part of a transitional program. In addition, it looked at native English speakers who were also part of these settings (Marian et al., 2013).

The native English-speaking students received instruction in English in reading and writing from kindergarten through second grade and then Spanish from third through fifth grade (Marian et al., 2013). The native Spanish-speaking students received instruction in Spanish for the first three years and English in the last three years (Marian et al., 2013). All students received math instruction in Spanish in grades kindergarten through third and in English for fourth and fifth (Marian et al., 2013). Social studies and science were taught completely in Spanish (Marian et al., 2013).

Students attending the TWI program in the upper grades, third through fifth, showed higher reading and math scaled-scores (Marian et al., 2013). The students within TWI showed

growth in reading and math testing scores over the years, while students within the transitional program did not (Marian et al., 2013). By third grade, TWI students outperformed their mainstream peers in both reading and math (Marian et al., 2013).

The study concluded that both minority-language, native Spanish speakers, and majority-language, native English speakers, who attended the TWI program, showed improved test scores in English (Marian et al., 2013). In addition, the students gained proficiency in both Spanish and English while students in the transitional classroom did not (Marian et al., 2013). The study suggested that TWI programs were beneficial to all students and should be considered within an educational setting (Marian et al., 2013).

The studies above showed similar results in terms of higher levels of success for ELL students attending a TWI program in comparison to a different form of bilingual education. For that reason, this study was based within a TWI based school as it appears to provide ELLs with the greatest chance for success.

Best Practices for ELL Students

Studies also show that particular practices should be used to help ELL students speak and learn in both their native language and their second language. These practices include specific strategies and methods of instruction, which allow students to be both successful in the language itself and in the academic subjects. Below is a review of practices that researchers have found as beneficial to ELL students in reading, language, and participation in achieving academic success.

Reading best practices. ELL students often struggle when working with reading as English is not their first language (DelliCaprini, 2011). However, by using specific strategies, students will prosper academically and often socially in English and perhaps in their home language (DelliCaprini, 2011). According to DelliCaprini (2011), using specific techniques to

support “ELLs throughout the reading process can enhance outcomes for those students in terms of comprehension and in terms of a greater sense of self-efficacy as readers” (p. 108). Discussed below are specific reading strategies that are most effective in terms of ELL students’ academic success. It is important to note that each of these strategies, although especially beneficial to ELL students, is also beneficial to the native English speakers as well.

According to Barr, Eslami, and Joshi (2012), explicit instruction allowed students who spoke little to no English to “gain word reading and spelling skills equal to those of native speakers in two to three years” (Barr et al., 2012, p. 107-108). Barr et al. found that ELL students learned the same way that English speakers did when it came to reading (2012). ELLs achieved more with instruction in the parts of literacy including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing (Barr et al., 2012).

Barr et al. (2012) reviewed several past studies looking at ELL success in terms of the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). The study attempted to determine “the best way to support the ELLs needing instructional process support and intervention” (Barr et al., 2012, p. 107). In order to answer this question, Barr et al. 2012 analyzed research from peer reviewed journals as well as other published studies to determine if “reading and vocabulary instruction should be used as core strategies for supporting ELLs requiring literacy instruction as a response to TELPAS” (Barr et al., 2012, p. 107).

Based on this review, Barr et al. (2012), determined that all students benefited from direct instruction whether they were ELLs or native-speakers. Students that received direct instruction in phonological skills and then were taught how to decode words were then able to use decoding when reading and were more likely to be successful during the reading process (Barr et. al, 2012). The review discussed the correlation between the various aspects of literacy

and the importance of explicitly teaching strategies that were used throughout the reading process (Barr et al, 2012).

ELLs also benefited from direct instruction in “decoding, literature appreciation, phoneme awareness instruction, systematic and explicit instruction in the code system of written English, [and] incentives for children to read” (Barr et al., 2012, p. 109). More importantly, direct instruction of literacy strategies in a child’s first language, allowed the student to incorporate those strategies as he or she was learning English (Barr et al., 2012). Barr et al. (2012) also discussed other specific strategies that were taught during explicit instruction in order to help ELLs achieve academic success (Barr et al., 2012) When students worked on comprehension, strategies including prediction, summarizing the texts, clarification, questioning, and some type of visualization allowed ELLs to understand the content and structure of the story (Barr et al., 2012).

Barr et al. (2012) established the importance of oral and written vocabulary as children’s oral vocabulary directly correlates to the level of reading comprehension. ELL students needed targeted instruction in the colloquial vocabulary as well as academic vocabulary to be successful readers (Barr et al., 2012). The study suggested that key vocabulary should be taught through specific approaches including “illustrating the word in context and showing relationships among other words using a graphic organizer” (Barr et al., 2012, p. 110). These strategies were especially beneficial to students in mathematics (Barr et al., 2012).

ELL students also benefited from structural analysis of vocabulary (Barr et al., 2012). Through this analysis, words were broken down into meaning, based on Greek or Latin roots or forms (Barr et al., 2012). The meanings allowed ELL students to determine unknown words within future texts (Barr et al., 2012). Barr et al. (2012) also established the importance of ELL

students linking new vocabulary to previous knowledge through brainstorming and description. They suggested that another “best” strategy (Barr et al., 2012, p. 111) is to look at semantic, or meaning based, relationships between new and familiar concepts through mapping, feature analysis, and categorization.

The study concluded that ELL students benefited most from teachers that were well prepared and educated in terms of literacy, or reading and writing, instruction (Barr et al., 2012). It stated by focusing on comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary development in terms of specific and direct instruction, students improved performance and proficiency (Barr et al., 2012). It suggested that by focusing on reading and vocabulary and by keeping up with current research, teachers would give ELLs the best chance at success in terms of reading fluency (Barr et al., 2012).

Language use strategies. In addition to learning to reading, the acquisition of language is very essential to surviving in an English speaking country (Honigsfeld, 2009). ELL students need specific strategies and instruction in this language learning in order to acquire the necessary vocabulary and structural language used within the classroom and the real world. In order to establish the current foundation for ELL success, several language-teaching strategies are discussed below.

Calderón, Slavin, and Sánchez (2011) discussed several successful strategies for teaching language by looking at which language strategies provided ELLs with the most support in terms of academic achievement. In terms of language development, the researchers found that oral vocabulary instruction helped students develop their English language skills as well as provided students with future academic success (Calderón et al., 2011).

Students who were actively participating “during teacher ‘read-alouds’” had an increase in vocabulary growth in reading and spoken language (Calderón et al., 2011, p. 111). In addition, the use of open-ended questions and multiple exposures to particular words and concepts gave ELL students the information needed to know how to use that academic and colloquial vocabulary later on (Calderón et al., 2011). The study suggested that teachers should also use culturally sensitive “strategies that send the message that [each] student’s primary language and culture [was] valuable” by supporting the student in using his or her native language as well as English when learning new vocabulary (Calderón et al., 2011, p. 111). Specific strategies were not provided.

Language development was also fostered by allowing students to work with other students whose native language is similar to the ELL. In addition, by creating cooperative learning settings, or settings in which the child works with a small group of students, the student received the support he or she needed to work on his or her new language (Calderón et al., 2011). Cooperative learning, allowed the shy or hesitant ELL students daily opportunities to speak English within a safe setting (Calderón et al., 2011). The study found that cooperative learning was very effective in elementary school especially with ELL students (Calderón et al., 2011).

The study concluded that it is essential for elementary teachers to prepare their ELL students for middle school and high school using the strategies listed above as well as several others (Calderón et al., 2011). It called for a “whole-school intervention” in order to restructure the type of language instruction that these children receive (Calderón et al., 2011, p. 119). Beyond that idea, it asked that the teacher participate in professional development to ensure the use of correct practices within the classroom (Calderón et al., 2011).

Each of the strategies above was used to create a platform of successful ELL language development strategies.

Participation strategies. In addition to language and reading, participation was also fundamental to an ELL student's success in the classroom (Barr et al. 2012). Yoon (2007) described the approaches of four teachers in relation to their ELL student's participation in literacy instruction, or reading and writing instruction. Through observation of the middle school teachers' classrooms, as well as interviews with four students, Yoon (2007) determined the level of participation based on the practices of each teacher.

She found that the teachers, who solely focused on American culture and the needs of the English-speaking students, lost the participation and interest of their ELL students (Yoon, 2007). Due to this cultural exclusion, the students remained unengaged and failed to interact with their mainstream peers because the teacher did not ask or engage the children (Yoon, 2007). In a contrasting classroom, the teacher "used many intentional approaches to include the ELLs in learning activities, to embrace their cultural differences, and to help them sustain their culture" (Yoon, 2007, p. 222). The teacher also created a strong community like setting within the classroom by pairing the non-native speakers with the native speakers (Yoon, 2007).

From this study, Yoon offered several effective approaches to facilitate ELL students' participation (2007). First, it was important for the teachers to show an interest in each ELL student's culture (Yoon, 2007). Second, teachers should offer opportunities for students to share their cultural experiences. Third, ELLs should be included as full participants regardless of the subject (Yoon, 2007). Fourth, teachers should also model his or her appreciation for cultural differences among ELL children in order to encourage the native speakers and other ELL

students to do the same (Yoon, 2007). Finally, teachers needed to encourage native speakers to support the learning of their ELL peers within the classroom (Yoon, 2007).

Overall, the best practices established in the studies above focused on creating a diverse environment in which students were asked to use both languages and to work in collaborative groups. These types of strategies encouraged participation as well as academic achievement. In addition, teachers who were sensitive to their ELL student needs and encouraged participation through various methods, found that their students were more willing to participate. Each of these best practices is essential to allowing ELLs to become successful.

Purpose of Study Based on Literature Review

As seen above, both the effectiveness of the TWI program and specific literacy and participation strategies have been established through previous research. However, there is a lack of the teacher's perspective within a high achieving TWI program. The purpose of this study is to describe the actual strategies used by teachers in language and literacy within a TWI program. The study will look at the dominant strategies that these teachers use. Through the perspectives of the teachers, educators will be given an opportunity to see the methods that teachers actually use within TWI in order for students to achieve grade level expectations. As a reminder, this thesis examines the perspectives of the teachers and principal of Green Academy to determine strategies that they believe are most effective to teach their ELL students language and literacy within their two-way immersion school.

Methodology

This study is grounded in phenomenology (Lichtman, 2013), a design that supports an understanding of the beliefs or practices of individuals. In this study, the perspectives of three

teachers and one principal based on their practices and descriptions of the practices used to teach their ELL students in language and literacy are revealed.

Researcher Background

I am a senior in the college of education studying elementary education with a specialization in ESL and Early Childhood Education at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). I am also a member of the UNR Honors Program. I have learned many strategies in my required courses and I have worked in several classrooms with a high percentage of ELL students. In my last practicum, I worked in a classroom with ELL students making up 75 percent of the class. I am a cohort in the Northern Nevada English Learning Initiative, a grant, which trains undergraduates in ELL strategies and helps teachers to procure their ESL endorsement for Nevada.

Participants

The participants in this study were the teachers and the principal from Green Academy in Northern Nevada. The teachers interviewed included the kindergarten teacher, Ms. A, the Special Education teacher, Ms. B, and the Spanish teacher, Ms. C. In addition, the principal of the school, Principal Albert, was interviewed. All of the teachers spoke English and had undergraduate degrees in education. Each of the teachers worked with students that spoke English as their first language and ELLs. The kindergarten teacher received her Master's degree in education. The Special Education teacher received her Master's degree in literacy. The Spanish teacher earned a degree in academic Spanish for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade as well as a Master's in education. Principal Albert has worked as a principal for 19 years. Each participant volunteered to discuss his or her teaching practices within the classroom.

Setting

Green Academy is a small charter elementary school located in the Northern Nevada area. Green Academy serves 150 students from kindergarten through grade 5. 93.33 percent of the students are Hispanic. In addition, of those 150 students, 75.33 percent of the population qualifies as ELLs. The program is made up of Title 1 students, or students that fall within the low income bracket according to Improving America's School Act of 1994 (LeTendre, 1996). 99.33 percent of students receive Free and Reduced Lunch based on the Title 1 standing. The school works under the process of dual language learning and is categorized as a TWI program. Students receive their instruction primarily in English. However, three days a week for 40 minutes a day, the Spanish teacher, Ms. C, enters the classroom and teaches entirely in Spanish. Teachers that are bilingual are also encouraged to use Spanish during regular class hours.

Data Collection

Data were collected through the interviews of four participants from Green Academy. The interviews lasted for thirty minutes to an hour and took place within the classrooms of the teachers and the office of the principal. Each interview was audiotaped. The interviews were semi-structured. The teachers and principal were asked the following six questions and then given an opportunity to provide additional comments about their practices.

- Share with me the practices you find most beneficial to your students.
- Tell me about the practices you find best to help your students with reading and writing.
- What changes do you see with your students when they become familiar with a strategy?

- How do you keep current on the best and most effective practices you use with your students?
- How would you describe having your students learn in English and Spanish?
What are the strengths or issues you notice?
- Is there anything else I should know about the importance of your teaching in a bilingual setting?

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Primarily, teachers did not represent all grade levels. There might be variability in practices between teachers of higher grade and lower grade levels. In addition, the setting of the study was a small school in a mid-sized city. Larger schools might share different practices and strategies.

Data Analysis

All audiotaped interviews were transcribed. Once transcribed, the first transcript was read to identify the practices and strategies used by the teacher. Each following transcript was read in a similar fashion. The redundant strategies were coded. According to Gough and Scott (2000), coding is the process of “condensing the bulk of [the] data sets into analyzable units by creating categories with and from [the] data” (p. 339). This process is completed by “assigning tags or labels to the data” based on the studies concepts (Gough & Scott, 2000). In addition to coding the strategies that were similar to the first transcript, new strategies were added as they appeared. Finally, the strategies that were similar were collapsed in order to be able to describe the dominant strategies used by the teachers in the study.

Results

As discussed in methodology, the principal and three teachers' interviews provided an insight to the dominant strategies used at Green Academy. From this information, three themes appeared across the interviews. The themes included the overall supportive practices, the importance of students, and the overall language and literacy practices.

Overall Practices Supporting Teachers and Students

The principal and the three teachers discussed several strategies that provided the teachers and students with extra support. These strategies included professional development, collaborative teaching, financial support, and technological support. Each category is reported below.

Professional development. All three teachers as well as the principal discussed the importance of taking professional development courses in order to stay up to date on the best practices used within the classroom. In particular, the teachers discussed attending Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) training (*What is Project GLAD?*, 2013). GLAD is defined as “a model of professional development in the area of language acquisition and literacy... [that uses] strategies and [modeling that] promote English language acquisition, academic achievement, and cross-cultural skills” (*What is Project GLAD?*, 2013). Ms. B and Ms. C found the training beneficial. According to Ms. C, “I went to seven days of GLAD and that was very helpful even though it is very different how I am teaching.” Based on her lack of a classroom, she explained that she still tries to integrate various aspects of the training into her teaching. “I do not have a homeroom...[but] I use different aspects of GLAD. Lots of hands-on [and] lots of imprinting.” Ms. C discussed that she was able to use the techniques of GLAD without the homeroom it asks for.

Collaborative teaching. Beyond attending additional courses, the teachers also discussed the collaboration that occurred with each other in order to create a connection between the grades and the Spanish and English material. Each of the three teachers talked about the importance of connecting the material learned in the general classroom to the material learned during the Spanish part of the day.

Ms. B established the importance of connecting the vocabulary using cognates. “I’ll let [Ms. C, the Spanish teacher,] know what we’re working on and she’ll find cognates so that they can compare.” Ms. C also mentioned that she made a point to meet with the individual teachers and attempted to duplicate aspects of the content. She also attempts to use themes that will incorporate many aspects of the core curriculum in English. “I just finished one...Nuestro mundo es que la sistema solar, [or] Our World: The Solar System...I started way out in space and then [came] slowly into earth...[We worked with] numbers, ABC’s...writing...[and] so many other skills.” She allowed the students to work on skills in both Spanish and English by collaborating with the teachers.

In addition to collaboration between Ms. C and the general education teachers, Principal Albert described the weekly meetings that the staff attended in order to discuss issues, accomplishments, and to gain support from the other employees.

“[The teachers come] to the PLC [(Professional Learning Community)] with a case...They talk about the child, what [he or she is] doing, things they have tried, their assessments, they get advice from their peers, they take questions’ and then we go onto somebody else.”

The teachers all meet in the lunchroom on Wednesday afternoons and communicate with the group as a whole. Principal Albert facilitates the discussion. Each of the teachers is able to hear from the rest of the school due to the small size of the staff.

Technological support. All three teachers argued the importance of the use of technology within the classroom. Ms. C, the Spanish teacher highlighted the need for technological support based on the learning styles of the students. “I am really big on computers and big on using them to let them see. Seeing is everything.” Both Ms. A, the special education teacher, and Ms. B, the kindergarten teacher, iterated similar points based on visual learning related to the integration of technology into the classroom. They discussed the use of I-pads in the younger grades for reading and educational games based in Spanish and English.

Financial support. In relation to the technological support, Ms. A mentioned that the board provided a budget for the lower and upper grades of the school. This money was used to purchase apps and other games for the students based on the core subjects. Ms. A discussed some of the subjects in which games were purchased. “With math I have games for time, money, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, number lines, counting, basic numbers, ABCs, a little bit of everything.” According to Ms. A, the lower grade classrooms had I-pads or I-pad minis, for the kindergarten students, while the budget provided Mac Air computers for the older students.

In addition to financial support being provided for more technologically perceptive methods of teaching, Principal Albert discussed the budgeting used to ensure that teachers received professional development training. He explained that the school budgeted for teachers to be able to attend GLAD training as well as other professional development courses. “We pay for their subs. We budget for it...I...make sure that they get the sub time so it will not cost them

anything.” By providing subs for the teachers, they are able to attend professional trainings without losing pay.

Finally, in terms of financial support, Principal Albert mentioned the stipend with which he provided his bilingual teachers. “If you are a bilingual teacher, a real bilingual teacher, you get an extra 2000 dollars per year.” He included his classified employees in this category as he said that each of these individuals, the bilingual staff and teachers, spent extra time translating documents and other child related materials.

Students are Important

Beyond highlighting the supportive practices used by the teachers and the schools, the second common theme that appeared in the responses of the teachers and the principal was the importance of the students. Based on the theme, the interviewees’ responses fell under the categories of valuing students as learners, honoring both languages, honoring cultures, encouraging parent involvement, and creating a strong learning environment. Each category is discussed below in further detail.

Valuing students as learners. The responses from the teachers iterated their beliefs in the strengths of their students. To begin with, all three teachers talked about the strengths of the students as learners. Ms. B emphasized her kindergarteners’ eagerness to learn English. “I have two girls that came with no English and now they won't speak to me in Spanish. They really just want so much to learn in English.” In addition to the native Spanish speakers, Ms. A and Ms. C found that they had students who worked as hard to learn Spanish as well.

Beyond their eagerness to learn, all three of the teachers highlighted the sense of confidence their children gained from mastering specific literacy strategies as well as the

language itself. Ms. A also described her students within the special education program as strong, confident speakers in their native language.

“A lot of my students are really strong in their Spanish. When we do something like we'll do vocabulary words in a story. Well [they will] make me say them in Spanish. Tell me in Spanish and make me repeat it back to them in Spanish. Because they are [very] confident there.”

Ms. A discussed how she allows the children to place their work on a specific board when they feel proud of it. Ms. B also mentioned the confidence the children gained from mastery of a skill and their likelihood of working independently.

“I see them change their attitude about how likely they are to work on their own. Once they're familiar with a [vocabulary word, they might say] ‘Oh this is the word, I remember what it means. Teacher B put it up on the board and now I can draw my own picture.’”

Ms. C also mentioned this connection between confidence in mastery based on her children understanding the correlation between a grammar skill in Spanish and English.

In addition, Principal Albert and Ms. C highlighted expectations of their students in relation to student confidence. Principal Albert talked about the goal of the academy in terms of student potential. “Our goal at Green Academy is for all of these kids to go to college...We want to go from the perspective of what can we do so that they go to college to help them on their way.” On the same subject, Ms. C also mentioned that she spoke with her fourth and fifth grade students about their futures and her expectation that each of them would attend college.

Honoring both languages. In addition to valuing the students as learners, the teachers and principal also emphasized their respect for both Spanish and English. Ms. B described one of

the benefits of working at Green Academy as the ability to learn Spanish while her children learned English.

“They really just want so much to learn in English...I think part of that is because they understand that I'm learning Spanish...They help me and I help them...We kind of work together in both languages. I really think that made a unique connection for all of us.”

Ms. A used the limited Spanish that she had in order to give directions and encouraged her students to speak to her in Spanish because she understood it.

Principal Albert also discussed how the TWI model Green Academy used allowed the children to gain a purer version of both Spanish and English.

“[The native speakers] can speak [Spanish] because they have been around it, and if you speak it then it will get better...If you are like [the] few kids we have who never had [Spanish], you will get it for the first time in a good and pure way.”

Principal Albert's intention is to give all students an academic version of Spanish. Ms. A spoke on a similar point as she explained that the children used a different form of the language at home and that studying at Green Academy would give them proper Spanish.

Honoring student culture. Beyond simply valuing language, one of the teachers mentioned incorporating student's culture into her curriculum. Ms. C, the Spanish teacher, touched on the students' study of Latin American culture based on where many of the students were from. “We are getting now to [the discussion] of cultures, so right now we are in Guatemala in fourth grade and...we are studying the history...and what it looks like. We have three students who are from Guatemala.” Her students are studying Mexico in the fifth grade and she plans to move on to Central America next in order to cover more of the students' family

origins. Ms. C also works with maps in order to give the children a sense of where the places their families are from are located in the world.

Encouraging parent involvement. Beyond integrating family origin and culture into the curriculum, the school required and encouraged parent involvement. Principal Albert talked about how they kept the parents involved in the school. “[The families] have to volunteer 20 hours... and you see it everywhere...ten of those hours must be in the classroom. All 20 can be but at least ten minimum. 20 hours for the year for a family.” Ms. A mentioned that based on the parent involvement, the fathers patrolled the school each day keeping unknown persons from entering the grounds without permission.

Ms. B also discussed how the parents were actively involved in the classroom. “I have several parents that come in and stay for breakfast time...Besides that I had two parents that are bilingual that would help during language time.” She mentioned that although she did not have any of the parents working with the children during math, she always felt that she had plenty of parent involvement within the classroom.

Creating a strong learning environment. Again based on their value of their students, the teachers and principal explained how their physical classroom environments played a role in the student success. Ms. B, the kindergarten teacher, discussed how her teacher materials were in both Spanish and English. “We also have a Spanish alphabet up on the wall and an English alphabet. We have different reference posters, colors, and shapes, and things like that are in both languages too.” Ms. C also mentioned creating bulletin boards based in Spanish that she was able to carry with her from classroom to classroom.

Principal Albert mentioned the importance of hanging student work and his expectation to see student work on the walls when he did teacher evaluations. “That is one of the things that I

look at. I like the kids to have the student work.” He stated that it was necessary for children to see examples of work done by their peers rather than just teacher materials. In addition, Ms. A spoke about the board in her room that was used for student work. “They’ll hang stuff up on my wall when it’s something that they are really super proud of.” She discussed their increased sense of confidence and independence based on the use of the board. Following a similar pattern, Ms. B had student created penguins hanging from the ceiling of her room. The hallways of the Green Academy were covered in student work (Figure 1). Ms. A said that in addition to students seeing the work of their fellow classmates, it was good for them to see what other classrooms were doing as well. Staff and parents in addition to the students of the school could view the work in the halls.

The school had a library with both Spanish and English books, a school garden, and a parent room. According to Ms. A, the parent room allowed the families to work with teachers to create connections between the families and the classroom as well as the school as a whole. The school also kept a set of Spanish curriculum textbooks for each grade for Ms. C to be able to use.



Figure 1. Student work in hallway at Green Academy. This figure shows the students’ work hung outside of the first grade door in the hallway.

The physical environment was not the only type of environment that that teachers and principals mentioned as important to student success. All three teachers and Principal Albert mentioned the sense of community that the students and teachers had created at the school. Ms. C discussed the connection she noticed between the lower and upper grades. “There is a real camaraderie in this school of the older kids towards the younger kids...The older kids really care for the younger kids. It is a very sweet thing.” She said that part of this connection was based on the tight family relationships present in the school as many of the children were related.

Ms. C also mentioned that the bilingual education provided many students with an opportunity to create friendships. “I have [seen] several...examples [of students] knowing no Spanish what-so-ever to learning enough Spanish [so] that they have friends...[When] they have friends, they feel comfortable in the classroom, [and] they know what is going on. [The program] is working.” She explained that the community created by the integration of Spanish also helped with behavior problems and allowed students to more comfortable within their classrooms.

Principal A and Ms. C both explained how the lack of behavioral problems allowed the children to feel safe in their environment. Principal A clarified that the students at the school were held to a very high standard in terms of conduct based because Green Academy was a very small charter school. He stated that the school used Lezotte and Snyder’s seven correlates to maintain behavior (2011). The piece is a guide to creating an effective school community (Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). Principal Albert mentioned, “One of the correlates is to have a safe and organized environment... [A] safe and controlled environment and I think that is important.” As a result, he had a no-tolerance policy for bullying and expected parents to help keep their children in line. Based on the school’s behavior policies, Ms. C mentioned, “This is one of the nicest schools I have ever taught at...In fact, it is scary with the fifth grade leaving.” The

children moving on to sixth grade will attend another school in the district and will no longer be part of the Green Academy community.

Specific Classroom Strategies for Language and Literacy

The final theme that appeared from the three teachers' and principal's responses was common strategies and practices used within the classrooms for teaching reading, writing, language, and the academic success related to these strategies. Each category is described in further detail below.

Reading strategies. Each of the three teachers discussed specific reading strategies they used to guide their ELL students as well as their general classroom. The main strategies used by the teachers were read-aloud instruction, scaffolding, cooperative learning, and academic vocabulary instruction.

During read-aloud instruction, each teacher used specific strategies. Ms. B and Ms. C discussed comprehension when reading in the classroom. Ms. B explained that after she read to the students, they would discuss. Ms. C also mentioned several types of reading aloud in the older grades including choral reading, individual reading, pair reading, triad reading, and popcorn reading. She mentioned that it was important to work on awareness and analysis through discussion after reading.

In terms of scaffolding, all three teachers discussed how they used some version of it within their classrooms. Introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), scaffolding is defined as a "process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which [is] beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). According to Maggioli (2012), "the difficulty of the task remains constant and what varies is the nature of the support available to the novice" when using scaffolding (p. 39). Ms. B talked about using some direct instruction to help her

students learn to read. “I do a lot of show and tell. I have to show them what I want them to do. I have to demonstrate everything.” She explained that she gave examples to help the children see what they could do, but refrained from making models, which the children would have to follow.

Ms. C and Ms. A also used scaffolding in one form or another. Ms. C mentioned that she was constantly modeling as she moved around the classroom in order to help the students learn. “I use graphic organizers. I use guided and assisted reading.” Graphic organizers allowed students to map their thoughts while reading. When working with her students in special education, Ms. A used texts that were slightly below their reading level.

“With reading, I [use] things that are at their level, or even sometimes a little bit easier, depending on what I am looking for...If I'm looking for sequencing, I not going to give them something that is at their level or hard. I want something that is simple that they can learn how to sequence.”

By using a simpler text, she explained, the ELLs were able to focus on sequencing the events in the story rather than the language of the story.

In addition to scaffolding, two of the teachers used cooperative learning to aid their students in both Spanish and English. As discussed earlier cooperative learning is defined as a process in which “participants contribute to the work of a pair or group...Each member needs to contribute information, insights, or skill so that the team can complete the task set” (Maggioli, 2012, p. 48). Ms. C used cooperative learning to create pairs of native Spanish speakers and native English speakers when she worked in each class. “I have maybe two to four students in a classroom that do not speak Spanish but I pair them up with someone [a native Spanish speaker] that can help them out and then I let them talk to each other during class.” She encouraged her

students to speak and work together in order to create a sense of community and to give each student a confidant and partner.

The teachers and principal also discussed using academic vocabulary, or content related vocabulary. Ms. A mentioned that the students learned academic level vocabulary in both Spanish and English on the same topic in order to create a connection. She explained that Ms. C worked with vocabulary based on the one-hundredth day because the students were studying the one-hundredth day during general English instruction. Ms. B mentioned that she tried to find cognates of the vocabulary she taught in her classroom, or asked Ms. C to find cognates when the students gained vocabulary in Spanish to correlate it to the vocabulary they were learning in English. Principal Albert explained that the school had started a program to give the children an opportunity to work with vocabulary in both English and Spanish.

“We started a program this year called Word of The Day. Every day we give another word...We do it in English and we spell it and then we do it in Spanish and now we are asking the kids at lunchtime to use it in a sentence...If you can spell it and give us a definition they get like a little candy.”

The vocabulary word was the same across the school each day. All three teachers also mentioned the use of this word within their classrooms.

Ms. B discussed creating content dictionaries with her students and using specific GLAD strategies to help her students retain the information. She asked students to add new and commonly used words to their dictionary in addition to a picture. “We were talking about Chinese New Year and ‘celebrate’ was one of the words so on the carpet someone suggested that we draw party hat, but I had a few draw birthday cakes instead.” Students were encouraged to use original ideas for pictures while still gaining the intent of the word. In terms of GLAD

strategies, Ms. B used physical gestures to help the children remember the words. “When there is a word that they don't know we try to come up with something that makes sense to all of us that we can do with our hands to help remember the word.” She described how the class yawned when they defined hibernate.

Writing strategies. In addition to reading practices, each of the teachers highlighted specific writing strategies that they used in Spanish and English to help their ELLs. The main strategies used by the teachers were collaborative writing, daily writing, scaffolding, and art.

Ms. A mentioned that she found collaborative writing effective when working with her students. “So [the students] call my pen Mister pen...and Mister Pen will come and get them when they do things wrong.” Ms. A explained that she worked in collaboration with her younger students to help them see the mistakes they were making in a more constructive way. In addition to collaborating directly with the students, Ms. A also provided materials to be included in the discussion between the students during group collaboration. “I give them a picture and we go around the table and everybody...gives ideas. Each kid is doing their own thing about their picture...They may or may not use each other's ideas, but they have the ideas.” She explained that her students were more visual learners and that visual prompts gave them more support.

In addition to collaborative writing, one of the teachers mentioned the importance of daily writing in Spanish. Ms. C discussed the use of specific pre-writing strategies as well as the importance of writing frequently. “We are brainstorming all the time...They have diaries...of course diaries...Everyone has a diary and I make them do different exercises in it and that is what I grade off of, like a portfolio grading right out of their own diario (diary).” She explained that the grades allowed her to help the students to correct mistakes and to make progress rather

than giving them a final grade. She also mentioned that the diaries allowed the students to write in Spanish each time she entered the classroom.

In addition to writing frequently, two of the teachers mentioned the use of scaffolding during the writing process. Ms. A explained several specific scaffolding strategies she used in terms of phonics and story elements when working with writing. During writing instruction with her younger students, Ms. A helped the children sound out the words with which they were not familiar. She explained that she would write the words on the board that were not common or sight words. She noted that she guided the younger students with more direct instruction than she provided for the older students. “I sit with [my first grader] and we try to do every word together...If she wants to know how to spell happy. I’ll go "hhaa" and get her to sound out each individual [word] with the sounds.” By providing her student with the individual sounds, she was able to help with the writing and work on the phonics of writing she explained.

Ms. A also used scaffolding to teach her older students, grades three through five, how to include the elements of plot while writing a story. Using a board game, the students took turns moving their pieces to gain the elements of the plot. The cards provided character names, locations for settings, and other specific details that could be used to create a story. “They may not be things that go together so you have to make them go together...You go through all of the different parts of the story. The theme, the characters, the setting, all of it comes out.” Then the students used a specific sheet to guide them in creating the story and writing it.

Ms. C explained that she used scaffolding and visual imaging to teach the younger students how to take notes. “They [may not] know how to take notes and maybe they do not know how to write [notes in] their second language.” By using direct instruction as a form of

scaffolding, she was able to give the students specific strategies including note taking and summarization, two specific types of writing.

Finally, all three teachers discussed the use of art while teaching ELL children how to write. Ms. C used lots of art with the younger children who were only beginning to write. “I am big on art because I found [that]...these young children...are extremely kinesthetic. They are...hands on and they love to draw. Drawing is big...for motor skills. It helps any kind of learning disability that we have.” By providing students with the opportunity to draw, she allowed those who struggled with writing to work on those types of skills and to get their message across in a more effective way.

Language strategies. The teachers and Principal Albert also discussed the language strategies they used in their classroom in conjunction with their other best practices. Each of the teachers believed that it was important to use specific strategies when working with their ELL students. Discussed below are providing opportunities to use language, valuing and encouraging the use of academic language.

Ms. C explained that she used several techniques to give the students opportunities to use authentic language within their Spanish instruction period. She explained that she asked students to give oral reports, sing songs, and act out plays.

“I translate English songs to Spanish songs and try to make sure that they can work...[The students] love it. Because we can act them out. We can act them out in English and we can act them out in Spanish. We can do both. Also, I am starting to use plays. We are going to do a play with the older kids.”

She explained that each of these experiences gave the students an opportunity to use the language, Spanish, while still enjoying what they were doing.

Principal Albert emphasized the value that the school placed on using academic language. “That is a big one. Speaking and using correct grammar and syntax. Things that they have the pieces but they may have the order of the words wrong or [lack] the pronoun or adverb.” He said that he wanted the students to be able to do more than just speak the language, but to speak it correctly. Ms. C also explained that she wanted the students to gain academic Spanish and English as well. “I changed the course around. I am not teaching to speak Spanish. I am teaching them to operate in the classroom in Spanish.” She explained that providing the students with the grammar they needed would allow them to speak more proficiently in Spanish and consequently in English. “I am not into silence. This is a talking class...I am doing conjugation. I am doing a lot of grammar. The grammar will correspond even into English because it is a discipline.” She explained that by letting students use the grammar while talking to their peers, they were gaining necessary skills.

Results based on the use of effective strategies. Principal Albert discussed the school’s academic testing growth based on the implication of strategies similar to those listed above. He explained that when he entered the school it had been in needs improvement. However, after a year under his command, they started to improve. In addition to making AYP, the school also made Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) in the same year.

“AMAO is part of No Child Left Behind and it requires certain standards for your English language learners...They come in and they assess them and then a certain standard is set in terms of how much they should achieve in their language acquisition and you have to make that too. Well, that year we made AMAO and AYP for the first time. So I thought...okay, I know we are doing the right thing. We are finally making it...They want you to reduce the kids who are in your lowest quartile by...at least ten

percent so that means about ten percent of your kids [need to improve]. That year we did not do ten percent. We did over 40 percent.”

According to the Nevada Department of Education (2012), the lowest quartile is referred to the area of “emergent/developing” skills (p. 6). These students are not considered proficient in the areas of math and reading based on the annual criterion reference test that is required of third through fifth grade students at Green Academy. In order to make AYP, Principal Albert explained that ten percent of the students within the lowest quartile must move from “emergent/developing” to a higher quartile of achievement (Nevada Department of Education, 2012, p. 6). Ten percent of the students within the lowest test quartile from the year before must receive scores that place them into the “meet standard,” or “achieve standard” quartiles (Nevada Department of Education, 2012, p. 6) in order to achieve Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) (Nevada Department of Education, n.d.). Principal Albert explained that rather than having a growth of ten percent of individuals, the school had growth from 40 percent of the individuals.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, a comparison is made between practices used within the classrooms of Green Academy and those practices discussed in the literature review. The areas of reading, language, cultural inclusion, and professional development are compared below. In addition, those practices that differed from the literature review are also mentioned.

Comparison of Reading Practices

In terms of reading practices, several connections were made between those practices discussed in the literature review and those described by the teachers and principal. Based on the literature review, two main connections were made in terms of reading - the use of direct instruction and vocabulary instruction.

Barr et al. (2012) discussed the benefit of using direct instruction when teaching students how to read. More particularly, Barr et al. (2012) recommended direct instruction to teach how to use phonological skills and how to decode words. All three teachers discussed the use of direct instruction when working in reading. Ms. A also mentioned the use of direct instruction to help sound out words, or decode, with her younger students as they wrote. As discussed in the results section, she worked with the children directly in decoding larger words pulling them apart into individual sounds.

In addition to the use of direct instruction, both the literature and the teachers and principal discussed the importance of vocabulary instruction. Barr et al. (2012) found that teaching key vocabulary through illustration and graphic organizers provided ELLs with stronger vocabulary and reading comprehension. Barr et al. (2012) also mentioned the importance of creating connections between new and familiar vocabulary in order to allow children to develop stronger vocabulary. Based on the same idea, each teacher and the school itself emphasized the importance of academic vocabulary and vocabulary in general. Principal Albert explained that the school used a Word of the Day program to allow all students to gain academic vocabulary in both Spanish and English. Ms. A explained that the children made content dictionaries to create connections through drawings and previous knowledge.

Comparison of Language Strategies

In addition to similarities among the practices discussed in terms of reading, there were also similarities between the language strategies discussed in the literature review and those found in the study. Based on the research gathered for the literature review and the perspectives from the results, the use of read-alouds and cooperative learning were both described as effective methods of teaching language to ELLs.

Calderón et al. (2011) mentioned that students who actively participated in read-alouds gained oral vocabulary. Ms. B and Ms. C discussed the importance of allowing the students to speak with each other after reading in the classroom. Ms. C used several types of read-alouds with the older students in which she was not the only person reading. Both teachers found it necessary to allow the children to talk about what they read and to share their ideas verbally.

In addition to the use of read-alouds for building language proficiency, both the research used in the literature review and the study mentioned the importance of cooperative learning in developing language based skills. Calderón et al. (2011) found that ELLs benefited from working in small groups in developing their language skills. Yoon (2007) also found that by pairing non-native speakers with native speakers, the students spoke more often and created a stronger community. Both Ms. A and Ms. C mentioned using cooperative learning based practices. Ms. A used cooperative learning during writing instruction, when she asked students to discuss their ideas about the picture prompt before writing. Ms. C used several methods of cooperative learning including pairing her native Spanish speakers with her native English speakers. Although Yoon (2007) discussed using this process in order to help the ELLs speak in English, Ms. C also used the same method to allow the native English speakers to feel comfortable and to speak more in Spanish.

Cultural and Linguistic Inclusion

Similarities also appeared between the culturally inclusive practices discussed in research related to this area and in the results of the study. Calderón et al. (2011) discussed the importance of allowing students to use both languages in the classroom setting in order to send the message that the language and culture of the student population is important. All three of the teachers discussed that they encouraged their students to speak in both Spanish and English. In

addition, as a dual immersion program, children were asked to use both languages to become proficient in both. Ms. C also incorporated particular countries into her culture lesson during her instruction based on the origins of the families her students.

Professional Development

Finally, the research analyzed in this study and the results found from this study both emphasized the importance of professional development. Barr et al. (2012) and Calderón et al. (2011) both suggested that teachers use professional development opportunities to keep up to date on the research related to literacy and language practices within the classroom. Barr et al. (2011) suggested keeping up with the research to be better prepared. Calderón et al. (2011) suggested professional development as a means for teachers to use correct practices within the classroom. Based on the interviews, Green Academy valued professional development. Principal Albert provided teachers with subs in order to allow them to attend trainings such as GLAD. In addition, each of the teachers spoke about reading new literature and attending district trainings in order to stay informed.

New Findings

Based on the results, techniques arose in terms of creating a successful TWI program in terms of language and literacy that were not discussed in the literature review. In addition to the strategies discussed above, Green Academy's use of collaborative teaching, parent involvement, and value of students as learners could be the source of their success.

The first strategy was Green Academy's use of collaborative teaching. Ms. C worked with each of the teachers to plan her curriculum as well as their own to create connections between the Spanish and English classroom settings. In addition, the teachers met at PLC

meetings each week and worked together as a school and staff to determine specific solutions on a case-by-case basis in terms of student learning.

The second strategy, which appeared to be integral to the school's success, was its use of parent involvement. By requiring the parents to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours a week, the school had created a community. As a result, the fathers patrolled the school and other family members work in the classrooms or lunchroom each day. This type of involvement created a safe learning environment for the children.

The final strategy that appeared to be related the school's success was its value of its students as learners. Each of the teachers used strategies to help students become independent learners and confident individuals. In addition, the school valued the students' futures. Principal Albert and Ms. C specifically spoke about their goal to get the students of the school to go to college. Ms. C even spent time discussing future college plans with her fourth and fifth grade students.

Conclusion

The importance of this study and its implications are shown in the academic results displayed by students. When a school worked together in professional development, school organization, teaching strategies, and honoring students, students succeeded. Future research could look at the reading and writing state testing scores for the ELLs of Green Academy and compare those scores to students in other schools throughout the district. Although my study initially focused solely on literacy strategies, the results indicate that more than strategies are needed for ELLs to succeed. It appeared that the intersection of well-prepared teachers who used exemplary literacy strategies, and valued students and families was critical to student success.

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