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by

Gloria E. Gómez

August, 2011

HIGH-EFFICACY BILINGUAL/ELL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF EFFECTIVE
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation Proposal Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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August, 2011

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Inocencia Flores Ramirez, who always taught me to strive for the highest levels of success in whatever field I chose. You may have left this earth 26 years ago, but your words of encouragement have lived on in me. With this publication, I complete my promise to you.

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The completion of this document has been far beyond a dream for me. My mother always expressed her complete confidence in my abilities. While my mother always inspired me, it is my own family who has given me the space, time, and motivation to continue my educational endeavors. To my husband, David, I am eternally grateful for supporting me through thick and thin. You allowed me to pursue new educational experiences to fulfill my personal and professional goals. To my family, my son, Rudy, and his wife, Carrie and my beautiful grandsons, Dilan, Jonathan, and Brandon, who have been extremely patient and understanding. Hopefully, my experience has inspired them to continue learning throughout their lives.

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Abstract

Few challenges facing America today are as vital as improving the educational attainment of low social economic and English Language Learners (language minority children). The United States' educational reform has brought forth numerous initiatives throughout the past decades to address the "Achievement Gap" between Latino students and their Anglo counterparts. Even when the teachers in high-poverty schools have experience and credentials, they are generally inadequately prepared and supported to handle the enormous instructional challenges they face, challenges that would test the mettle of the most experienced and accomplished teachers.

The study explored high-efficacy bilingual/ English Language Learner teachers' perceptions of what they consider to be relevant professional development that meets their essential needs. The research methodology used in this study consisted of rigorous qualitative, multisite ethnographic interviews and their analysis and synthesis. The study addressed the following two research questions: What are high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development? And what resources, means of delivery and organizational support at the school level do high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' perceive as promoting effective professional development?

This study was conducted in three phases using qualitative methods of ethnographic analysis of individual semi-structured interviews. Interviews provided multifaceted understanding of the impact that high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teacher' perceptions on professional development have on their instructional effectiveness and

challenges they face. The three sections include a description of the participants' gleaned from the (TDQ) Teacher Demographic Questionnaires, a description of the archival district data, selection of the study participants and discussion of categories emerging from analysis of the interview data.

This study found differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses in learning, practice, supportive school cultures and sustainability of school practices. Study participants disclosed the lack of adequate educational programs, instruction, resources, unfair assessment, and exclusion of parents and community within school district. Consistent with social, racial, ethnic or linguistic research, this study's participants disclose that English language learners in transitional bilingual campuses are isolated on three campuses. Furthermore, the study results indicate that bilingual/ELL teachers' lack of professional development specifically designed to target the needs of English.

In addition, this study revealed the extremely difficult challenges teachers face on a daily basis in addressing the needs of their bilingual/ELL students. Teachers had to contend with inadequate instructional material and resources as well as a lack of support. Consequently, bilingual/ELL teachers' reported that they are left to fend for themselves. In conclusion, the study results revealed the need of specific professional development for all teachers and staff not just the bilingual/ELL teacher.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education ... (and) the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth. Now this idea cannot be applied to all the members of a society except where intercourse of man with man is mutual, and except where there is adequate provision for the reconstruction of social habits and institutions by means of wide stimulation arising from equitably distributed interests. And this means a democratic society.

(Dewey, n/d)

Introduction

Few challenges facing America today are as vital as improving the educational attainment of low social economic and English Language Learners (i.e., language minority children). Education reform within the United States has brought forth numerous initiatives throughout recent decades to address the “Achievement Gap” between Latino students and their Anglo counterparts. Even in cases where teachers in high-poverty schools have experience and credentials, these individuals are generally inadequately prepared and supported to handle the enormous instructional challenges they face. Such challenges would test the mettle of the most experienced and accomplished teachers. In addition to the general constraints involved in the world of American education, a litany of laws and mandates also shape educational practice across the country. These changes have been initiated by many agencies, including federal and

state government entities, resulting reactionary measures and initiatives on the part of individual/local school districts under the purview of the given mandates. The majority of such these initiatives are carried out in the name of school “accountability”, which centers on improving education from a global perspective.

The most note-worthy of these new regulations is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Established as a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, NCLB assigns school districts and individual schools to a number of specific accountability measures. Namely their ultimate goal is that all students shall be able to read, write and perform mathematical functions at a minimum (proficient) level by the year 2014. The establishment of these expectations has compelled many school districts to critically examine existing curricula and pedagogy and make adjustments where necessary. The federal legislation is geared toward addressing accountability issues in education; however, accountability measures have taken on numerous appearances in school districts and states throughout the United States. Further confounding the situation, each individual state has been charged with establishing criterion for statewide testing measures to determine the success of individual schools. As a result, school districts are now feeling increased pressure to succeed and bolster standardized test scores, which is resulting in the curricula now being scrutinized as never before.

Never before in our history has the success of our nation been more tightly and directly tied to students’ ability to learn. Today’s society necessitates the ability to read, write and compute proficiently; to find and use resources; to frame and solve problems; and to continually learn new technologies, skills and occupations. The economy of high-

wage jobs for low-skilled workers is fast disappearing. Therefore, the education that once allowed Americans to earn a decent living in past decades is not longer sufficient to enable them to earn a decent living in our current economic market. In short, America's future prosperity depends heavily on our ability to teach (NCTAF, 1996).

There is a close relationship between instructional quality and students' ability to succeed in school, in the workplace, and in life. Hence, the bottom line is clear: Regardless of changes present in our education structure (policies, assessment practices, new standards, etc.), our nation's efforts to lift student achievement will fail without highly qualified teachers (National Alliance of Business, 2001). The new science of learning emphasizes the importance of modifying what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed. If every citizen is to be prepared for a democratic society whose major product is knowledge, every teacher must know how to teach in ways that help students reach high levels of academic and social competence (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000).

This definition of teacher quality supports similar teacher attributes possessed by high-efficacy teachers according to Bandura (1993) and Blanton, Sindelar, & Correa (2006). Despite the innate complexities, it appears that the teacher quality can be defined as the successful blend of many different attributes. Namely, quality teachers possess a high level of content knowledge in their specific subject, which they constantly draw upon to understand where students are, where they need to go, what work to give them, how to allow them to spend their time, which students need more or less attention, and how to address individuals and groups. Since quality teaching is multi-dimensional and

complex in nature it should, therefore, be measured in multiple ways (Stronge et al., 2008).

Through these changes and enhancements to educational development, which are designed to ensure improved educational opportunities for all students and to increase the rigor of educational standards, the greatest impact on improving the quality of education for children must occur at the classroom level. The impact these adjustments have had on the classroom varies greatly, but to say that classroom teachers – now more than ever – have been forced to examine their own instructional practice in order to impact student achievement is a fair assertion.

The fastest growing segment of the public school population in the U.S. is English Language Learners. Since the mid-1990s, the nation's Hispanic population has nearly doubled (Suro & Lowell, 2002). These students – the majority of whom are born in America – sit alongside native English-speaking classmates, yet they continue to lag far behind in terms of test score performance. The effectiveness of a state's English Language Learner or ELL program is vital to the closing of the achievement gap.

In the United States today more than five million children are English Language Learners. And according to Patricia Gandara, professor of Education at UCLA, the majority of these children are not foreign born. She alleges that “[a]bout 85% of kids nationally who are English Learners are native-born children” (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). They are “home grown” kids who are growing up in communities; oftentimes, they live in linguistically isolated communities and arrive at school speaking a language other than English. So, yes, these are our kids “our American kids” (Posnanski, 2002).

In the state of Texas, Latino children constitute the majority of the student population, which is reflected at the local district level, the school level, and within our individual classrooms. Despite dramatic demographic shifts occurring in our nation, the educational achievement of Latinos continues to significantly lag behind that of their Anglo counterparts. The disparity found between Latino and Anglo students in academic and social achievement is commonly referred to as the “achievement gap” (Fry, 2003). The closing of this achievement gap has been the stated primary objective of many educational reform policies throughout the past 50 years at the federal, state and local level; yet, administrators, and especially classroom teachers, continue to struggle to enact pragmatic solutions to this overwhelming challenge.

The nature of this perplexing and pervasive issue becomes even clearer when one considers the historic academic underachievement of Latino students in the U. S. public school system. And, despite over 50 years of education policy reforms at federal, state and local levels, the fact that the achievement gap still exists provides a realistic, although disheartening, look at the academic future of many Latino students. Therefore, educational leaders must unite in an effort to explore and research methods that will shed light on measures that can begin to resolve this dilemma. To address these concerns, federal and state governments have initiated top-down mandates requiring in-service learning with the expressed purpose of raising student achievement (Lason-Billings, 1995; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007).

Teacher efficacy is an important corollary of student achievement. Teachers’ efficacy beliefs “affect their general orientation toward the educational process as well as their specific instructional activities” (Bandura, 1997, p. 241). In fact, teacher efficacy is

one of the most significant factors with regard to student achievement. Simply stated, teacher “Self-Efficacy” is an important characteristic for teacher success (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Wood & Bandura, Bailey, T., 1990). Differences in teachers’ ability to perform at the highest levels of achievement show wide variances in self-efficacy. It is reasonable to conclude that in-service professional development for teachers can contribute to their self-efficacy. Thus, investigation of the possible correlation among high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers and relevant professional development experiences will, ultimately, contribute to the knowledge base for bilingual education and Bilingual/ELL teacher efficacy. Subsequently, this information could have implications which lead to positive changes in the academic achievement of students from diverse populations. Understanding the dynamics of self-efficacy as a vital construct in a selected group of high performing Bilingual/ELL teachers may also provide insights into the kinds of professional development that encourages/nurtures self-efficacy. In addition, this identification may also showcase the specific skill sets of those educators who persistently set high expectations for student academic performance. Teachers with a greater sense of efficacy would be more engaged and more confident in their responses to their students; they would persist for longer periods; they would provide a greater academic focus in the classroom; and these individuals would exhibit different types of feedback when compared with teachers who maintain lower expectations of their ability to influence student learning (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions with regard to what they consider relevant professional development that meets their essential needs. There is a dearth of evidence in the area of Bilingual/ELL teacher self-efficacy research. It is the researcher's goal to contribute to the research literature on Bilingual/ELL teachers' efficacy through the present study. Further, differences in teachers' abilities to perform at the highest levels of achievement correlate with variances in self-efficacy. Investigations of possible relationships between high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers and various forms of professional development can contribute to a knowledge base for bilingual education and teacher efficacy, and have implications that may lead to positive changes in the academic achievement of students from diverse populations.

A qualified, effective teacher is the most important building blocks for improving student achievement – a particularly salient point in the case of the English Language Learner. The researcher believes that gaining a better understanding of teachers' specific professional development needs will better prepare and maintain the high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teacher, which may positively affect the English language learners' academic success as a corollary. This study proposes to provide educators with the evidence to proceed with a more informed perspective in terms of high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' professional development needs through a qualitative methodology. "To fully understand the relationships between the sources of efficacy information, the meaning teachers attach to this information, and any ultimate change in their efficacy beliefs, in depth studies of teachers are necessary" (Labone, 2004).

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for the study is based on a growing body of research literature suggesting that teacher efficacy is one of the most important factors that influences student academic success (Collier & Collier, 2003; Bandura, 1977; Erdem, & Demirel 2007). In fact, teacher efficacy ranks ahead of class size and school size in its influence in student achievement (Bandura, 1977; Erdem & Demirel, 2007; Coladarci, 1992; Wheatley, 2002, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Enderlin-Lampe, 2002; Darling- Hammond, 1996, 1998, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Young, P. 2002). Self-efficacy has been shown to correlate with teacher effectiveness (Torff, B., Sessions, Overbaugh, R., & Lu, R., 2008; Marable, M. A., & Raimondi, S. L., 2007), and student achievement has been linked to teacher effectiveness. Of the seven teacher characteristics cited by the U.S. Department of Education as contributing to increasing student achievement, participation in professional development that is focused on academic content and curriculum was second only to a teacher's cognitive ability (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002). Therefore, the need to increase teacher efficacy to enhance the design, implementation and outcomes of instruction for English Language Learners is discussed with special focus on its potential as a catalyst for expanding teachers' perception of their power to make a difference in the lives and performances of their students.

Ultimately, the research findings regarding teacher efficacy and staff development have a salient impact on student academic success in the United States. For instance, Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009) concluded the following: "Teachers' effectiveness based on measures of knowledge and expertise, education and experience,

accounts for a larger share of the variance in student's achievement than any other single factor, including poverty, race and parent education.” (p.10)

Research Questions

This study was conducted in the following three phases: (a) *Phase One* will entail the review of archival data – namely, the Woolfolk-Hoy self-efficacy survey for the identification of high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers; (b) *Phase Two* consisted of conducting face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with six to eight of the previously identified high-self-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers; and *Phase Three* consisted of data analysis. The following questions will be addressed in the research:

1. What are high self-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development?
2. What resources, means of delivery and organizational support at the school level do high self-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers perceive as promoting effective professional development?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents research literature pertaining to teacher self-efficacy and professional development. This literature review will be divided into the three following sections:

- Part I: Teacher self-efficacy.
- Part II: Teacher self-efficacy and professional development/ teacher quality.
- Part III: Teacher self-efficacy, professional development/teacher quality and bilingual education.

This multi-purpose literature review attempts to reveal common instructional practices among high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers, and what these teachers perceive to be relevant professional development that meets their essential needs. The literature review also illustrates the shortages of research with regard to bilingual/ELL teachers' self-efficacy.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Bandura's definition of self-efficacy (1977) emerged from the definition of teacher efficacy as a "teacher's judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783). The construct of teacher efficacy and the attributes associated with it are derived from two distinct theoretical frameworks: Rotter's (1966) locus of control theory, and Bandura's (1977) social

cognitive learning theory. Teacher efficacy was first measured through the use of two items based on Rotter's locus of control theory. The RAND (Research AND Development) group, an American global policy think-tank, was the first to use the phrase "teacher efficacy", which it defined as the extent to which teachers believed they could control student outcomes, regardless of environmental factors. The item "If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated student" and the reversed item "when it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of the students' motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment" were included in an extensive survey of teacher characteristics and student learning.

Although the initial RAND studies found positive results, researchers (Ashton & Webb, 1986, 1996; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Guskey, 1981; Rose & Medway, 1981) questioned the reliability of a two item scale. Following the theoretical pathway of Rotter, researchers expanded the two item scale in hopes of creating a more powerful measure of the construct of teacher efficacy. Guskey (1981) developed a 30-item instrument, Responsibility for Student Achievement (RSA), which measured the amount of responsibility a teacher felt for student learning. Guskey added the locus of control definition of teacher efficacy by adding the attribution theory (Weiner, 1979) to his instrument. The items on the RSA asked teachers to distribute 100 percentage points between two option statements – namely, that (a) the event was caused by the teacher, or that (b) the event occurred due to factors outside the teachers' immediate control. The teachers were also asked to rate four causes for success or failure of the event: specific teaching abilities, effort put into teaching, task difficulty, and luck.

A third group of researchers attempted to expand the RAND efficacy items in order to capture more of teacher efficacy. The Efficacy Scale (Ashton, et al., 1982) measured teachers' beliefs towards the responsibility and skills they had when trying to help all students learn. Those items that were more efficacious (i.e., those who scored higher on the scale) were observed to have fewer negative interactions with their students than teachers who were less efficacious. Despite the researchers' expansion of the two-item RAND, an imprecise conceptualization of teacher efficacy still remains. Nonetheless, although the origins of teacher efficacy lie within the two-item scale created by RAND researchers built on Rotter's locus of control theory, another line of research also found teacher efficacy to be a powerful and important construct.

Bandura (1997) offered four sources of self-efficacy beliefs. More specifically, he suggests that self-efficacy beliefs are formed through mastery experiences, physiological and emotional characteristics, observing models, and social persuasion. Previous experiences are the most valid and influential sources of efficacy beliefs because if one experiences success, he or she is more confident in his or her ability to be successful in the future. Conversely, if one experiences failure he or she will doubt his or her ability in future trials. The physiological and emotional feelings (i.e., feelings of anxiousness, anxiety, excitement, or ease all influence individuals' beliefs of their capabilities to successfully complete a task) individuals experience when they are successful, or when they fail, also play a crucial role in their efficacy beliefs.

Attributions also play a role in efficacy beliefs (Schunk, 1989, 1995, 2000). The type of attributions teachers make is thought to have a direct effect on teachers' sense of efficacy which can, ultimately, affect their performance. Individuals make efficacy

assessments by weighing and combining internal and external influences. They also consider a multitude of other factors, such as effort, ability, task difficulty, and outside assistance. The overall assumption here is that causal attributions mediate achievement related behaviors, and thus influence achievement (Schunk, 1989; 1995; 2000).

Teacher efficacy was first measured through the social cognitive lens by Gibson & Dembo (1984). In constructing their instrument (the Teacher Efficacy Scale [TES]) they built upon the work of the RAND researchers, but they also developed items that reflected Bandura's self-efficacy and outcome expectancy dimensions. In its final form, the TES contained 16 Likert-type items that formed two scales – personal teacher efficacy and general teaching efficacy. The first scale, personal teaching efficacy, was built upon the first item in the RAND scale “If I really try hard, I can get through even the most difficult or unmotivated students.” The second scale, general teaching efficacy, which related to Bandura's concept of outcome expectancy, reflected the teacher's belief about the general relationship between teaching and learning. This particular scale built upon the second item in the RAND scale: “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of the student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.” Gibson and Dembo found their scale to have high reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, as well as being related to observable teacher behaviors.

Subsequently, as derived from Gibson & Dembo's research (1984), the definitions of personal and general teaching efficacy were adopted and remained consistent within the field of teacher efficacy. *Personal teaching efficacy* was defined as a specific, individual belief that a teacher held concerning his or her ability to impact student

learning. More specifically, this definition upholds the belief that one has the skills and abilities to bring about student learning. *General teaching efficacy*, on the other hand, was defined as teachers' expectations that teaching can influence student learning. In other words, it is the belief that the educational system is capable of bringing about student achievement despite factors external to the teacher.

Although the Gibson & Dembo scale (1994) enjoyed widespread use for fifteen years, researchers eventually began to question its validity and factor structure. For example, Guskey & Passaro (1994) conducted a study with pre-service teachers to examine the difference between teacher efficacy and locus of control. During close examination of the TES, Guskey & Passaro discovered that all of the items on the personal teaching efficacy scale which used referent "I" statements were positive, and had an internal locus of control (i.e., "I can"); conversely, the items on the general teaching efficacy which used the referent "teachers" statements were negative, and had an external locus (i.e., "teachers cannot"). Given these findings, Guskey & Passaro questioned whether or not Gibson & Dembo's (1984) two factors were measuring personal and general efficacy or an internal and external locus of control.

As a result of their investigation, Guskey & Passaro (1994) developed their own scale using an altered form of Gibson & Dembo's TES (1984) and items used in Woolfolk & Hoy's (1990) study. They reworded the items to form a scale with four factors of teaching efficacy: personal-internal, personal-external, general-internal, and general-external. However, after implementing their scale and conducting further factor analysis, they found that the four factors collapsed into two factors: internal and external teaching efficacy. Their modifications tested the referent "I and teachers" and the locus

of control, but did not include any tests of the directionality of the items (i.e., can vs. cannot). Thus, their findings of the two-factor structure (Internal and External) could actually be a finding of a positive and negative structure. Guskey & Passaro's (1994) work spurred other researchers to focus on developing a better understanding of teacher efficacy and finding a measure of this elusive construct.

From this model, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) developed a new instrument, Teachers' Sense of Efficacy (TSES), which measures both dimensions of the teacher efficacy judgment (i.e., personal competence and analysis of the task). This new instrument measured not only teacher efficacy, but also three critical facets of effective teaching: engagement, use of instructional strategies, and classroom management. The three scales found within the TSES measured teachers' sense of efficacy for these essential tasks of teaching.

The student engagement scale within the instrument accounted for teachers' perception in their ability to involve students in their schoolwork. In addition, the instructional strategies scale tapped into teachers' perception in their ability to adapt instruction to their student's individual needs. Finally, the classroom management scale measured teachers' perception in their ability to establish routines in their classroom and manage disruptive students. Although Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy's (2001) instrument is relatively new, the developers feel that it is superior to previous scales because it has demonstrated stable factor structure, and because it measures three crucial teaching tasks without being too specific to limit its use for comparing subject areas or grade levels. Furthermore, the three-factor structure will allow researchers to use the TSES to help schools and teachers identify specific areas of concern. Lastly, this

structure will allow researchers to examine the relationship between each efficacy domain and their specific origins, as well as their outcome on both teacher and student behaviors.

The first and strongest predictor was determined to be teachers' sense of being prepared (i.e., ample resources, materials, and training), and the other predictors established were as follows: subject area taught, years of experience, level of education, gender, and willingness to engage in non-traditional teaching strategies (Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996). Through their investigation of within-teacher predictors of teacher efficacy, Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla (1996) found several variables that significantly contributed to 92 teachers' sense of efficacy. Ross et al. (1996) concluded that teacher efficacy could not be interpreted as a lump sum that it is influenced by both within- and between-teacher variables, and should be investigated as such.

Another study that investigated teacher differences in relation to teacher efficacy also found that other factors, such as teacher preparation, school climate, subject area taught, gender, age of student, and ability or track of students, significantly contributed to teachers' sense of efficacy (Raudenbush et al., 1992). Raudenbush et al. warned against classifying individual teachers into "high" and "low" efficacy groups because of the many intra-teacher differences. The researchers concluded that further studies investigating reasons behind the intra-teacher differences would advance the understanding of teacher efficacy.

Woolfolk-Hoy & Spero (2005) contributed to the teacher efficacy research literature by investigating changes in teacher effectiveness during the early years of teachers' careers. These authors also subscribed to Bandura's theory of self-efficacy,

which suggests that efficacy may be most malleable early in learning. Therefore, the first years of one's teaching career could be the most critical in regard to long-term development of teacher efficacy. The authors tracked teachers from their initial Masters of Education teaching certification program through a longitudinal study. In particular, this study documented teachers' efficacy ratings at the beginning of their program, again at the end of their student teaching experience, and, lastly, at the end of their first year of teaching. Through this investigation, the authors were able to conclude that efficacy scores rose while the students were within their program, yet fell after their first year of teaching. Moreover, the authors concluded that the decline in efficacy between the student teaching and first year of teaching phases was due to the removal of support as compared to the experience the students received while they were in the program.

Academic domains are another area in the research of teacher sense of self-efficacy through which perceived self-efficacy receives considerable attention (Tucker et al., 2005; Guskey, 1987, 1988; Coladarci, T., 1992; Scheerens & Slegers, 2009; Chan, 2008; Wheatley, 2005; Bandura, 1993; Poulou, 2007; Labone, 2004). Bandura (1977; 1986) cautions that while self-efficacy is domain-specific, it is also task- and situation-specific; that is, perceptions of efficacy pertain to criteria tasks and situations in which they are studied. This perspective enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the interactive relationship between self-efficacy and performance.

Teachers who scored high in efficacy believed that their students were capable of learning in spite of their home environments. They also believed that they had the teaching ability to reach even the unmotivated students (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Student ability is undoubtedly a critical factor in a student's education. Yet, a teacher with a low

sense of efficacy tends to use a student's mental ability to justify his or her beliefs – namely, that these students cannot be taught, which is in direct contrast to the teacher that possesses a high sense of personal efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Hence, as a direct corollary of their personal efficacy, teachers belonging to the latter category genuinely believe that all students can learn, and adjust their teaching methods accordingly.

Another interesting phenomenon illustrated within the research literature is that students taught by efficacious teachers develop efficacy themselves. In other words, teacher efficaciousness has an impact on students' ability to develop efficacy. Teachers, who exhibit efficaciousness in their ability to be successful with difficult students, or with students in difficult situations, are tenacious in their efforts to help their pupils achieve success. In their tenacity, highly efficacious teachers provide successful experiences for students which, in turn, help student become efficacious themselves. Teachers with a low sense of efficacy do not believe they are able to have a positive influence on students' success in the classroom; therefore, they are more likely to give up on low-performing students and make excuses for students' lack of success. Preoccupation with their own inadequacies, as well as their students' lack of success, adds to their stress level and further impedes their effectiveness as teachers (Eisenberger et al., 2005).

Recent studies show that self-efficacy holds significant power for predicting and explaining academic performance in various domains (Lampe, 2002; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tucker et al., 2005; Guskey, 1989; Scheerens & Sleegers, 2009; Chan, 2008; Wheatley, 2005; Bandura, 1993; Poulou, 2007; Lebone, 2004 & Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Self-efficacy, described as one's self-judgments of personal capabilities to initiate and successfully perform specified tasks at designated levels, expend greater effort, and

persevere in the face of adversity (Bandura, 1977; 1986), is a relatively new construct in academic research (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Moreover, several studies have shown that the strength of teacher efficacy interacts with other teacher characteristics, such as gender, teaching experience, level of teacher's education, and cognition (Ross, 1992; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Ross, McKeiver, & Hogaboam-Gray, 1997).

In addition to these teacher characteristics, in the findings of their research, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy (2001) identified an interaction between a teacher's grade levels taught and his or her level of efficacy beliefs. Although far definitive conclusions, the findings related to interaction effects would generally suggest that females report a stronger sense of teacher efficacy than their male counterparts. The level of teacher efficacy also declines with experience, and elementary school teachers report higher levels of efficacy than middle or high school teachers. As Ross (1992) notes, however, the correlations reported are generally small and inconsistent.

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Professional Development/Teacher Quality

In the current climate of systemic reform, the professional development of teachers has taken on new prominence. There are a host of reasons for this new urgency, which ultimately center on the importance on the classroom teacher's role in promoting successful student learning. Without the continuous improvement of teaching (and of professional teachers), these reforms will undoubtedly fail. Professional development must serve the purpose of promoting teachers' continuous learning of integrating new knowledge about teaching and learning within the social contexts in which teaching takes

place. Within the context of social cognitive theory, the two most important variables influencing the impact of professional development on teachers' classroom practices are (a) teacher efficacy and (b) organizational support.

For years, educators have been bombarded with information suggesting a decline in the educational system. Much has been written about how lenient the public school system has grown, and there has been a push for education to return to a more basic and "successful" time (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986). The Carnegie Task Force, however, maintains a considerably different, more nuanced view with regard to this dilemma. The Task Force report highlighted a need for drastic changes in America's education system in order to prepare our nation's children for productive lives in the 21st century. The report suggested that today's schools must provide *all* students the same quality of education presently reserved for few, or the cost would be steady erosion of the American standard of living (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986).

A 1996 report issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), titled *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, reiterated the challenges facing our nation's schools. If there is any hope of meeting 21st century challenges and demands, this report suggested that America's schools must successfully teach more students with increasingly diverse backgrounds more effectively than ever before. Educational demands themselves are increasing in isolation; rather, the very nature of learning is changing. Students must do more than learn new facts or cover more material: they must learn to integrate and apply their knowledge in more complex ways to more difficult problems. It is essential, therefore, that teachers work in both new and

creative ways. For instance, teachers must now understand how students with different language backgrounds and cultures can be supported in learning academic content. Furthermore, they must simultaneously be able to identify and apply specific teaching strategies that will best suit an ever-widen range of student learning needs & abilities. American schools themselves must also respond appropriately to the demands of our current educational landscape. Specifically, schools must reorganize themselves to enable more intensive kinds of learning, which can be supported by new technologies (NCTAF, 1996).

Professional development interventions can have an effect on teacher efficacy by giving teachers new instructional skills and strategies (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Ross & Bruce, 2007). Brownwell & Pajares (1999) call for researchers to examine how professional development programs may change the efficacy beliefs of teachers working with students with special needs (e.g. English language learners). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) call for studies in which researchers seek to understand how efficacy is transferred between different teaching tasks, and how training programs affect teachers' sense of efficacy at various stages in their career. Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009) also argue that professional development is essential for meeting the needs of 21st century learners.

Teachers' perceived sense of self-efficacy has been linked to teacher effectiveness in a number of research studies (Allinder, 1994). Throughout the past several decades, research findings have reinforced the importance of teacher efficacy beliefs as a powerful predictor of teacher outcomes, such as willingness to implement new instructional ideas (Ross, 1992; Ross, McKeiver, & Hogaboam-Gray, 1997; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Tournaki

& Podell, 2005). Several researchers have also investigated the relationship of self-efficacy in relation to professional development and academic achievement.

Like other professionals, teachers require a continual honing of knowledge and skills in order to become more effective in their craft. Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden (2005) states, “It is important for teachers to understand their roles and responsibilities as professionals in schools that must prepare all students for equitable participation in a democratic society” (p. 35). Researchers have explored this issue by studying teacher learning in an attempt to define the characteristics of high-quality professional development that lead to positive student outcomes (Ross & Bruce, 2007; Guskey (1988, 1987; Smylie, 1988; Smylie & Conyors, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Watson, 2006). The importance of the on-going support of professional development is well documented (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Rice-King, 2003a) in building teachers’ sense of effectiveness. “Despite the general agreement about the importance of high-quality teachers, researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and the public have been unable to reach a consensus about what specific qualities characteristics that make a good teacher” (Rice-King, 2003a, p. 3).

Several studies have found a positive effect of experience on teacher effectiveness; specifically, the *learning by doing* effect is most obvious in the early years of teaching. Nevertheless, a clear sense of which specific teacher attributes really lead to improved educational outcomes should guide these important teacher preparation programs and degrees, teacher certification, teacher coursework, and teachers’ own test scores. Rice recommends that “[t]eacher policies need to reflect the reality that teaching

is a complex activity that is influenced by many elements of teacher quality” (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Rice-King, 2003, p. 2).

Interested in how the implementation of a new instructional program for mathematics would impact teacher efficacy, Ross & Bruce (2007) designed a randomized professional development (PD) study intended to increase teacher efficacy in delivering a new mathematics program. The researchers randomly assigned 106 elementary school teachers from one Canadian school district to either a PD control group or a PD treatment group. The PD was delivered over a course of the fall semester, while the control group received the same PD during the spring semester. To increase teacher efficacy, the researchers presented the PD using Bandura’s (1977) four sources of efficacy information: mastery experiences, in which teachers had opportunities for active learning through collaborate with peers; vicarious experiences, in which teachers observed experienced teachers demonstrating the new strategies; and social persuasion, where presenters assured participants that given methods would work in their own classrooms. In addition, the researchers started off by presenting less-threatening lessons to participants in order to reduce their level of anxiety and as a means to address their physiological and affective states.

Professional Development programs had a positive effect on teacher expectations about their ability to handle student-management issues in the mathematics classroom (Ross & Bruce, 2007). Although teachers’ growth with regard to their positive sense of efficacy was minimal, these findings are significant because they identify teacher efficacy as a powerful predictor of teacher outcomes, such as willingness to implement new ideas (Allinder, 1994; Ross, 1998; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Guskey,(1981,1988, 1991, 1998,

2000; Guskey & Dembo, 1984; Little, 1993; Smylie, 1988; Smylie & Conyors, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Overbaugh & Lu, 2008; Watson, 2006).

Professional development programs also impacted teachers' perceived efficacy, as long as programs helped teachers understand the needs of students with difficulties and provided specific methods for modifying the instructional program (Brownwell & Pajares, 1999). Teachers in both special and general education were more receptive to the strategies that were presented in a more personal way. Teachers found the strategies more usable when information was presented from a classroom experience point-of-view, rather than a mere empirical lens. It should also be noted, however, that experienced teachers remained less receptive to the information regardless of the presentation. The researchers caution that a personal, rather than scholarly, presentation of instructional strategies for students with special needs must be reinforced by valid and reliable research, but "dissemination efforts probably must focus on teachers' apparent proclivity for personal presentation" (Brownwell & Pajares, 1999, p. 39).

Throughout the last twenty years of educational research, the subject of professional development has clarified the distinction between effective professional development and workshops. The latter is often characterized by activities that consume an inordinate amount of teachers' valuable time; an investment which does not translate to significant increases in student achievement.

Garet et al. (2001) concisely describe the salient connections between teachers' instructional practice and their perceptions of efficacy when imbedded in effective professional development:

Teachers' ... practice changed when they received professional development that was coherent, focused on content knowledge, and involved active learning. Hands-on work that enhanced teachers' knowledge of the content and how to teach it produces a sense of efficacy, especially in that content was aligned with local curriculum and policies

Rather than conducting "one-shot workshops" in isolation, a second criterion for effective professional development is that they should part of a targeted, on-going school improvement plan through which teachers have an opportunity to use the materials, skills, and strategies learned during professional development sessions. More importantly, teachers should be given the autonomy to conduct this process within their own classroom. The third criterion for effective professional development is that teachers must be able to collaborate and communicate with each other regularly. Professional and regular collaboration is essential for teachers to help each other and feel supported as they make changes to improve student achievement. Ideally, professional development should be "sustained, coherent, and intense", PD sessions spanning in the school year and ongoing opportunities for teachers to integrate their new learning in the classroom and to reflect on their practice with colleagues" (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 48). In addition, another essential structural element of these activities is that they should provide hands-on activities aligned with the curriculum (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Upon reviewing several comprehensive studies of school policy and practices, Darling-Hammond (1998) writes: "When educators are denied access to appropriate

preparation and training they prove unable to manage complex forms of teaching, policymakers typically revert to simplistic prescriptions of practice, even though these prescriptions cannot achieve the goals they seek” (p. 13). Reform movements have often failed because they have placed too little emphasis in building capacity of the professional and the learning community.

Teachers were more likely to change as a result of professional development when they also possessed high levels of personal efficacy. Guskey discovered that teachers with high self-efficacy were more likely to adopt new practices, but that higher self-efficacy was also associated with effectiveness (although how effectiveness was measured was not defined), and so teachers with high self-efficacy least needed to adopt new practices (Guskey, 1991, 1987, 1988, 1991).

It is also important to note that stronger teacher self-efficacy going into professional development affected the extent of teacher change. Teachers were more likely to change as a result of professional development if they had high levels of personal efficacy. Moreover, high-efficacy teachers place greater emphasis on analytical and reflective learning, rather than the mere transfer of knowledge and/or strategies (Smylie, 1988, 1990).

Strong inter-correlations between overall responsibility and responsibility for student success and student failure scores were compared from the Responsibility for Student Achievement (RSA) with teacher efficacy (TE) as measured by the sum of the two Rand items. Guskey (1986) found significant positive correlations between teacher efficacy and responsibility for both student success and student failure. Positive and negative performance outcomes represent separate dimensions, not opposite ends of a

single continuum. These dimensions also operate independently in their ability to influence positive outcomes rather than simply preventing negative ones. Greater efficacy was related to more positive attitudes about teaching as well as higher levels of confidence in teaching abilities on a measure of teaching self-concept (Guskey, 1986). In addition, among teachers receiving training in Mastery Learning, more efficacious teachers tended to rate mastery learning more important, more congruent with their current teaching practices, and less difficult than teachers with weaker efficacy beliefs (Guskey, 1981, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1998).

The difficulty associated with translating professional development into student achievement gains – despite their intuitive and logical connection – is explored by Guskey & Yoon's (2009) research study entitled *What Works in Professional Development?* A massive study of professional development yielded some unexpected findings regarding professional development and its links to student learning. This research synthesis confirms that those responsible for planning and implementing professional development must learn how to critically assess and evaluate the effectiveness of what they do.

In another study titled *Technology Professional Development: Long-term Effects on Teacher Self-Efficacy*, the effects of a project on the long-term self-efficacy of in-service teachers and their use of the internet in the classroom were examined (Watson, 2006). The researcher's results highlighted several points which indicated the following:

- (a) Teachers improved level of self-efficacy after the summer workshops remained high even years after their involvement with the program;

- (b) Combining an intense summer workshop with additional online courses shows a significant differences in some aspects of self-efficacy over just having a professional development workshop; and
- (c) Certain external factors do affect teacher self-efficacy over the long-term.

(Watson, 2006, p. 151)

In summary, results indicated that teacher training has a long-term effect on teacher self-efficacy towards using the Internet in the classroom. There was only a slight downward, statistically insignificant, change in feelings of self-efficacy from the post-workshop survey and the survey conducted seven years later.

A strong sense of teacher efficacy has been linked to several positive educational outcomes, including increased student achievement (Ross, 1992; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996; Ross & Bruce, 2007). However, subsequent studies have shown that a teacher's belief in his/her instructional efficacy is not consistent when presented with different subject matter or students with diverse needs (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). This finding is especially relevant in the current inquiry given the diversity of English Language Learners served by teachers.

The deep structures of teacher efficacy were investigated and three conditions were found to have a salient effect on a teachers' level of instructional efficacy: implementation of innovation, contextual influences, and career stage (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). In the current era of accountability, reform efforts are commonplace and many educators are immersed in an environment suffused with innovation and change. Such conditions result in the lowering of teacher efficacy beliefs

as teachers learn new skills and go about the process of incorporating the new information into their repertoire of skills (Guskey & Sparks, 1996, 1991).

Teacher efficacy – more specifically, personal teaching efficacy – has also been found to be a significant predictor of “instructional implementation, including willingness to try a variety of materials and approaches, the desire to find better ways of teaching, and implementation of progressive and innovative methods” (Allinder, 1994, quoted in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, 214). This is not surprising given that teachers with high-efficacy expectations are likely to try out innovative ideas, extend more effort and persist in the face of obstacles and challenges, while maintaining a strong commitment to what they set out to do (Bandura, 1991).

A teacher’s level of personal efficacy affects one’s general orientation toward the educational process as well as his or her special instructional activities (Bandura, 1977). The fluctuations in teacher efficacy during the implementation of destreaming were examined to assess the professional development effect on teacher self-efficacy beliefs, measures of achievement and coaching (Ross, 1992). The key findings included demonstrated that students of teachers who interact more with their coach experience higher overall levels of achievement. In addition, students maintain higher levels of academic achievement when taught by teachers who possess higher self-efficacy beliefs themselves. The negative correlations between reliance on school administrators and other measures were also examined. Furthermore, personal teaching efficacy, rather than general teaching efficacy was prominent. Therefore, researchers propose that teaching efficacy should be viewed as a fluctuating, malleable state rather than as a trait.

The possible effects of educational reform to teachers' expectations about their professional effectiveness, and the fluctuations of teacher efficacy during destreaming professional development, were explored with the purpose of identifying possible factors that contributed to the resurgence of teacher efficacy (Ross, McKeiver & Hogaboam-Gray, 1997). The researchers found that an important factor contributing to the rebound of teacher efficacy beliefs was that teachers accumulated personal and credible evidence that students at the upper and lower ends of ability range were more successful than the teachers had anticipated. Other personal factors also contributed to teacher efficacy recovery. Moreover, findings indicated that mentors were revitalized, empowered and well aware of their competencies. The most powerful factor was teachers' expectation of future success. The researchers consider the study's findings demonstrating the importance of viewing teacher efficacy, as a dynamic characteristic that changes over time. In addition, for practitioners, this study shows that factors influencing the rebound of teacher efficacy can be harnessed for school improvement.

The relationship among teacher experience, teacher efficacy, and attitudes toward the implementation of instructional innovation was investigated. The data gathered indicated that experience was negatively correlated, personal teaching efficacy positively correlated, and general teaching efficacy not correlated with teachers' attitude toward implementing new instructional practices (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997). Teachers' experience was negatively correlated with their sense of general teaching efficacy and to their ratings of the importance of implementing instructional innovation. Meanwhile, experience was positively correlated with teachers' rating of the difficulty of using the instructional innovation, The Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD). Teachers' sense of

personal teaching efficacy was found to be positively correlated with their ratings of The Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD), as more congruent with their present practices, less difficult to implement, and very important. General teacher efficacy appears to have little, if any, bearing on their attitudes toward the implementation of new practices such as STAD. According to the researchers, these findings suggest that teachers with high sense of personal teaching efficacy are more likely to implement instructional innovations. The results obtained are generally supportive of measuring personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy as separate indices (i.e., dealing with inexperienced and experienced teachers differently), and enhancing personal teaching efficacy. This is especially apropos given that there appears to be a strong determinant of teachers' willingness to adopt new practices.

In their 2005 study, titled *Factors Affecting the Impact of Professional Development Programs on Teachers' Knowledge, Practice, and Student Outcomes & Efficacy*, Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis examined effects of structural and process features of professional development programs on teachers' knowledge, practice and efficacy. This particular study is based on four recent studies undertaken through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program, designed to enhance teacher quality (Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis, 2005). The total data set for the survey study includes 3,250 teachers who had participated in eighty individual professional development activities within these studies. Teachers were surveyed at least three months after participating in an activity, which provided them with the opportunity to gauge the impact of programs on their practice. To investigate factors affecting impact, a theoretical model was developed based on recent research into the characteristics of effective professional development

and tested using block-wise regression analysis. Consistent significant direct effects were found across the four studies for the impact of content focus, active learning, and follow-up on knowledge and professional community. Feedback was rarely incorporated into program design. Impact on efficacy was strongly related to the perceived impact of activities on teachers' practice and student learning outcomes.

Another study examined the interaction between student and teacher characteristics affecting teachers' predictions of students' academic and social success (Tournaki & Podell, 2005). This study of three hundred and eighty-four general education teachers responded to (a) one of 32 possible case studies describing a student, (in which gender, reading achievement, social behavior, and attentiveness were manipulated experimentally) and (b) to a 16-item teacher-efficacy scale. The subsequent results demonstrated the following:

1. Teachers with high-efficacy make fewer negative predictions about students, and seem to adjust their predictions when student characteristics change. By comparison, low efficacy teachers seem to pay attention to a single characteristic when making their predictions.
2. All teachers respond similarly to a student who exhibits a combination of aggressive and inattentive behaviors; that is, if students are friendly, inattentiveness is tolerated more than if they are aggressive.
3. All teachers make higher predictions of academic success for students reading on grade level even when they are aggressive, than for students reading below grade level even when they are friendly. The authors discussed the

importance of attending to the complexity of characteristics each student brings in to the classroom.

Teacher Self-Efficacy, Professional Development/Teacher Quality & Bilingual/ELL Education

It is commonly accepted that teachers are the primary and most influential agents of change in the classroom practices (Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tucker, et al., 2005). As such, research into the characteristics of quality teachers can render critical information that informs teacher training on how to meet the needs of ELL students. Teachers of ELL students' lack of both preparation and support significantly challenges teachers who work with (ELLs) English Language Learners (Gándara, Maxwell Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). Tellez & Waxman (2005) suggest that teachers of ELLs cannot be reasonably prepared for each and every student population. However, they endorse reforms for teacher education policy and practice in three areas: (a) pre-service teachers' acquisition of cultural knowledge, (b) pre-service teachers' knowledge of second language acquisition, and (c) the value of targeted recruitment of Latino teachers would improve the education of Latinos (Hispanics) significantly (p. 43).

In a 1995 special issue of the TESOL Quarterly, Lazaraton (1995) suggested that "the number and quality of qualitative studies in second language learning was bound to increase and consequently, have a greater impact in the instructional domain" (Téllez & Waxman, 2006, p. 246). Nonetheless, qualitative studies that focus specifically on Bilingual/ESL teachers' sense of efficacy remain limited, but there are a several studies that focus on English language learner (ELL) teachers. In particular, they focus on how

their sense of efficacy is affected by influencing factors, such as professional development, environment, and the demands of cultural diversity. A review of a number of the significant studies follows.

While there has been very little research that specifically examines the efficacy beliefs of bilingual/ELL teachers, one notable exception was a study that assessed the teacher efficacy beliefs of Mexican-American teachers, or “normalistas”, prior to entering the bilingual educator preparation programs in the United States (Bustos Flores & Riojas Clark, 2004). The authors argue convincingly that participants’ beliefs about their character and moral worth were critically linked to their sense of efficacy as a teacher. Using a multivariate regression analysis, the researchers were able to provide empirical evidence of these phenomena emphasizing the finding that the group overall had a positive sense of teaching efficacy.

Another study focused on the relationship between teacher efficacy beliefs and student language background. The efficacy of teachers from ethnic groups – not including Caucasians – increased with diversity training (Tasan, 2001). The results of this study suggested that teacher efficacy can be changed through teacher preparation and professional development to work with English language learners (ELLs).

Furthermore, another study on ELL students and teacher efficacy concluded that teachers with greater efficacy are less likely to refer students with specific learning needs or disabilities to special education. The study’s findings also indicated that ELLs from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were more frequently referred to special education than students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Podell & Soodak, 1993). The

researchers deduced that special education referral and placement decisions were related to teacher efficacy and not based on only educational needs (Podell & Soodak, 1993).

Another important study addressed the critical issue of meeting the “Highly Qualified Teacher” challenges with regard to teachers of English Language Learners, which has increased the already arduous burden on school districts to hire bilingual education teachers in the low socio-economic areas (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). The study findings suggest that needs and challenges of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers must be addressed. Specifically, efforts must be made to improve teacher effectiveness by providing new bilingual/ELL teachers with relevant professional development that will help them effectively overcome the overwhelming challenges they face, which will ultimately alleviate the number of bilingual/ELL teachers leaving the profession (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

This California study included teachers from 22 small, medium, and large school districts, and incorporated quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the specific areas where teachers who taught English as a second language needed support (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). With an impressive sample size of 5300 educators, the researchers were able to provide important descriptive statistics on the needs of teachers serving English Language Learners in California. The researchers also made important teacher comparisons based on their level of certification. Gándara and her colleagues have produced several seminal works on issues regarding ELLs, and this study is no less significant.

Using the analyses generated from this study, the researchers noted nine findings that serve to inform educators’ efforts to develop relevant and meaningful professional

development (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). These include a description of the most common challenges reported by teachers (i.e. barriers to communication, time constraints, a wide range of student academic and language levels, and a lack of teaching resources) and the finding that many teachers had often sporadic, if any, training with regard to linguistically diverse students. Moreover, researchers found that teachers with more preparation were more aware of the shortcomings in instructional programs and resources presented to these students. Finally, they concluded that “[g]reater preparation for teaching ELLs equaled greater teacher confidence with their skills for working with these students successfully” (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005, p. 17).

Another study concluded that at-risk students, as well as Latino students, were empowered by teachers to create their own technological design (Liu & Rutledge, 1997). These findings suggested that through teachers’ persistent efforts, students identified a personal meaning for learning, as well as a personal identity as a learner. Teacher efficacy had a direct and positive effect on the self-efficacy of these students’ learning experiences. Those with low self-efficacy favor a custodial orientation that relies on extrinsic inducement and punishment to improve learning. Teachers with strong self-efficacy support development of students’ intrinsic interests, which helps to foster improved student self-efficacy (Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1990). Studies concerning the effects of Latino and other minority students suggest that teachers play a major role in heightening the self-efficacy of Latino students (Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). Teacher efficacy may be a vital factor in preparing Latinos to maintain the economic vitality of the United States.

Additionally, studies suggest that Latino students become disengaged from school because they perceive teachers as disinterested in them. Teachers perceived Latino students as having “problems” in school (Franquiz & Salazar, 2004). Another study suggests that teachers believed that matters concerning student success were beyond their control, and generally took the view that opportunities exist if Latino students reach them and persist, tending to blame communities and families for student failure (Espinosa-Herold, 2003). This feeling of futility among the teachers towards the students supports Bandura’s (1991) description of a teacher with a sense of low teacher efficacy. As a result, these teachers expressed a sense of powerlessness in the decisions that affect them and their students. These factors are a bane to Latino students’ success and poses important areas through which the educational environment might be reshaped and improved for minority student success.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study will address two research questions: (a) What are high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development? And, (b) what resources, means of delivery and organizational support at the school level do high self-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceive as promoting effective professional development? Both educators and their students can benefit from differentiated instruction. For example, for the teachers themselves, instruction may consist of professional development opportunities that are relevant to their needs. Gaining a better understanding of how to nurture Bilingual/ELL teachers through specific professional development opportunities may, ultimately, translate to positive affects in regard to the (ELLs) English Language Learners' academic success. Namely, the degree to which Bilingual/ELL teachers are prepared to meet the needs of English Language learners may have an indirect effect on individual student outcomes.

The data generated in the present study will be collected through interviews (The Woolfolk Teachers Efficacy Survey [TES]), a review of district archival data, a Teacher Demographic Questionnaire (TDQ), and the researcher's field notes. And, again, the research questions that this study will focus on are: (a) What are teachers' perceptions of effective professional development? And, (b) what resources, means of delivery and organizational support at the school level do teachers' perceive as promoting effective professional development?

High quality staff development provides educators with opportunities to understand their own attitudes regarding race, social class, and culture – as well as how their attitudes affect their teaching practices and expectations for student learning and behavior (Guskey, 1991, 2000). As stated by Bandura (1997): “The task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers” (p. 240). This chapter outlines the researcher’s methodology, and denotes how it will be organized in following sections: Introduction and overview, research design overview, data-collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness.

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative research is grounded in a constructivist philosophical position. Thus, in this sense, it is concerned with how the complexities of the socio-cultural world are experienced, interpreted, and understood in a particular social context and at a particular point in time (Maxwell, 2005). In addition, attaining a greater understanding of the factors that facilitate or inhibit efficacy beliefs would be valuable. Qualitative studies may bring about needed insight to understand teachers’ perspectives about their successes and disappointments (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Woolfolk Hoy, A. & Hoy, 1998).

Furthermore, qualitative research deals with different perspectives or points of view, such as social & practical purposes, and the researcher’s own personal purpose. Qualitative research methods can provide us with a “snapshot” of the efficacy beliefs of teachers at a particular point in time, along with important cultural influences on the construction of their efficacy beliefs (Shaughnessy, 2004). Interviews can identify

teachers' experiences and beliefs expressed in their own words, and as colored by their own emotions. Qualitative research studies can bring insight and understanding with regard to how teacher efficacy beliefs are formed; subsequently, supporting the investigation of interventions that enhance teacher efficacy (Shaughnessy, 2004). Qualitative research deals with different perspectives or points of view such as: social, practical purpose and the researcher's personal purpose (Labone, 2004).

Practical Purpose

Practical purpose is focused on accomplishing something, meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some objective. This research's practical purpose is to explore common instructional practices among high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers, and what they perceive to be relevant professional development that meet their essential needs. The researcher also intends to highlight the shortages in the research literature with regard to Bilingual/ELL teachers' self-efficacy in order to provide them with a voice of advocacy. Learning environments that reap high student achievement consists of teachers with high-efficacy and who are heavily talented (Bandura, 1997). The level of confidence teachers display in their instructional efficacy partly determines how they structure academic activities in their classrooms, and how they assess students in their intellectual progress (Bandura, 1997).

Gibson & Dembo (1984) measured teachers' efficacy by their ability to motivate and educate difficult students beyond the adverse effects the home and community can have on academic achievement. Teachers with a high level of self-efficacy operate on the notion that difficult students are teachable through extra effort and the appropriate

instructional strategies. These particular teachers enlist parental support, and they help students overcome outside negative influences through effective and deliberate instruction. Teachers who have a high sense of instructional efficacy devote more classroom time to student achievement, support students who have a difficult time comprehending and learning new concepts, and celebrate with students when they accomplish or achieve a goal (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Professional development aimed at these teachers should center on helping them better perform these deliberate tasks.

Personal Purpose

The researcher's personal purpose refers to what Strauss & Corbin (1998) believes is "theoretical sensitivity", which comes from a number of sources, including professional literature, professional experiences, and personal experiences. It is the researcher's goal to make sense of a defined body of work in its own terms; understand the insights and limitations of this work. This research will contribute to the research community by expanding and enriching the theoretical conceptions of teacher efficacy to include the professional development needs of high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers.

As a Bilingual/ELL teacher and a Latina, I have, from the start of my education career, been extremely interested in exploring ways to improve the teaching profession for Bilingual/ELL teachers and the academic success of English language learners. I believe that the classroom teacher is the most important influencing factor in relation to student achievement. Considering the current propensity of the increasing English Language Learner population, it behooves educators to provide professional development

that helps teachers to utilize new and innovative strategies that are supported by current and valid research

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study consisted of rigorous qualitative, multi-site ethnographic interviews and their analysis and synthesis. It is the researcher's contention that quantitative methods are uncertain to elicit the rich data necessary to address the proposed research purposes (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). "Qualitative methodologies enable detailed investigations of the processes involved in such reflective practices and the impact of these practices on the development of teacher efficacy beliefs" (Labone, 2004, p. 346). Historically, qualitative research has revealed that the modern social science disciplines have taken as their mission "the analysis and understanding of the patterned conduct and social processes of society" (Vidich & Lyman, 2000, p. 37).

Using qualitative techniques, the perceptions of high-efficacy teachers regarding professional development were examined in order to identify what they perceive to be effective professional development activities that genuinely address their essential needs. Data collection conducted applied a naturalistic approach of semi-structured individual interviews of volunteer participants from the four elementary campuses in a school district. The interview protocol provides the listing of the overarching research questions and subsets of discussion questions for the semi-structured interviews addressed the issues identified above.

The main form of data collection of this study was semi-structured interviews of approximately 6 of the district's bilingual elementary school teachers previously identified as high-efficacy to better understand how and why these high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers make the difficult choices of about what they do, how they learn to do what they do, and what they consider to be relevant and effective professional development that serves their needs. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Transcripts were analyzed using continuous comparative analysis to identify patterns and themes. When collecting and coding qualitative data, identifying patterns in it is an essential goal (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). These methods achieved the three major components of qualitative research; obtaining data from various sources, procedures used for organizational, interpretive means, and verbal or written reports (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The researcher worked with a committee of experts (i.e. her dissertation committee) to design and implement this study. Before interview questions were used to collect data for the study, each question was reviewed, critiqued, modified and/or approved by the committee members. Questions were validated for content, relevance, clarity, and ambiguity of wording. The semi-structured interview was selected as the primary method of data collection in this ethnographic study. Semi-structured interviews supplied the researcher an opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information. A major benefit of collecting data through individual, in depth interviews is that they offer the potential to capture a person's perspective of an event or experience (Creswell, 1994, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000). The interview is a fundamental tool in qualitative research because of its "attempt to understand the world from the subject's

point of view, to unfold their lived world. . .” (Kvale, 1996, p 1). The researcher’s logic for using this data-collection method was to interact with people (i.e., talk to and listen to them), thereby capturing the meaning of their experience in their own words.

Although interviews have certain strengths there are various limitations associated with interviewing. First, not all people are equally cooperative, articulate, and perspective. Second, interviews require researcher skill. Third, interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering, they are the result of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and the context in which they take place (Fontana & Frey 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Schwandt, 1997; Schwandt, 1997, 2005).

The Research Participants

A purposeful sampling procedure was used to select this study’s sample to yield the information to investigate the study’s research questions. The criteria for selection of participants was that all participating Bilingual/ELL teachers have high-efficacy, had to be employed by the school district, and were assigned to teach bilingual classes in PK-5 grade. Potential phase II participants were identified through review of district archival data (The Woolfolk Teachers Efficacy Survey [TES]). The study volunteers solicited were from among those teachers whose scores indicate high-efficacy.

School District Setting

The specific district being studied is relatively small and resides in a suburban community in a Texas metropolitan area. Like many other school districts in the surrounding region, this district has experienced substantial growth in their English language learner population over the last few decades. To address this trend, the district

has recently implemented a dual-language program in one of the four elementary schools, in addition to the transitional bilingual program in the other three elementary bilingual campuses. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Academic Indicators of Excellence System (AIES) report shows that the district's Latino student population has grown significantly in the last 30 years. In the 1988-89 school year, the district's Latino student population was a mere 158 (14.5%). Now, however, it has grown to the total of 5,306 (42.5%) students. The district's 2008-09 AIES reports an English Language Learners population (LEP-Limited English Proficient) of 1,294 (10.4 %); an economically disadvantaged population count of 4,570 (36.6%) students; an at-risk student count of 4,533 (36.4); and a total of 1,274 (10.2%) students enrolled in the Bilingual/ESL program. Table 3.1 shows the elements of the district's Latino population from the AIES report information.

Table 3.1

2008-09 Student Population Demographics

| Identifier | District | Percentage | State | Percentage |
|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Latino | 5,306 | 42.5% | 2,264,367 | 47.9% |
| LEP | 1,294 | 10.4% | 799,801 | 16.9% |
| Eco. Dis.* | 4,570 | 36.6% | 2,681,474 | 56.7% |
| At-Risk | 1,274 | 36.4% | 2,285,954 | 48.3% |
| Bilingual/ESL | | 10.2% | 757,146 | 16.0% |

Note: Data gathered from Texas Education Agency (TEA) AEIS 2008-Report.

*Economically Disadvantaged

The study participants consisted of six high-efficacy elementary bilingual (English/Spanish) teachers. Participants will be elementary school Bilingual/ELL teachers; there will be differences among them having to do with years of experiences, age, gender, and prior professional development experiences.

Research Overview

To carry out this research, the following steps will be used. Following this list the researcher will provide a more in-depth discussion of each of specific steps.

1. Approval from the IRB, which involved outlining all procedures and processes needed to ensure adherence to standards put forth for the study of human subjects, including participants' confidentiality and informed consent.
2. The high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers (i.e., potential research participants) will be contacted in person through short initial meetings to request their consent to be included in the face-to-face interview phase of the research.
3. If the subject decides to participate, he/she will complete each of the instruments: Teachers Background Questionnaire (TDQ) and the participant Consent Form will be returned to the researcher after the initial presentation meetings.
4. Face-to-face interviews with high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers (identified from district's archival data from the Woolfolk-Hoy teacher Efficacy Scale).
5. Semi-structured, in-depth ethnographic interviews will be conducted with approximately 6 elementary Bilingual/ELL teachers in up to three separate interviews sessions, which will range between 45-60 minutes in length. The researcher will audio record and transcribe all of the interviews.

6. Interview data responses will be analyzed for common themes and patterns.

Data-Collection Methods

Prior to the face-to-face interviews, the researcher's first step will be the process of evaluating the archival data (modified short version of the Woolfolk & Hoy Teacher Efficacy Survey) for the identification of the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers and then the selection of interview participants. The researcher will choose those Bilingual/ELL teachers with the highest efficacy, and who fall in the same score range. The researcher's goal is to acquire 6 interviewee participants, and to have participant representation from each of the four campuses.

An initial analysis of the interview data content will be conducted to account for specific themes of professional development delivery, resources, and support that the Bilingual/ELL teachers report. These will include specific themes of how professional development contributes to high-efficacy teachers' effective instructional practices, what they perceive to be effective professional development, delivery, relevance, follow-up support, and resources and materials to implement these new ideas. High-quality staff development provides educators with opportunities to understand their own attitudes regarding race, social class, and culture, and how their attitudes affect their teaching practices and expectations for student learning and behavior (Guskey, 2001). Again, the description of Bandura (1997) is apropos: "The task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers" (p. 240). The specific characteristics of how professional

development programs were organized and presented to the Bilingual/ELL teachers will also be as follows:

- Whether it was sustained over an appropriate duration of time; whether it was connected to teacher needs; and if time was allowed for teacher reflection.
- Whether application and evaluation was conducted, whether it included follow-up activities involving peer support and integration; and
- Whether or not there was administrative support.

The use of multiple methods and triangulation is critical in attempting to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and in this study. And, such understanding will be sought through multiple interviews (up to three) with each participant. This strategy will add rigor, breadth, and depth to the study.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data will follow the ethnographic analysis process (Seidman, 2006), and comparative methods for coding directly from the interview data. The analytical objectives of this study will describe variation, and describe and explain relationships, individual experiences, and group norms. Some aspects of the study will be flexible; participant responses to the open-ended, semi-structured interview questions will affect how and which questions the researcher will ask next. The study's design is iterative: Data collection and research questions will be adjusted according to what is learned. The researcher will collect all interview data and transcribe the data and field notes to analyze the development of patterns and themes.

The researcher will listen carefully to what the participants say, engage with them according to their individual personalities and styles, and use probes to encourage them to elaborate their answers. The interviews will be audio-recorded as the primary method of creating text from interviews to transcribe them. Vygotsky states, "Each word a participant speaks reflects his or her consciousness" (Seidman, 2006). The audio-recorded interviews will offer a variety of benefits to both the researcher and the participants. The researcher has the benefit of having access to the participant's original interview data to refer to if something is unclear upon further review. The researcher can return to the participant, which demonstrates accountability to the data. The audio-recordings will also benefit the participant, who will have the assurance that there is a record of their responses, to which they have access. This process can give them more confidence that their words will be represented responsibly and reliably (Seidman, 2006). Transcripts will be examined multiple times to ensure that the data reflects the most accurate reflection of participant thoughts and words.

Ethical Considerations

A social science researcher has a responsibility for both informing and protecting respondents. Therefore, ethical issues relating to protection of the participants are a vital concern (Berg, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam, 1998). The research process involves enlisting voluntary cooperation, and it is a basic premise that participants will be informed about the study's purpose. The central issue with respect to protecting participants is the way in which information is treated. Although it is anticipated that no serious ethical threats will be posed to any of the participants or their well-being, this

study will employ various safe-guards to ensure the protection and rights of the participants.

Informed consent will remain a priority throughout this study. Cautionary measures will be taken to secure the storage of research records and data, and no person other than the researcher and her advisor will have access to the material. In addition, written consent to voluntarily proceed with the study will be obtained from each participant prior to initiating the data collection. Participants' rights and interests will be considered of primary importance when choices are made regarding the reporting and dissemination of data. The researcher is committed to keeping the names and/or other significant identity characteristics of the participating organization confidential.

In any qualitative research project, four issues of trustworthiness demand attention: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *conformability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). *Credibility* is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a "credible" conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). *Transferability* is the degree to which the findings can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the project. *Dependability*: An assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. *Conformability* is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings be "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). This is quite different from the conventional experimental precedent of attempting to show validity, soundness, and significance. In this inquiry, trustworthiness will be enhanced through the strategies listed below.

The study has the potential to contain certain limiting conditions – some of which are related to the common critiques of qualitative research methodology in general, and some of which are inherent in this study’s research design. Careful thought has been given to ways of accounting for these possible limitations and ways of minimizing their impact. Qualitative studies in general are limited by researcher subjectivity because analysis ultimately rests with the thinking and choices of the researcher. Therefore, an overriding concern is that of researcher bias in framing, as it does, assumptions, interests, perceptions, and needs.

One of the key limitations of this study may be the issue of subjectivity and potential bias regarding the researcher’s own participation in elementary teaching bilingual experiences. Recognizing these limitations, data will be scrutinized by advisors and through peer review. During data analysis, all participant names will be removed and will be coded in all interview transcripts blindly so as not to associate any material or data with any particular individual. To address the problem of participant reactivity, reflection on how and in what ways the researcher might be influencing participants will be considered. Furthermore, a conscious effort will be made to create an environment that is conducive to honest and open dialogue.

Credibility. To enhance the methodological validity of this study, the researcher will employ a variety of methods of data-collection to triangulate data sources. Gathering data from multiple methods will yield a fuller and richer picture of the phenomenon under review. Interpretive validity of this study will be carried out with the use of various strategies: Clarify assumptions up front, and the steps through which interpretations are made will be charted. The researcher will employ various

participatory and collaborative modes of research that include the search for discrepant evidence and review (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher will also look for variation in the understanding of the phenomenon and seek instances that might challenge her expectations or emergent findings. Reviewing and discussing findings with professional colleagues will be a further way of ensuring that the reality of the participants will be adequately reflected in the findings. The criterion for credibility (or validity) suggests that the findings are accurate and credible from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. This criterion will become a key component of this qualitative research design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Transferability. Although generalizability is not the intended goal of this study, the issue of transferability is what will be addressed primarily (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The issue of transferability deals with the way a reader determines whether and to what extent one particular phenomenon in one particular context can transfer to another particular context. Patton (1990) promotes the notion of transferability as the thinking of “context-bound extrapolations” (p. 491), which he defines as “speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but no identical conditions” (p. 489). Toward this end, the issue of transferability will be addressed by way of thick, rich descriptions of the participants and their contexts, which will provide the basis for a qualitative account’s claim to relevance in some broader context (Schram, 2003).

Aside from issues pertaining to bias and reactivity, a further major limitation in terms of transferability may be that the research sample is restricted to the number of

Bilingual/ELL teachers in the specific district that will be used in this study. Therefore, a critique of this research might be the limited possibility of generalizing to other groups. Generalizability was not the intended goal of this study; instead, what the researcher will address is the issue of transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By way of rich descriptions, as well as detailed information regarding the context and background of the study, it is anticipated that knowledge could be assessed for its applicability and applied appropriately in other contexts.

Confirmability. This term refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. There are a number of strategies for enhancing the confirmability of this study. For example, checking and rechecking of the collected study data will document confirmability. The researcher will actively search for and describe *negative instances* that contradict prior observations in the textual data. After the study, a *data audit* will be conducted by a fellow doctorate student to examine the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgments about the potential for bias or distortion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of what they consider to be relevant professional development that meets their essential needs. Differences in teachers' ability to perform at the highest levels of achievement correlate with variances in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1993, 1997). Investigations of possible relationships between high-efficacy ELL teachers' and various forms of professional development can contribute to a knowledge base for bilingual education and teacher efficacy. In addition, it can also have implications for positive changes in the achievement of the diverse student populations. Bilingual/ELL teachers were chosen in lieu of the lack of studies on these specific groups' professional development needs. The study was conducted in three phases using qualitative methods of ethnographic analysis of individual semi-structured interviews. The individual semi-structured interviews were used to answer the following research questions: What are high self-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development content? What (a) *resources*, (b) *means of delivery* and (c) *organizational support* at the school level do high self-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceive as promoting effective professional development content?

Interviews provided multi-faceted understanding of the impact that high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teacher perceptions on professional development have on their instructional effectiveness and challenges they face. Ultimately, these perceptions can

inform professional development for bilingual teachers in ways that may, subsequently, impact student academic outcomes. Detailed analysis of the categories revealed through constant comparative analysis of the interviews with selected high-efficacy teachers comprises the majority of this chapter. A summary detailing differences and similarities is provided at the conclusion of this chapter.

Overview

This chapter identifies the categories in the present study. The three sections include a description of the participants' gleaned from the Teacher Demographic Questionnaires (or TDQ), a description of the archival district data, selection of the study participants and discussion of categories emerging from analysis of the interview data. To determine codes, the researcher searched for specific themes within each research question. Preceding interview cycles analysis of emerging codes and patterns reflecting the research questions were developed. The researcher provides data presenting the perceptions of bilingual/ELL teachers and a preliminary discussion of general themes that emerged through analysis. The researcher's field notes also helped to provide a study narrative, clarification of the study, and relevant procedures during the project. In conclusion, the researcher triangulated the data and synthesized the themes in relation to the research questions to formulate correlations to professional literature. More detailed links to the professional literature will be presented in Chapter Five. The analysis identifies what the high-efficacy bilingual teacher samples identify as vital in professional development to their instructional effectiveness and the academic achievement of the ELLs.

Participants

The process of selection for teachers to participate in Phase II involved the initial step of the researcher reviewing 22 bilingual/ELL teacher volunteers' self-efficacy scores on the Woolfolk-Hoy Teacher Self-Efficacy scale instrument. Ten teachers scoring in the high range from the group of 22 teacher volunteers were selected for interviews. The 22 teacher volunteers' scores ranged from 36-43. In addition to the teacher scores used in the selection process, the researcher also utilized prior knowledge from working with some of the Bilingual/ELL teachers participating in this study. Contact via telephone and email was made to coordinate interview schedules. Subsequently, the researcher ensured interview schedules accommodated participants' busy schedules; interviews were held after school as preferred by all participants. The location preferred by 8 of the ten teachers was their classrooms. One teacher chose her home, and another was interviewed in the researcher's classroom.

As shown in Table 4.1 below, the ten participants selected for Phase II include Bilingual/ELL teachers from four bilingual elementary campuses (8 from the Early-Exit/Transitional Bilingual Program and 2 from the Dual Language bilingual program). The selected participants Teacher Self-Efficacy scores ranged from 36-43, which indicates that they possessed high-efficacy. These measures of efficacy were determined by their overall scores on the Teacher Efficacy Scale.

Table 4.1

Phase II: Interview Participants' Demographic Data

| Part | Age | Gender | Birth Place | Grade | Degree | EXPER. (Yrs.) | TSE | CERT. |
|-------|-----|--------|----------------|-------|--------|------------------|-----|---------------|
| A017 | 28 | F | USA | 1 | BACH. | 3 | 36 | BIL/ESL |
| A018 | 30 | M | USA | 2 | BACH. | 6 | 38 | BIL/ESL/E.C. |
| A019 | 31 | F | USA | 2 | BACH. | 9 | 44 | BIL/ESL |
| B016 | 36 | M | MEX. | 3 | BACH. | 5 | 43 | BIL/ESL |
| B002 | 26 | F | USA | 4 | M.Ed. | 7 | 37 | BIL/ESL |
| B003 | 27 | F | USA | 4 | BACH. | 7 | 40 | BIL/ESL |
| C003* | 37 | F | MEX. | K | M.Ed. | 8 | 39 | BIL/ESL/E.C./ |
| C004 | 35 | F | USA | K | BACH. | 11 | 35 | BIL/ESL/E.C. |
| D002 | 42 | F | USA | PK | BACH. | 17 | 37 | BIL/ESL/E.C. |
| D003 | 4 | F | USA | PK | BACH. | 6 | 49 | BIL/ESL |

Note: Data was collected from the Phase II Bilingual/ELL teachers' demographic questionnaires. Initial letter indicates campus locations (A,B, C, D); TSE =

Teachers' self-efficacy score; CERT. = Teachers' certification received (BIL - Bilingual; ESL -

English as a Second Language; E.C. = Early Childhood); EXPER. = Experience

*Subject has also received a Texas Principal Certification.

Setting

The study was conducted in a relatively small district in a suburban community in a Texas metropolitan area (See Table 4.3). As is the case in a considerable number of school districts, the sample district within this study has experienced substantial growth in their English language learner student population over the last few decades. To both

protect and respect the anonymity of schools, the researcher referred to schools by alphanumeric codes. Among a total of 60 Bilingual/ELL teachers 22 Bilingual/ELL teachers volunteered for Phase II: Individual Interviews. Then, the 10 teachers elected were contacted for interviews. The researcher worked with a committee of experts to design and implement the study, particularly with regard to specific study methodology. Before research questions were used to collect data for the study, each question was reviewed, critiqued, modified, and/or approved by a committee of experts (i.e., the researcher's dissertation committee) in the fields of research design, Bilingual/ELL education, and professional development. Items were discarded or revised to reflect these comments.

The study included teachers from four elementary campuses (See Table 4.2). These four elementary schools also accommodate the district's bilingual programs. One campus previously provided English instruction with English as a second language for English language learners. However, this campus recently has added a 50/50 dual language program model, which is currently in its third year of implementation. The other three elementary campuses implement the transitional (also known as "early exit") bilingual program for the districts' remaining bilingual student population. According to the Texas Education Agency's 2010 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for each campus, the English language learner (LEP, Limited English Proficient) population for each campus is as follows: Campus A (the dual language campus) has 95 bilingual/ELL students or 10.6%; Campus B has 367 bilingual/ELL students or 48.2%; Campus C has 283 bilingual/ELL students or 37.0%; and Campus D has 17 bilingual/ELL students or 37.4%. The four elementary campuses in this study have

similarities among their student populations and programs. However, one campus presents a unique situation resulting from the placement of the dual language program in the school in 2009/10.

Table 4.2

Characteristics of District Campuses A, B, C, and D

| Characteristics | District | A | B | C | D |
|------------------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Enrollment | 12,436 | 898 | 762 | 764 | 366 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | |
| Anglo | 3,673 | 469 | 126 | 31 | 88 |
| Hispanic | 5,475 | 394 | 606 | 632 | 261 |
| African | 316 | 26 | 28 | 31 | 13 |
| N. American | 40 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Pacific Islander | 232 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| EcoDis. | 5,258 | 363 | 613 | 652 | 295 |
| ELL | 1,294 | 95 | 367 | 283 | 137 |
| At-Risk | 4,404 | 311 | 541 | 388 | 141 |
| Mobility | 541 | 86 | 108 | 123 | 0 |
| Program | | | | | |
| Bilingual | 1,303 | 134 | 365 | 281 | 137 |
| GT | 808 | 40 | 4 | 17 | 0 |
| Special Ed. | 1,274 | 72 | 84 | 39 | 117 |

Note: Data obtained from the Texas Education Agency 2009/10 AIES report.

Qualitative Data

Data collection took place within a three month period following approval and assurance that proper permission documents were in order. All four campus administrators were supportive of the researcher completing the study's interviews. Individual semi-structured interviews were held with two or three teachers from each participating elementary bilingual campus contingent on the number of bilingual/ELL teachers per campus.

Interview Process

The semi-structured individual interviews with the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers began with introductions and basic interview guidelines. Participants were informed that they would be asked a series of questions relating to professional development experiences. In addition, each participant was assured of their anonymity. The interviewer remained silent while participants responded to each question. If participants hesitated, paused or requested clarification, a prompt was given by the interviewer. During the interview process, participants were asked several guiding questions focused on their teaching experiences that included their successful or challenging professional development experiences. In addition, several follow-up or "probing" questions were asked according to responses generated by each participant. Each initial interview lasted approximately 50 to 60 minutes and was audio recorded.

The researcher subsequently transcribed each audio recording verbatim to ensure accuracy and to guard against researcher bias. Additionally, field notes throughout each interview were completed to guarantee clear understanding of individual interview

responses prior to transcribing. Documents were reviewed several times from each campus to determine supporting evidence from collected data. Interview formats for each campus were parallel. All ten high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers interviewed were both professional and pleasant with regard to their responses. These teachers welcomed the invitation to participate and made certain they had a clear understanding of the question prior to giving their response. All ten Bilingual/ELL teachers offered their contact information and email addresses in the event that clarification or additional information was needed by the researcher.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consisted of 27 probing questions, and initial interviews took place with all ten teachers. After the careful verbatim transcription of the initial interviews and researcher's field notes, follow-up interviews were conducted in cases where the researcher required additional elaboration on responses to interview questions. The researcher conducted follow-up interviews with six of the ten selected participants for clarification and/or further elaboration on particular interview question responses. Each set of interview questions was clearly linked to the research questions. Research question one was connected to the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perception of effective professional development. Research question two was related to the resources, means of delivery, and organizational support at the school level that the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers perceive as promoting effective professional development content. The interview protocol was modified several times as a result of participants' feedback on the interview questions. The researcher followed up by altering the wording

on some of the questions. Initial interview transcript data identified eleven themes; however, after repeated analysis of data, these themes were reduced to five major themes.

Coding Process

In an effort to become familiar with the data, the researcher transcribed the interviews and used a hands-on approach to review the well-developed and ordered ethnographic themes by reviewing sentences and paragraphs of the verbatim transcripts of participants. Codes were derived from searching, re-reading, and analyzing the data for patterns, themes, and topics using inductive and logical analysis in constant comparison. An important step in this process was the reduction of the collected data in useful ways referred to as a “winnowing process” (Seidman, 1998, Creswell, 1994, 2003). Central ideas in the data represented as concepts were categorized in a manner that could explain and predict (Creswell, & Miller, 2000).

Initial codes gained from the literature review included qualities of effective professional development (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Woolfolk-Hoy, 2005; Guskey, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1998, 2000) and the needs and challenges of teachers of English language learners (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005), characteristics of high-efficacy teachers (Bandura, 1993; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ashton, 1996; Woolfolk-Hoy, 1990). Additional categories from each school were coded, analyzed and sorted to correspond with each research question. Categories emerging from the interviews were compared for similarities and differences. These categories were repeatedly reanalyzed, revised, and

collapsed as necessary (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985). The initial twelve emergent categories are as follows:

1. The overwhelming majority of participants reported appropriate Spanish materials and resources as their greatest need.
2. Most participants expressed a need for accountability standards for the implementing of the bilingual program with the best ELL instructional practices.
3. All ten participants cited a need for consistent training in the 2nd language acquisition and bi-literacy development process for all teacher and staff serving ELLs.
4. The majority of participants indicated district professional development trainings are not accommodating the Bilingual/ELLs' specific needs.
5. The majority of participants expressed a need for campus and district administrators who are more knowledgeable about the Bilingual/ELL program and ELL culture as a whole.
6. All ten participants expressed medium- to high-levels of comfort in the 2nd language acquisition process and implementing the Bilingual/ELL program.
7. Some participants indicated district professional development trainings have great ideas, materials and abundance of resources; yet, are not designed to accommodate ELL needs.
8. All ten participants reported the greatest obstacle in implementing district professional development and/or programs was the added requirement to translate research and to find their own materials.

9. All ten participants reported that English monolingual colleagues receive trainings, materials, resources and support for immediate implementation.
10. Several participants expressed there was an undertow of prejudice and stereotyping of low socioeconomic ELL students.
11. Several participants reported they were "have nots" and the dual language teachers were predominantly the "haves."
12. Several of the participants brought up that the district has an unspoken message regarding the bilingual/ELLs.

Detailed field notes and transcripts were reviewed by neutral peer de-briefers (doctoral candidates) to confirm the reasonableness of the categories. Thus, their objectivity served to minimize investigator interference and bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The coding categories were recorded on a summary of findings chart to review as the transcripts and field notes continued to be evaluated. Committee members as well as two other doctoral candidates reviewed the coding schema/legend for any discrepancies. This process provided the researcher valuable neutral feedback that allowed for reduced researcher interference and bias. The major coding categories following collapsing and reduction were as follows:

1. Ten out of ten high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers reported to have acquired their instructional methods through a myriad of sources including professional development training. All affirmed a commitment to continue learning to improve teaching effectiveness.

2. An overwhelming majority of participants reported specific professional development designed to support bilingual/ELL teachers and Spanish materials and resources as one of the greatest needs.
3. All ten participants reported one of the major obstacles to the implementation of district professional development is the need to translate and/or create Spanish materials.
4. The majority of participants expressed the need for administrators and staff with knowledge of the bilingual/ELL needs and culture.
5. Differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses were found in learning, practice, supportive school cultures and sustainability of school practices.

Categories

Presented below are the descriptive qualitative results from the collection of the Phase II individual semi-structured interviews. Teachers spoke passionately about professional development experiences and the challenges they face in achieving the academic goals they hold for their students. The responses support recommendations for effective professional development – namely, that content should be based upon research; context should be job-embedded; and that it should be applicable to Bilingual/ELL teachers' specific needs. Distributions of comments in the discussion were of the following five major categories.

- Ten out of ten high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers reported to have acquired their instructional methods through a myriad of sources including professional

development training. All affirmed a commitment to continue learning to improve teaching effectiveness.

- An overwhelming majority of participants reported specific professional development designed to support Bilingual/ELL teachers and Spanish materials and resources as one of the greatest needs.
- All ten participants reported that one of the major obstacles to the implementation of district professional development is the need to translate and/or create Spanish materials.
- The majority of participants expressed the need for administrators and staff with knowledge of the bilingual/ELL needs and culture.
- Differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses were found in learning, practice, supportive school cultures and sustainability of school practices.

The following section presents a discussion of the findings with details that support and explain each finding. By way of “thick description” (Denzin, 1989) the researcher set out to document a broad range of experiences. This method is employed in order to give the reader the opportunity to enter into this study and better understand the reality of the research participants. The emphasis throughout the interview process is centered on letting participants speak for themselves. Highlighted quotations drawn from interview transcripts attempt to portray multiple participant perspectives and capture some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter. Where appropriate, critical incident data are woven in with interview data to augment and solidify the discussion. Following is a further discussion that includes the interview participant data.

Category One: Sources of Professional Development

All ten high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers reported acquiring instructional methods through a myriad of sources. All affirmed a commitment and sense of responsibility to continue improving their knowledge of instructional practices. One teacher responded, “I do my own research...to be informed of current practices...especially the first year...I remember going to so many workshops.” A number of teachers brought up successful professional development strategies implemented with success in their Bilingual/ELL classrooms, which supported the English language learners’ needs. For example, another teacher study participant commented:

Oh to see it work! Aims web training (in district) and adapt it with pictures, for example they had to go crayons, paper, and scissors and then go down the line. As was adding letters they had to begin to identify letters that go with pictures to help them read. And now my emergent readers are those that I implemented that Aims web with... I am so proud of them, and that is why I had to learn how to get their videos on my website.

The majority of the teachers refer to the importance of making instruction comprehensible for English language learners. Most described how they were incorporating visuals and graphic organizers as a way to increase ELLs’ learning experience. With this strategy in mind, another teacher responded:

By providing graphic organizers...providing real life, let’s say pictures...being consistent with them (graphic organizers)... an example for vocabulary development and enrichment I use is the Frayer model,

sheet of paper divided into... fourths ...in the middle is the word... left quadrant— first quadrant you put the definition...second quadrant...an example or drawing ...visual representation...third quadrant ... an example...fourth quadrant, has non-examples. That is what really helps them out.

According to one math teacher who created a graphic organizer for his English language learners, he demonstrates the willingness to go the extra mile to provide comprehensible input for ELLs. This teacher provided the following explanation:

A strategy that I created for the students to remember multiplication tables. I had to work out a plan that would work out for the different student levels. So, I had each and every student make out cards. They would work on them at their own pace. What I liked about it was that they made it themselves. They knew what to study and as they were testing themselves they would see what they had mastered and what they needed to continue to work on.

Regardless of their linguistic background, people around the world can similarly interpret mathematical equations and musical scores. In addition, they can also interpret pictures, and – with minimal linguistic skills – can interpret charts and graphs. Visual literacy, which can be described as one's ability to evaluate, apply, or create conceptual visual representation, is a relatively independent of language. Therefore, is invaluable to the simultaneous process of learning content subjects and the English language.

Diagrams, graphic organizers, pictorial riddles, photographic analysis and map

development are a few of the many activities that can be used to build visual literacy (Tellez & Waxman, 2005). Another teacher, commenting on the use of visuals, explained:

Thinking Maps training...have been successful with my ELL students, especially because they're graphic organizers that they map out in their mind ... they're pictures of those maps that help them plan all their thoughts onto the paper. It helps the students remember.

The transcript data revealed that ten out of ten high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers reported voluntarily seeking professional development through a variety of countless other sources, such as outside regional education centers, their own research, professional journals and/or books, independent training workshops, observing other teachers, city and state conferences, as well as university courses. Participants often cited their commitment to continue learning best practices that would benefit their ELL students' achievement outcomes. One teacher's response, which reiterated the message of the high-efficacy bilingual teachers' dedication to provide the best instruction with what tools they were offered as another, stated the following:

I have to connect the lessons to the real world not just for TAKS. That is not for the school... it is for the rest of their lives. I don't stay in my comfort zone...it's always taking risks to make it easier for them and a lot more fun. ...what did we do last year and how can we make it better?

With great excitement, ten teachers reported implementing successful professional development ideas and/or strategies this past year. Yet, an

overwhelming number of these ideas or strategies came from professional development that was provided outside of their district. Some of the ideas and/or strategies teachers mentioned demonstrated the innovative uses of graphic organizers for vocabulary development and enrichment, literacy strategies for ELLs, writers in the schools, games for ELL learning and differentiating instruction strategies.

Participants further indicated instructional practices were learned through several sources including formal methods. Some of their sources were pre- and post-college coursework, internal and external professional development training, as well as mentors or advisors. High-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers reported that informal methods consisted of dialogue with colleagues, their own research, and various other professional resources/methods, such as educational articles or books, trial and error, and informal teacher observations. One neophyte teacher mentioned that her instructional practices were derived directly from her team members. She states, “I think most of the help that I have gotten, since I’m a new teacher is team planning... and I have a lot of support from my colleagues.”

Word formation and vocabulary knowledge are major components of language development for students who are learning English, and these factors have direct effects related attaining competence with academic language (Cummins, 1986, 2001). Cognate recognition may provide a helpful shortcut through the massive number of words English learners must acquire to read and write proficiently in English. Spanish-English cognates can also help students create connections between the two languages – particularly through related roots and morphological parallels (i.e., aspects of words derived from a

common Latin heritage). A teacher with over six years' teaching experience noted that, while at another district, she attended training on Spanish/English cognates. Furthermore, she cited using the strategy to transition ELLs from bilingual (Spanish/English) instruction to all English instruction. The teacher noted that "training really helped because it helped them (ELLs) create lists of things that they already knew in Spanish and learned them in English."

Moreover, another teacher also provided strategies learned at another district to develop the students' early literacy and vocabulary development. The teacher explained:

The kids really have fun with games. I use a lot of bingo games... bingo with everything you can think about... to develop their vocabulary. Another example is that in the centers I'll put the instructions with pictures along with the vocabulary words they are going to use in the activities.

Although additional time and effort to apply the strategies they learn through professional development is required, all teachers stated that such efforts are worthwhile if it means providing new ideas and strategies to support the ELLs. In addition, all ten teachers cited that the strategies resulted in significant ELL learning success. An experienced teacher, for example, noted, "Well, I like anchor charts ... it provides the students with the visual representation of the strategy or skill they need to learn, and they could use it throughout the school year as a reference point."

Category Two: Professional Development Not Targeted to Bilingual/ELL Teachers' Needs

The overwhelming majority of participants cited similar critical areas of need with regard to professional development. Teacher respondents collectively highlighted the need for additional Spanish resources, materials and proper training in both 2nd language acquisition and bi-literacy development process. Additionally, participants also highlighted the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity training for all teachers and staff serving ELLs. One teacher described the lack of language acquisition knowledge and understanding among some colleagues, and how such deficiencies can affect both Bilingual/ELL teachers and ELL students. The follow passage recounts a conversation the teacher had with her students with regard to this particular issue:

Making that connection with them helped my EL learners a lot...Lot of people (Monolingual English teachers) felt bad for me because I taught the kids in Spanish... they would talk bad about them. I told them... it made me mad...if they talked bad about them then they were talking bad about me.

Another response supporting high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' needs was as follows: "Still... lack of resources that dual language kids get like iPods and these guys are staying behind." In a powerful statement alluding to the notion that Bilingual/ELL students are less important, another teacher critically states:

It's that the Bilingual/ELLs are not very important. They are not very important...it's like somewhere we're dragging along and eventually they're going to test in English and they're going to blend in with all the English kids that do not pass.

And, in reference to the need for more quality Spanish materials in classrooms, another teacher comments:

I feel that they (administrators) are supposed to be supportive...one thing that I lack is a lot of material... I think they (administrators) need to ... research as far as what material we need to use ...because a lot of times we have to create our own material. Regular (English monolingual teachers) have a huge supply of materials compared to us (bilingual/ELL teachers). The more responsibilities ...the less the effective we will be... our minds will be focused on other things instead of the ultimate goal of teaching our kids.

The instructional demands placed on teachers of English language learners are intense. These teachers must provide instruction in English language development while simultaneously, or sequentially, attempting to ensure students' access to the core curriculum. Nonetheless, recent studies indicate that even where teachers are teaching a majority of English learners, the professional development they receive that is dedicated to helping them instruct these students is minimal (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). For example, Smylie & Conyers (1991) describe how the idiosyncratic nature of teachers' work necessitates appropriate professional development opportunities:

Rapid changes in the characteristics, conditions, and learning needs of students will continue; that knowledge about teaching will expand dramatically; and schools will face ongoing pressures of accountability

and reform. These conditions will create unprecedented demands for the development of teachers' knowledge and skills. (p.12)

In order to expand opportunities for professional development, and to ensure that they are fulfilling the purpose of transforming teaching and learning, Bilingual/ELL teachers must be given a voice in the overall planning process. It is also important that all educators and professional development coordinator understand that language is bound to culture. According to Vygotsky (1978) language is a primary conduit by which one is enculturated. Language contributes to the formation of a community that adopts a somewhat different set of norms, beliefs, and practices. Other content areas are also framed within cultural knowledge. However, the common obstacle ELL teachers face relates directly to their difficulty in convey differing cultural concepts when other teachers do not have access to the students' native culture. Thus, if a teacher does not possess confidence in her or his pedagogical strategies to convey the cultural concepts needed in the appropriate use of language, they will surely experience difficulty bridging gaps students' understanding (Bandura, 1993).

English language learners come from different backgrounds, and often face a multitude of challenges in the classroom. All the teachers reported concerns about their ability to serve ELL students' needs effectively. To this end, Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll (2005) state, "Teachers of English language learners need practical, research based information, resources, and strategies to teach, evaluate and nurture ELL students." Study participants also reported experiencing similar issues with regard to professional development relevance. The issues facing teachers of English language learners grow

more complex and difficult as the numbers of ELLs grow and as more teachers face the challenges of effective second language instruction. In a study that examined the problems associated with profession development, conducted by Gándara et al. (2005), ELL teachers that these activities were:

- Poorly planned and executed presentations
- Had uninformed presenters
- Not effective at meeting teachers' genuine needs
- Were not applicable to ELL students
- Were not practical

(Gándara et al., 2005, p. 13)

In the study reported earlier in this dissertation, several teachers commented that English language students are not only in an authentic Bilingual/ELL classroom. In fact, the teachers noted, these students are essentially taking part in English as a second language (ESL) pull-out classes in English classrooms for several reasons (e.g. because the parents denied services, or because a student has exited the bilingual program). One teacher responded,

It (teacher-student-parent relationships) can really be strong with the ELL kiddos, in most cases...with the ELL parents, but it is not...I am talking about the (ESL and regular monolingual English) teachers and the bilingual/ELL families... especially because we have a pull-out ESL.

Another experienced teacher brought up the notion that parents need professional development as well. This particular teacher stated, "We need more training on how we

can tell the parents, because they still don't really understand bilingual education." The accountability of providing the ELLs the services they need to be successful is still the primary responsibility of the district. Another teacher points out the following: "There is no accountability... professional development that the district does offer is not required." Another teacher response stated, "I think bilingual teachers as well as all teachers need a lot of professional development on bilingual education programs." Therefore, training on how to skillfully accommodate this group of students should be offered to all teachers to ensure adequate teacher preparation. In the past, ELL students were often viewed perceived as solely the responsibility of Bilingual or ESL teachers. In our current education system, however, ELL students spend the majority of their school time in regular classrooms. General education teachers are increasingly being called on to instruct this student population, and many say they do not feel well prepared to meet their needs. (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, Driscoll, 2005)

Seven of the ten teachers reported that district professional development programs in a majority of the cases do not even accommodate bilingual/ELL teachers' needs. Voicing her disappointment to this unfortunate fact, one teacher stated the following:

It would be great if there were some training that were specifically for our bilingual students. You know, where they had all the materials offered in Spanish where I didn't have to translate it. Translate everything. Even though they were wonderful, it would be more wonderful to have them in Spanish ready to use in our classrooms.

Four other teachers indicated that district professional development programs only minimally accommodate bilingual/ELL teachers professional development needs. One teacher stated:

I attended a great training in the district with wonderful materials all made for us but they were all in English... So then I'm like fortunately I'm not teaching in Spanish this year, I didn't have to worry about translating to Spanish but ... I'm eventually going to teach Spanish again and will keep running into the same wall.

A second teacher stated:

But we have don't have bilingual anything here...and we have to translate everything that doesn't either translate well... and we are supposed to be a staff development school...they (district) looks at the bilingual teachers as parallel to the monolinguals.

A third teacher responded:

Lack of resources like not having the material... for instance ... it was all about nonfiction... we need to get our kids into nonfiction like yeah, but I don't have any nonfiction books ... and I don't have money to go buy them so I could...buy a few...pretty much the lack of resources.

The fourth teacher responded, "I can't remember anything (training) that had to do with bilingual education...we have to translate a lot of things."

All teachers were also vocal in reporting specific professional development requirements. Five of the ten high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers stated a bilingual/ELL

program model with specific implementation guidelines was essential for effective implementation of the program. An experienced teacher explained the lack of understanding and confusion about the district's expectations. Specifically, the teacher explained:

The training needed is... what the district wants from the bilingual/ELL teachers? ...So that the teachers know exactly what success looks like? What is the final product that they want to see? Because right now there are so many different programs to follow and some people say this and others say that. Does the district want the ELLs to speak in both languages or only in English?

Furthermore, all ten participants reported that they would benefit from opportunities to visit and observe teachers in and out of their district. They added that observing one another would lead to critical feedback which could, subsequently, lead to the improvement of their individual teaching effectiveness. One experienced teacher articulated, "I would just like to observe another class at prestigious private schools... to see what their kids achieve... Can our kids achieve the same thing? Can I get more out of my kids?"

A majority of teachers also noted enormous pressures from numerous different fronts. For instance, accountability pressures combined with growing demand to implement a specific number of programs simultaneously compete for time within the schoolhouse. Nonetheless, most teachers shared the hope that if they received greater support, and specific and relevant professional development, teacher effectiveness would

improve as a result. Participants' responses offered a variety of different ways the district's professional development programs could be able to accommodate Bilingual/ELL teachers' needs. Several noteworthy comments were:

...district professional development program needs to offer training especially for bilingual/ELL teachers... provide bilingual teacher feedback to see what we need ... put together something that can be offered to all teachers.

Teachers support the following preparation to ensure English language learners receive the full range of services required to improve English proficiency and academic performances: Professional development resources to help increase educators' knowledge about effective and differentiated bilingual teaching strategies. One teacher cited, "Providing a session or two, especially with the technology ones... it would be nice to have some training designed for the bilingual/ELL teachers... none of them were geared toward ELL or bilingual." Citing their concern, another teacher stated, "By providing training that helps bilingual/ELL teachers especially the new ones like me to learn how to help our kids' transition from Spanish to English literacy and provide cultural awareness for all teachers."

More than a few examples of teacher's comments found in the transcripts were associated to the corollary of administrators' knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of the growing diverse Bilingual/ELL population in the district. Administrators without this knowledgeable are unable to facilitate the successful implementation of Bilingual/ELL programs, or promote cultural awareness and sensitivity. Consequently,

Bilingual/ELL teachers are left to fend for themselves. With regard to the issue of unequal resources, the follow statement illustrates one teacher's frustration:

It was the only class in the whole district taught in Spanish in that grade level and yet we still have to have a little flag ...hey I'm here it's unmotivated at times, it's frustrating and at times I'm like a lot of Hispanic people...you don't like to explain...so I say, okay I can manage, I'm fine but after a while it's so overwhelming I started stressing out. I was so frustrated I didn't even want to teach with these boring materials but yet I didn't have anything new and it's just like that...it would be great if there were some training that were specifically for our bilingual students...where they had all the materials offered in Spanish where I didn't have to translate it. Translate everything. Even though they were wonderful, it would be more wonderful to have them in Spanish ready to use in our classrooms.

Six teachers cited lack of knowledge of bilingual/ELL culture and needs as the basis for misunderstandings affecting students and teachers at their campuses. Teachers' statements alluded to schools' latent prejudice regarding Bilingual/ELL students' intelligence. One teacher articulated, "It's not direct, but you know, it's a feeling--- It's the looks. It's sometimes the comments that you hear. Well, they need to learn English." Another teacher passionately stated:

You push extremities, which are been done when you are distinguishing by social class, one social class of students be them white or Hispanic are

going to be able to go to the dual language program... another class of students is those of which can only be Hispanic is going to have early transitional (early exit) bilingual program. So what they are saying is that we are accepting this plan in this case where these Hispanic kids we will just to get them to average. So in this district you have average or below average and then you have excelling. These kids are not receiving the same thing.

Discourse regarding diversity, bilingualism, multiculturalism, and their related implications, constitute the social context through which Bilingual/ELL students must learn. And, unfortunately, students often become victims caught in the crossfire of negative discourse. Such discourse can seriously hinder the ways in which identities and cultural agreements are negotiated between teachers and students. Moreover, such discourse also constricts the opportunities for learning that culturally and linguistically diverse students' experience. A large number of studies have revealed that bilingualism is associated with enhanced linguistic, cognitive, and academic development when both languages are encouraged to develop (Cummins, 2001a, 201b). One teacher notes that negative discourse is the primary result of misunderstanding both the culture and the language of diverse students. This teacher's response is expressed as follows:

They just think---sometimes misconceptions like... their social economic status is too low so they can't do anything. Low expectations for our kids. Or segregating, --- I mean, lets ship all the bilingual kids to one school when there is so many out there within the district.

Several teachers cited a need for training to be informed about new Bilingual/ELL education research studies. Current research studies conducted can offer teachers research-based best practices, and help remain informed about new materials and literature related to their field. Such information is vital for the successful implementation of Bilingual/ELL programs in general. For instance, one teacher stated the following:

Refresher training and additional courses should be offered to help the ELL kids. One thing our district lacks is in providing professional development for ESL and bilingual/ELL teachers to get refreshers on how language development occurs, and how language is learned. Another training could be literacy, writing and different ways to use math. Everything should already be prepared for the bilingual/ELL teachers so they can just take it to their classroom and it would be ready to use.

An overwhelming number of the teachers pointed out the significance of building positive relationships with students. Teachers of ELLs must become familiar with the ELLs' diverse backgrounds to build positive student-teacher relationships. Teacher participants also spoke of the need to build relationships with parents to bridge communication both within the school and the home. In particular, new teachers with little experience need training on how to address parents in "Parent & Teacher" conferences respectfully as well as skillfully. One teacher described her concern regarding parental involvement through the following response:

*Training on how to talk to parents . . . Not sympathetic but ... Sensitive...
Being sensitive from where our parents are coming from ... and where our
kids come from to avoid misunderstandings... cultural sensitivity training.
Um, maybe training in second language acquisition, because like I said, I
remember in college maybe one or two classes on that, but that was a long
time ago.*

One teacher pointed out that not all bilingual/ELL teachers are native Spanish speakers and need in-depth training in Spanish language mechanics and grammar rules. This particular teacher stated:

*I think that good in-depth grammar rules and transitioning strategies that
will help our ESL teachers who are not Latino understand things like
cognates to make connections between languages, I think that the ELL
kids are not being transitioned but thrown into English and that is the
difference between the bilingual/ELL program and the dual language
program provides more support to the ELLs native language.*

Another important issue disclosed in the interview transcripts was the low number of Bilingual/ELL students represented in their school's Gifted & Talented Program. Sadly, English language learners (ELLs) are the least represented in gifted education programs in most districts. There are a variety of related reasons that account for this regrettable state of affairs; yet, the nature of the procedures involved in identifying "gifted" students are probably most important. Specific tests have developed by individuals with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to identify giftedness

among students (Datnow & Castellano, 2001); however, these particular instruments are not widely used in the current system. Compounding the lack of identification procedures, the high mobility rates of Hispanic students also makes it difficult to track the records, lack of the English proficiency, and the socioeconomic status of many Hispanics, which ultimately affect their nomination. Research notes that teachers typically identify Anglo GT characteristics in Hispanic students, but such teachers must realize that there is an inherent difference in Hispanic students' common traits (Moon & Brighton, et al, 2007).

In its attempt to address the needs of Bilingual/ELLs, the district in this study has implemented a new identification method and program to combat the lack of ELL representation in the school's Gifted & Talented Program. This particular program is called the Kilgore Observation Inventory (KOI). The KOI proposes to increase teacher's effectiveness in identifying and differentiating instruction for the students with gifted potentials by: (a) Clarifying students' response patterns to look for over time; (b) Providing an ongoing series of enriched learning opportunities to all students who elicit advanced potentials; and, (c) implementing standards for observations and student products that document teachers' insights about their students to other educators. In addition, the school will be administering a Spanish test, called the *Aprenda*, which measures the academic achievement of Spanish-speaking students in their native language. The test is modeled after its companion English-language test, the *Stanford Achievement Test Series*. However, the Gifted & Talented Program teacher/specialist does not speak Spanish; thus, either the Bilingual/ELL teacher, or another diagnostician who is available, administers the *Aprenda* to ELLs. Several teachers also raised concerns

about the identification of bilingual students. One of the teachers related her experience with the new program as follows:

I think the KOI (Kilgore Observation Inventory) helps, but I wish we had a bilingual teacher specialist that could test the bilingual/ELL students but also service them. The few students that get identified are only seen for 1 hour and a half per week and the services are available only in English... A position did open up for a GT teacher and a friend of mine applied who is a bilingual teacher with over 6 years' experience, but she was not hired. They hired another Anglo teacher for the position this year.... this is sad because the need is there.

Another participant expressed concerns regarding one of his ELL students who exhibited an above average intelligence. Yet, due to the barriers associated with communicating in a language other than English, it is often difficult for teachers to identify such student as gifted – particular if the teacher does not possess an intimate understanding of both language *and* culture. These scenarios can be attributed to a number of inequitable conditions that affect their opportunities. With this in mind, another teacher cited the following:

I have a girl right now...girl in my classroom who speaks English, Spanish and Chinese since two years, from Mexico and I know she is smarter and will be smarter than me and other children that I know or I've seen before and it hurts to know that if I don't do something for her or if I don't fight

*for her in any way, shape or form... that's going to be wasting talent ...
and that bothers me.*

Finally, another teacher recounts her experience in recent years with the bilingual GT identification process:

*In the over 10 years that I have been with the district, they never had any
GT Testing for Spanish speaking bilingual/ELL students. But they also
did not have anyone bilingual to test or provide instruction in
Spanish...only in the past year it seems that they are trying to push testing
and identification of Spanish speaking bilingual students into the GT
program...But they still do not have anyone provide GT services for these
students in Spanish... only English instruction is available.*

Category Three: Need to Translate and/or Create Spanish Materials

An overwhelming majority of participants reported that the most prevalent impediment to executing district professional development programs rich with fidelity and efficacy has to do with the need to translate and create useful materials. Teaching is a complex and demanding profession. Further, this challenging work requires a great deal of energy, which can be intellectually, emotionally, and physically taxing for many. Participant teachers reported facing many challenges, such as time constraints, diverse levels of student needs, and various kinds of emotional stress. Professional development and teacher preparation studies indicate that there is not deep capacity to help teachers acquire the required skills, thereby compounding the severity of Bilingual/ELL teachers' challenges (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 1996, 1998). One teacher voiced her

dissatisfaction with having the added responsibility of translating materials with already so little time in her day:

It is difficult in the way we have to take a step further to modify those programs and meet the needs of our kids. We have to modify it (professional development) to our particular groups of ELLs because they are not geared for Bilingual/ELLs.

Recounted her disheartening experience relating to the lack of Spanish materials, one teacher stated, “I feel defeated...they’re not thinking ... about how our bilingual/ELL students learn... We (the bilingual/ELL) teachers have look at the (English) material and see, well, how can I change it to make work for my students?” Any teacher who has shopped at the nearby teacher supply store in search of Spanish materials can agree that there are few commercially available materials specifically designed for English language learners. This may be due largely to state policies that provide funding overwhelmingly for adopted materials; thus, educational publishers have no financial incentive to develop other materials. Another teacher expressed her disappointment with lack of Spanish materials at a professional development training session through the following statement:

One time I actually went to this training and I asked the trainer, would you be developing this in Spanish? ... And she said we just ... it’s the demand and we don’t make money...we just won’t make money from that.

Most of what does exist takes the form of add-ons to the currently adopted materials for English fluent students. Many experienced ELL teachers report that these

materials are not well-designed for the needs of their students (Gándara et al., 2007).

One experienced teacher describes the Spanish resource dilemma in this manner:

I think that the Bilingual/ELL needs a lot of support for materials, because there is no real Spanish material here. Teachers are... making their own materials... I mean the material is translated from English to Spanish and it is translated wrong.

That most teachers are forced to assemble their own materials may be a significant reason why Spanish materials and resources were reported as a major professional development implementation obstacle by nine of the ten participants. One teacher's recounted, "We don't have very many available computer programs for use with Spanish speaking students that we could integrate lessons with, but I create power points and translate some I find in the internet." In addition, other obstacles for the bilingual/ELL teacher are time constraints, lack of on-campus and district support, lack of proper training, lack of follow-up support, and the lack of specific Bilingual/ELL professional development.

It is remarkable that seven of the ten Bilingual/ELL teachers reported successful implementation of a district professional development idea or strategy in spite of lacking materials in Spanish. In reference to this feat, one teacher stated, "Even though the material is there, it's like ... this might work for the English class, but it won't work here.....in the long run we basically end up reinventing the wheel kind of." Nevertheless, most teachers pointed out that they had to spend more time and effort to adapt the English materials provided for them. As one teacher stated:

I understand it is a small district but if that's the case they should send us to the district next door where they have dozens and dozens of just bilingual/ELL in-services. But we don't have any "just bilingual anything" here and we have to translate everything and there are things that don't either translate well."

Many teachers revealed frustration in regard to what they perceive as the unequal distribution of resources for the transitional bilingual campuses. Their district possesses an enormous amount of resources and provides great ideas and training; yet, each of these activities is English-related. More than half of the teachers referred to themselves as the "have nots" of the district because they consistently have to adapt, translate, and create materials to meet the needs of their ELLs. By comparison, dual language and regular English teachers (i.e., the "haves") receive materials and resources ready to implement in their classrooms. A teacher explains, "You know in the long run we basically end up having to reinvent the wheel kind of." Yet another teacher acknowledges her additional efforts with regard to the school's lack of Spanish or bilingual resources by stating, "We have to translate whatever we can't find, which is very time consuming." The collective Bilingual/ELL teachers' comments reveal additional obstacles those in their area of specialization must face with regard districts' implementation of professional development programs. Another teacher discloses the following statement:

...everything is in English but there are no materials in Spanish and sure it's easy to translate but it is very time consuming and there is no need.

There is no need when someone else can be translating it. I have a job and it is not translating.

Category Four: Administrators Need to be Knowledgeable about Bilingual/ELL Education

The majority of participants expressed the need for knowledgeable administrators and staff regarding the successful implementation of Bilingual/ELL programs. The importance of the administrator's role as instructional leaders for schools is evident. Nevertheless, many administrators lack the skills needed to provide the support and guidance for teachers and programs catering to English language learners. Many small districts face new and overwhelming challenges brought about by new accountability measures of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, even with the best of intentions – namely, this study's district is struggling to meet the needs of the Bilingual/ELL professional development needs. Only two of the ten participants reported minimal district support in meeting their Bilingual/ELL professional development needs. One participant reported:

Well, they support it (bilingual/ELL program) even though the district doesn't offer a lot of specific... If we need to go to Region IV ESC to get training, they don't have a problem, you know, that's the thing about us.

The district administrators' support of the Bilingual/ELL program was reported by teachers as limited to the funding of outside professional development opportunities at the regional education center or state conferences. One teacher states, "I wish they (the administrators) would help us out a little bit more... search for not only English ...

materials but also for Spanish materials. I wish they (the administrators) would take the Bilingual/ELLs a little more seriously.”

However, it is also important to note that most participants’ responses revealed that had administrators tried; yet, their lack adequate knowledge of bilingual program served as a bane to their specific needs. One teacher stated, “They try to...I have to say they try to...” Furthermore, three of the ten participants reiterated the same message that campus level support was imperfect yet accessible – at the least in the form of funding to attend training out of district professional development sessions. Citing the dearth of quality in-service training at the district level, another teacher stated:

I never have been turned down... in fact, if anything, they have been more than open to allow us to go outside of the district. That being said, the problem is with the campus administrators as much as within the district administration that doesn’t actually have bilingual in-services within the district. They should be developing writing programs that they are pushing through or reading programs but have them for the bilingual program.

Finally, one teacher cites the following suggestion regarding the issue of campus administrators’ knowledge: There must be, at a minimum, a degree of basic understanding of the language of the majority of students and parents. Another teacher also commented that the Bilingual/ELL teachers at her campus had to translate their lessons when being observed. The teacher states, “I think that having to translate my

lesson when I am observed because our administrators do not speak or understand Spanish is not right.”

Category Five: Inequity between Bilingual and Dual Language Campuses

Differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses were found in the learning and practice, the degree of supportive school cultures, and the sustainability of school practices. There is little debate that highly qualified teachers are students’ most critical resource; yet, research shows that ELL students are the least likely to have qualified teachers (Gándara et al., 2007). The study’s major categories disclosed unanticipated issues regarding a cultural divide between Bilingual/ELL teachers and dual language teachers. Six of the ten participants reported that resources, materials, and appropriate professional development that dual language teachers receive were not also available to them. Commenting on the impressive bilingual professional development provided on their campus, one dual language teacher stated, “I learned a lot from the sessions...played games that I could bring back into the classroom, especially for expressions in Spanish that have literal translation.” After this comment, the teacher was then asked where this training took place and who could attend. The teacher responded, “The California Association of Bilingual Education’s dual language conference held in, San Diego, California, and it was for the dual language teachers specifically.” Another dual language teacher responded, “Yes, for our dual language because our program deals with language learners. We’ve had the privilege of having a university professor, expert in bilingual come to our campus to provide professional development.” The perception of receiving unequal allocation of resources as reported in the teacher interview responses is

problematic as reiterated in a recent national survey, which states, “Unequal resources equal unequal outcomes” (Gándara, et al, 2007).

Several teachers’ most salient statements occurred upon describing their disappointment and sense of not being as important or valuable as the dual language teachers. One teacher stated, “It’s just like that... we are not as important.” Yet, another teacher reported, “I just wish they would take the Bilingual/ELLs more seriously.” Most of the teachers interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of the differences between the two bilingual programs. The dual language program resides under the bilingual education umbrella. The former is a form of education in which students are taught literacy and content in two languages. Dual language programs are different from the state’s most commonly implemented transitional bilingual program, which is in place at the other three schools of this study. The specific aim here is to transition students out of their native language and into English as quickly as possible, ideally within three years. This process is sometimes also referred to as “subtractive bilingualism” since the first language is typically lost as English is acquired (Cummins, 2001a, 2001b). Dual language programs are considered to promote “additive bilingualism”, meaning that students’ primary language is developed and maintained as a second language is added (Thomas & Collier, 2002). It is important to note that some of the teachers’ responses confirm their knowledge of bilingual programs. In fact, several of the teachers pointed out the various differences and similarities between the bilingual programs (i.e., between subtractive and additive bilingual programs). One teacher, for example, stated the following:

I understand the bilingual program because I am a product it... we have an early exit or transitional bilingual program with an ESL pull-out here...the dual language is a more successful program because the students are allowed to develop their Spanish language longer.”

Another teacher provided a comment regarding the transitional (early exit) bilingualism:

I think the transitional, early exit bilingual program it is subtractive, no longer additive bilingualism... like the dual language...They want them out, like oh you know enough...They'll survive...Let's just move them to English. I like the dual language, but I wish they would provide the same opportunities to the rest of the ELL kids.

A strong declaration made by participant was that many referred to the regular Bilingual/ELL (from the transitional bilingual campuses) as “Have Nots” or the “stepchildren of the district”. By comparison, many referred the dual language teachers and English-monolingual teachers as “Haves” of the district. Furthermore, the latter typically receive everything needed for success in their classrooms, such as materials, training, resources, and support. One teacher impatiently remarks:

I like the dual language program yes, but I wish they would provide the same opportunities to the rest of the bilingual/ELL kids, not just saying oh, low SES, too bad...So sad. You don't fit the program...To me it is a subtractive bilingual/ELL program for the ELLs not in the dual language program and that is sad.

Unmistakable differences between transitional bilingual teachers and dual language were evident in responses to specific questions relating to instructional needs including professional development, materials and resources when interviewing dual language teachers. Their responses were clearly and adamantly articulated when asked “Have you received professional development specifically designed for English language learners?” For example, one dual language teacher contently replied the following:

Yes, for our dual language. Yes, because our program deal with dual language learners. We had the privilege to have a professor from a neighboring university come to our district (our campus during working hours) to provide professional development. She provided us with a starting point to work though addressing the needs of the kids as they begin to interact with literacy in their second language.

In a similar tone, when asked the same question, another dual language responded as follows:

We traveled out of state and visited other schools (and I am going to refer back to our dual language program) and they were very useful because it was an insight to classroom because we saw how instruction was being delivered...we were able to observe ... the teachers answered our questions... it matched our professional needs.

However, an exceptionally different response was furnished when the same question was asked of the transitional Bilingual/ELL teachers. Five of the ten high- efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers indicated great differences in their instructional needs as

compared to their dual language counterparts. An overwhelming number of bilingual teachers reported lacking specific professional development, resources, and materials to meet the needs of the English language learners they taught. An experienced bilingual teacher responded, “...our ELLs still have a lack of resources... we don’t have that stuff that other schools (dual language kids) have for the dual language kids, like have iPods and these guys are staying behind...”

Summary

The findings of this study’s qualitative data analysis appear shed light upon the extremely difficult challenges teachers face on a daily basis in addressing the needs of their bilingual/ELL students. In short, the following list provides a concise recapitulation of the major categories that emerged during the present:

- Ten out of ten high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers reported to have acquired their instructional methods through a myriad of sources including professional development training. All affirmed a commitment to continue learning to improve teaching effectiveness.
- An overwhelming majority of participants reported specific professional development designed to support Bilingual/ELL teachers and Spanish materials and resources as one of the greatest needs.
- All ten participants reported that one of the major obstacles to the implementation of district professional development is the need to translate and/or create Spanish materials.

- The majority of participants expressed the need for administrators and staff with knowledge of the Bilingual/ELL needs and culture.
- Differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses were found in learning, practice, supportive school cultures, and sustainability of school practices.

Teachers in this study appear to be highly committed and passionate professionals and take seriously the responsibilities of educating the Bilingual/EL learners in their classes. The following comment by one of the teachers illustrates the degree of commitment in which she brings to her work:

Well, I remember attending some workshops and getting ideas there, but it was more than workshops... peers and a lot of reflection...looking at my lessons and ... actually implementing them and looking back and figuring out what worked and what didn't work... and making changes for next time.

All ten teachers interviewed make extraordinary efforts in achieving their high expectations of academic achievement for their ELL students. The follow statement was shared by another experienced teacher:

I love to learn new ways to improve my teaching, yeah, because it is fun, which is what has kept me in the teaching filed for over 30 years...There are always different ways to make it entertaining...yeah it is entertaining and it does not lose its zest.

Teachers with the most preparation in working with the Bilingual/EL learners regrettably reported that, more often than their monolingual English peers, they face challenges directly due to their lack of appropriate tools and Spanish materials, as well as the overall lack of adequate support from school and district administrators. One teacher stated, “they (the administrators) are doing their best, but the best person for it would be a true bilingual individual.” In relation to the need for Spanish materials, one teacher articulates, “There is not enough material for them (bilingual/ELL teachers). They are hungry... starving. I brought some stuff from Mexico City and people are like share ... Uh, but you know there is a lot of lack of material.” Several teachers responded that the district has an abundance of materials and training opportunities online which could be easily accessed; yet, the issue reiterated by most teachers was that they are not designed for the Bilingual/ELL teachers. In relation to the school district’s availability of materials, one teacher said, “The district definitely surpasses other districts in the materials....but they are all in English.”

Successful experiences, or “mastery experiences,” are the strongest methods to developing efficacy (Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Schunk, 1996). Within the professional development opportunities that the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers experienced, they created the opportunities to successfully maneuver their ways through difficult dilemmas and with repeated successes will ultimately continue to develop teacher efficacy (Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Schunk, 1996). It was evident that, even in spite of challenges they identified, the high-efficacy bilingual teachers felt most competent to meet the EL students’ needs because most were, in fact, bilingual/ELL themselves, and

reported their thorough understanding of the program and students' culture. One teacher stated:

I feel good about it because they are successful...I think for first year of School...first experience away from their parents and their first school setting... I feel that my biggest job is to make them comfortable in a learning environment and for them to be happy and to grow.

These teachers were dedicated to work through these challenges for their students by contributing extra efforts to translate and/or creating their own materials. Overall, the greater the teacher's preparation in working with EL students, the more professionally competent he or she felt to teach them. The more years of experience teaching ELs, the greater the likelihood that bilingual/ELL teachers also possessed higher self-efficacy (i.e., personal *and* teaching efficacy), which inevitably should result in both strong and positive correlations related to their teaching ability.

The high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers most often reported having gone to great lengths to seek proper professional development. The teachers generally agreed on the overall professional development content needed to enhance their teaching effectiveness. Namely, the top choices included second language transitioning strategies, second language acquisition process, bi-literacy instructional development process, and a variety of teaching strategies specific to their ELLs' academic needs. Teachers also reported that one of the best formats for learning these skills was by observing skilled teachers. A teacher responded:

I think meeting with the other teachers...for example if you teach Pre-K, meeting with the Kindergarten teachers to share issues or concerns about the students... the kindergarten teacher needs to meet with the first grade teachers to know what the students need know when in first grade... teachers could try to work with that right away, you may not be able to fix it but you can start to work on it (learning weaknesses or strengths).

Peer observations were reported by several teachers who expressed the benefits of peer observations as a valuable learning opportunity. When asked how was successful in the classroom, she stated, "From observing other teachers, asking them a lot of questions...but I think it comes back to observing experienced and effective teachers."

Differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses were found in learning, practice, supportive school cultures, and sustainability of school practices. For instance, one response states:

The dual language classes have IPods to take home and practice their learning with their families... have university professors who are experts in bilingual provide us trainings during the day to learn on how to improve the process of bilingual literacy.

Bilingual transitional teachers also preferred similar opportunities of professional development: activities that were structured around in-class opportunities to work alongside a skilled professional knowledgeable in bilingual/ELL. In addition other kinds of support, they reported that this would most help them meet the needs of their ELL

students, which included: more and better ELL materials, more time to teach students, time to collaborate with colleagues, and more administrative support.

A reported critical challenge for the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers was the additional knowledge, effort, and skills required of them in teaching classrooms of English Language Learners. All participants reported translating and/or creating Spanish materials as one of the greatest obstacles to implementation of district or campus professional development initiatives. Issues of misunderstanding of the ELL culture are reiterated in the following statement: "It's the perception that I feel like my kids are slow... comments like, they need to speak English." These teachers more often stated that their ELL students did not have the prerequisite skills they needed to do grade level coursework. Issues of poverty, health, racism, gender bias, latchkey homes, language differences and disparities in educational opportunities all contribute the public school system. One response in relation to these issues flatly stated, "I don't think the other teachers understand it (bilingual program and ELL's culture)." Relevant professional development content opportunities will help Bilingual/ELL teachers effectively address these issues with skill and optimism.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary, conclusion, and discussion for the findings of this study. Implications for practice in support of instructors and course developers are also discussed. Next, recommendations for future research are provided. Before discussing the implications derived from the study's findings, it would be instructive to return to the theoretical framework proposed at the onset. Therefore, this chapter will begin by addressing the theoretical underpinnings. Faced with the rapidly growing diverse student population of English language learners in recent years, professional development in the area of addressing student diversity is emerging as a common theme among school districts. The purpose of this study is to explore high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions regarding what they consider to be relevant professional development that meets their needs. There exists a shortage of research with regard to Bilingual/ELL teachers' self-efficacy. The researcher's goal with this study is to contribute to research literature on high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development content that improves their teaching effectiveness in increasing ELL academic achievement.

The results of this study indicate that teachers' lack of professional development specifically designed to target the needs of English language learners. Subsequently, this dearth of adequate training may hinder their teaching and can be altered through better professional development. Professional development that goes beyond the mere

acquisition of skills, and which targets teachers' source of efficacy beliefs, may better support teachers (Ross & Bruce, 2007; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996; Ross, 1992).

In addition, this study revealed the extremely difficult challenges teachers face on a daily basis in addressing the needs of their Bilingual/ELL students. Teachers had to contend with inadequate instructional material and resources as well as a lack of support. The teaching environment as well as the teachers' skill set must be considered inextricably and critically linked. Soodak & Podell (1996) suggest that "...this may suggest the need to foster the development of effective teaching techniques, and simultaneously to create a supportive environment with which teachers can effect change" (p.409).

Teachers' sense of efficacy has become an important concept over the past 25 years in the area of teacher education. Datnow & Castellano (1998) defined this concept as the extent to which teacher believes he or she has the ability to affect student performance. Furthermore, Bandura (1977) described four types of experiences that influence teaching efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, emotional arousal, and social persuasion. These four kinds of experience provide a framework for understanding the perceptions of professional development held by the Bilingual/ELL teachers in this study that will be presented in the following section of this chapter.

Discussion

The qualitative ethnographic analysis data, which consists of semi-structured individual interviews with high-efficacy bilingual/ELL teachers, revealed five major categories in response to the following research questions: (a) What are high-efficacy

Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development content? And, (b) What resources, means of delivery, and organizational support at the school level do Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceive as promoting effective professional development content? The five major categories are as follows:

1. All ten of the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers reported having acquired their instructional methods through a myriad of sources including professional development training. Each teacher participant also affirmed a commitment to continue learning to improve their teaching effectiveness.
2. The majority of participants reported explicit professional development specifically designed to support Bilingual/ELL teachers and Spanish materials and resources as one of the greatest needs.
3. All participants reported one of the major obstacles to the implementation of district professional development is the need to translate and/or create Spanish materials on their own.
4. The majority of participants expressed the need for administrators and staff with knowledge of the Bilingual/ELL needs and culture.
5. Differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses were found in learning, practice, supportive school cultures, and sustainability of school practices. These differences included unequal professional development opportunities.

An important limitation worth mentioning in this study is that only teachers were interviewed; therefore, the data provide only the Bilingual/ELL teachers' point of view. The data reflects the teachers' perspective and their responses accordingly.

Administrators were not included in the interview phase of this study resulting in a limitation. The administrators' point of view was not explored in this study.

Bandura's (1977) four kinds of experience that influence efficacy – mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and emotional arousal – provide a framework for understanding the perceptions of professional development held by the bilingual/ELL teachers in this study.

Mastery Experiences

“Mastery experiences” are disadvantageous when their success requires an enormous amount of work that teachers feel they are not able to sustain (Bandura, 1977). Comparable to this circumstance described by Bandura (1977) relating to disadvantageous experiences, this study's Bilingual/ELL teachers experienced such disadvantageous “mastery experience” or are at risk of doing so, if professional development continues to be ineffective meeting bilingual/ELL teachers' needs. Consequently, Bilingual/ELL teachers feel they are left to fend for themselves in the end.

The Bilingual/ELL teachers' experiences conform to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, which proposes four sources of efficacy experiences: mastery experiences (which is most powerful), vicarious experiences, emotional arousal, and social persuasion. Remarkably, all of the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers in this study reported acquiring their instructional methods through a myriad of sources including professional development training out of district. An overwhelming majority of the high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers in this study described taking extra measures to ensure instruction was comprehensible for the English language learners, and resulted

in successful teaching experiences. As outlined by the four experiences that influence self-efficacy, Bandura (1977) would define such actions as authentic “mastery experiences”. Within the realm of Bandurian social cognitive theory, such experiences constitute the most powerful source of efficacy; thus, elevating expectation that teaching will be proficient in the future. However, “mastery experiences” are disadvantageous when their success requires an enormous amount of work that teachers feel they are not able to sustain. Comparable to this circumstance, and as related to Bandura’s (1977) description of disadvantageous experiences, this study’s Bilingual/ELL teachers also experienced such disadvantageous “mastery experience”, or are at risk of such effect. Furthermore, this will continue to be an issue if professional development continues to be ineffective at meeting Bilingual/ELL teachers’ needs.

Vicarious Experiences

Consistent with Bandura’s “vicarious experiences” that enhance teacher self-efficacy, this study’s participants confirmed the need for collaboration and observation among teachers – a finding also cited in previous research literature. The more closely the observer (i.e., the teacher) identifies with the effective model, the stronger the impact on efficacy. Repeated observation of effective modeling increases successful performance by 44% and one’s self-efficacy by 38% (Bandura, 1977). However, only a few Bilingual/ELL teachers reported having such opportunities, or the successful experiences and benefits associated with opportunities to observe peers.

Also, in alignment with Bandura’s “vicarious experiences” that enhance teacher self-efficacy, this study’s participants confirmed the need for collaboration and

observation among teachers, which concurs with previous research. Repeated observation of effective modeling increases successful performance by 44% and self-efficacy by 38% (Bandura 1977). Furthermore, all study participants reported on in this dissertation affirmed a commitment to continue learning to improve their teaching effectiveness, and also demonstrated a willingness to do whatever it takes for their students. All participants in this study reported the need to observe peer teachers, and other teachers at exclusive private schools and/or other public schools, implementing successful research-based and proven practices in teaching ELLs. However, only a few Bilingual/ELL teachers reported having such opportunities, or the successful experiences and benefits that could be drawn from opportunities to observe peers. This particular strategy for improving teacher self-efficacy is directly related to Bandura's (1977) "vicarious experiences", which are described as those experiences in which someone else models a skill. The more closely the observer (teacher) identifies with the effective model, the stronger the impact on efficacy.

In harmony with preceding research, this study discovered that *specific* professional development designed to support Bilingual/ELL teachers was minimal. Inadequate professional development opportunities to help teachers address the instructional needs of English language learners were reported, including the report that the quality of instructional materials appears to differ according to the concentration of English language learners in the schools. Research studies has shown that "Bilingual/ELL teachers are less likely than non-bilingual/ELL teachers with low percentages of English learners to have access to instructional materials in general and materials needed by English language learners in particular" (Gándara, et al., 2003).

Although, there is minimal direct evidence demonstrating a causal relationship between student achievement and teacher professional development, the connection between teacher preparation and student achievement suggests that such relationships probably exists (Darling-Hammond, 2000, Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002).

Demands placed on teachers of English language learners are intense. These particular teachers must provide instruction in English language development while simultaneously, or sequentially, attempting to ensure access to core curriculum. Yet, research also indicates that teachers of ELLs receive minimal professional development dedicated to helping them instruct English language learners specifically (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). An important component of the effective implementation of any program is to have the necessary tools and materials; yet, the current study's participants reported the major obstacle implementing the district's programs is lack of Spanish materials and resources including assessment materials.

As Bilingual/ELL educators search for ways to improve the achievement level of the student populations they serve, it is imperative to focus on Bilingual/ELL teachers' learning and the professional development content. Hence, creating a focus that provides for greater alignment between the teacher and his or her content being delivered is more likely to translate into improve quality instruction, as well as increased student performance levels, for ELLs. All too often, rather than providing students the rigorous and challenging curriculum they need, the trend in public schools is to place emphasis directly on the student – in particular, the deficits they bring to the learning environment. Implications revealed in recent research studies indicate that if teachers are given instructional tools they can use in the classroom, their sense of mastery experiences

would increase, which would contribute to an increase in their sense of personal efficacy (Ross & Bruce, 2007).

Regardless of the particular student or school environment, effective teachers and good teaching matter greatly. There is little debate that highly qualified teachers are students' most critical resource; yet, ELLs are the least likely to have the highest qualified teachers (Gándara, et al, 2003). A common account for this is that the existing knowledge of how to teach English language learners is not often incorporated in teacher preparation efforts (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). In effect, significantly more is known about how to prepare teachers than is actually utilized. Translating research into practice has been a persistent problem in education - reasons for which have been debated at great length in the education literature (Tucker, et al., 2005). Nonetheless, the only firm conclusion to be drawn from this research-based malaise is that there is a clear disjunction between research and practice in teacher education. Nowhere is this more painfully evident than in the preparation of teachers for English language learners. A common argument is that the field lacks research-based methods; when, in fact, this is not the case (Télez & Waxman, 2005; Garcia, 1983; Cummins, 1986; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

This study revealed that focus must be placed on providing appropriate tools and specific professional development opportunities to enable teachers to become more effective at addressing the diverse needs of Bilingual/ELLs. In his 1986 work, Bandura explicitly cites the importance of external support, including necessary equipment, training and resources. Additional research in the social cognitive construct of teacher efficacy also illustrates that teacher efficacy as a contributor to positive practices in

student achievement (Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Ashton & Webb, 1986). However, schools may impose barriers to developing teacher efficacy within their organizational structures while current restructuring efforts seek to improve teacher efficacy with schools (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ross, 1992). When educators are denied access to appropriate preparation and training they prove unable to manage complex forms of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

However, the optimistic view of self-efficacy by means of cognitive systems may offer a false impression that all teachers need the self-efficacy belief to take on challenging endeavors at any given time and place. This notion ignores an essential aspect of social cognitive theory. Namely, as mentioned above, Bandura (1986) explicitly mentions the importance of external support, including necessary equipment, resources. In referring to disincentives and performance constraints, he argues that perceived efficacy will not be expressed in corresponding actions if people lack the necessary equipment and resources to perform the behavior adequately (Bandura, 1986). This creates the situation where self-efficacy exceeds the actual performance due to the hindrance caused by external factors (i.e., disincentives, inadequate resources, external constraints, etc.). In this type of situation, self-efficacy may not be an effective predictor of actual performance (Smylie, 1988, 1990, Smylie & Conyors, 1991).

Translated into the context of the present study, this means that Bilingual/ELL teachers with strong perceived efficacy who believe their teaching makes a difference may, nonetheless, give up trying to perform their best when faced with a lack of external support. Without appropriate and adequate organizational support at school and district levels, these highly efficacious Bilingual/ELL teachers, who possess the knowledge and

skills to provide high quality learning experiences for ELL students, may end up wasting their internal resources due to external constraints. This constitutes an extremely unfortunate situation, especially as so many resources are invested in increasing teacher's self-efficacy beliefs and professional development. It is, therefore, extremely unfortunate for these beliefs, knowledge, and skills to simply be waste due to external factors, which can ultimately be controlled.

The implications for practice revealed in this study provide insight to possible professional development strategies that genuinely meet the specific needs of Bilingual/ELL teachers. These instructors often face constraints with regard to the implementation of bilingual programs – primarily, a considerable lack of the essential instructional resources and materials. Such constraints also include pressure relating to state mandates, district central office imperatives, and the directives of school administrators. Additionally, as also revealed in the present study, the constraint of lacking adequate instructional time to accomplish learning goals is another significant obstacle. There is significant research that indicates an apparent relationship between increased time engaged in academic tasks and increased achievement. Specifically, Berliner (1990) argues that “time on task” is different from “academic time”, with the latter resulting in greater achievement gains than the former. Research literature also suggests that there is a relationship between time and learning, and that learning increases when students are optimally engaged in learning activities for greater amounts of time. However, the importance of time for learning is not honored within the transitional bilingual program where English language learners experience less academic “time on

task” than other students because they are pulled out for 90 minutes for English as a second language instruction.

Lastly, this study suggests that Bilingual/ELL teachers need to have control over the time for, and type of, instruction provided for the English language learners. In addition, the results of this study suggest these individuals also need to contribute input in regard to professional development program selection. If such constraint concerns are not addressed adequately, then teachers will inevitably be left feeling frustrated and powerless.

Verbal Persuasion Experiences

Another of the four types of Bandura’s (1977) experiences influencing self-efficacy evident in this study’s findings is “verbal persuasion”, which may consist of a pep-talk or specific performance feedback from a supervisor, colleague or students. The Bilingual/ELL teachers reported a lack of feedback and support regarding the bilingual program received from campus administrators. Consequently, Bilingual/ELL teachers also reported that they are often left to fend for themselves.

This study exposed teachers’ need for administrators and staff who are knowledgeable about Bilingual/ELL needs and culture. Administrative support reinforces teacher commitment through a sense of respect, opportunities for collaboration, professional development, and a sense shared values. A critical component in how teachers perceive their sense of teaching effectiveness is related to the support they receive from other colleagues and, more importantly, from the school’s administrators (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ashton & Webb, 1986).

How can you reach me, teach me, or in any way help me if you don't know me?

The importance of administrators' role as instructional leaders has been proposed in previous research (Gallagher, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1996). The role of the principal is instrumental in the development of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teachers who report receiving the necessary support from building principals and colleagues feel confident in their ability to teach students in low socioeconomic schools (Guksey, 1984, 1988; Tucker, et al, 2005; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005; Tennenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Thus, it is logical that Bilingual/ELL teachers who receive support from campus principals with regard to meeting the needs of the English language learners would exhibit more efficacious beliefs about instructing those specific students than teachers who do not receive the appropriate support.

Consistent with findings of effective schools research, school-level leadership appears to be a critical dimension of effective schooling for English language learners (Tournacki, & Podell, 2005). Previous research findings also indicate that teachers and administrators lacking the specific training to teach ELLs were most likely to report difficulty in communicating with parents of English language learners (Tucker, et al., 2005). Significant issues associated with the cultural background of ELLs also bear on how they learn. With this in mind, Wong Fillmore and Snow (2000) argue the following:

A critical role of teachers, campus instructional leaders is to socialize students to the demands of schools. Certainly this is made more difficult if the teacher or campus instructional leaders do not understand both the cultural and linguistic norms of the students they are serving.

Teacher training programs have undervalued the interdependence between the native and second languages and cultures (i.e., prospective teachers are told that acquiring English subsumes all other language skills and should proceed more rapidly). Furthermore, teachers have not understood the importance of validating, developing, and understanding students' home cultures and language (Wong Fillmore and Snow, 2000). For example, Varghese & Stritikus (2005) pose the following suggestion:

Given the ambiguous and contentious guidelines and policies relating to the education of ELLs, teacher education must begin to seriously consider how teachers respond and create language policy, explicitly preparing teachers to deal with the social and policy contexts in which their work will occur. (p. 73)

Without understanding the cultural and linguistic expectations of ELL students' communities, teachers, and administrators, students' learning is undermined because educators subsequently lack the ability to identify and acknowledge culturally appropriate behavior. Teachers may inadvertently squelch the motivation of ELLs to participate at all. For example, many teachers reward students questioning behaviors and active participation in discussion, but some ELLs are socialized to believe that such behavior is inappropriate in the classroom (Hakuta, 1998; Cummins, 2001a, 2001b). In addition, administrators need to understand the culture of ELL students and support teachers in working with and responding appropriately to these students.

Emotional Arousal Experiences

The final source of experiences from Bandura's four types reported is "emotional arousal" experiences. In regard to this factor, teacher participants' reported descriptions were mostly unfavorable. The Bilingual/ELL teachers reported two primary emotional responses: Frustration and disillusionments resulting from inequities in professional development opportunities, administrative support, materials and resources. Additionally, their district's unspoken message suggested Bilingual/ELL teachers and ELL students are not as valued. "Emotional arousal experiences" according to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory create mixed emotions between anxiety and depression, fear and anger, apprehension and excitement. The residual arousal from a prior experience may be miss-assigned to a prominent element in a new situation. Even the same source of physiological arousal may be interpreted differently. What is of most importance here is how these experiences are perceived and interpreted by the teachers (Bandura, 1977).

Consistent with the social context reported by the teachers in this study, Cummins (2004) has described the impact of negative discourse on Bilingual/ELL teachers and ELL students. Interaction related to diversity, bilingualism, multiculturalism, and its implications, constitute the social context within which Bilingual/ELL students must learn, and students can truly be caught in the crossfire of negative discourses (Cummins, 2001a, 2001b).

This study's findings are consistent with previous teacher efficacy research, which cites that teachers with a strong perceived self-efficacy are more likely to seek out solutions to problems, and to persevere in the face of challenges and obstacles by

expending more effort. They believe that what they do makes a difference by having an impact on their surrounding environment. This is the basic tenet of the social cognitive theory most relevant to the current study, especially with regard to the self-efficacy component. In any given instance, behavior is best predicted by the combined influence of self-efficacy and outcome beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1993, 1997).

The similarities between this study's high-efficacy bilingual teachers' traits fully support preceding research. Namely, teachers with a higher sense of efficacy adopt more effective instructional practices and realize more positive learning outcomes from their students, and would seem likely to attribute that positive change to their efforts. Teacher efficacy research findings suggest that teachers who experience positive changes in their instructional effectiveness would assume greater personal responsibility for the learning outcomes of their students. Such teachers would also express more positive attitudes about various aspects of teaching and express greater confidence in their abilities as teachers (Guskey, 1989).

All of the current study's participants were high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers whose commitment and effort appeared as supporting evidence of characteristics suggested in previous efficacy research (Bandura, 1997; Woofolk-Hoy, Ross, 1998, Gibson & Dembo, 1985; Guskey, 1981; Coladarci, 1992; Ross & Bruce, 2007). High-efficacy teachers are more likely to attempt new teaching ideas and strategies, particularly techniques that are difficult, involve risks, and require that control is shared with students (Ross, 1992).

Another matter of concern disclosed in this study was the need for specific professional development for *all* teachers and staff – not just the Bilingual/ELL teachers.

Providing ELLs with the best quality instruction must be everyone's responsibility. It is important to reiterate the notion that teacher effectiveness is not forever fixed; in fact, it is malleable, and requires an ongoing effort. Thus, through careful professional development, teachers can build instructional effectiveness over time. Professional development is an important component in creating effective schools for English language learners. The professional development initiatives must be for *all* teachers who serve ELLs. According to the Gándara national study (2005), every teacher has at least one ELL in her or his classroom.

Another finding highlighted in this study was the pernicious issue of low expectations for the ELLs. This situation may be due to a lack of understanding of the language acquisition process, or a lack of understanding the Spanish ELLs' language and ELL cultural background. An important way to raise teacher expectations is to increase student achievement by assisting teachers in the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed for success with specific student populations via effective and relevant professional development (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Smylie, 1988, 1991; Téllez & Waxman, 2006; Téllez, 2005).

What is of the utmost importance is how these experiences are perceived and interpreted by the teachers themselves (Bandura, 1977). In accordance with Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, "Emotional arousal experiences" create mixed emotions between anxiety and depression, fear and anger, apprehension and excitement. Also, residual arousal from a prior experience may be miss-assigned to a prominent element in a new situation. Even the same source of physiological arousal may be interpreted

differently. Yet again, what is of most importance is how they these experiences are perceived and interpreted by the teachers (Bandura, 1977).

This study found differences and similarities among the bilingual campuses in learning, practice, supportive school cultures, and sustainability of school practices. Previous research studies in this area also reveal a number of disturbing findings. In fact, these findings suggest that educational inequity starts early and gets progressively worse over time. A study by the Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools (2009) reported that educational inequity costs the United States \$500 billion each year. And, by the time they reach fourth grade, children living in low-income communities are already two-to-three grades behind their higher-income peers. Furthermore, statistics shown that only half of those students in low-income communities will graduate high school by age 18. Those who do graduate will perform on average at an eighth-grade level. Overall, only 1 in 10 students growing up in poverty will graduate from college. Educational inequity also prevents children from fulfilling their potential. It limits life choices, professional options, and incomes, and weakens families and communities. Because children in low-income communities are predominantly children of color, they also face the added burden of societal low expectations and discrimination. Inequities in distribution have profound implications for the poor and minority children (Collier & Thomas, 2002).

This study disclosed the lack of adequate educational programs, instruction, resources, unfair assessment, and exclusion of parents and community within school districts. Major differences disclosed between the 3 transitional bilingual and the dual language campuses were that transitional bilingual campuses offer bilingual/ELLs

English instruction (ESL) through “ESL Pull-Out” classes, while dual-language students received native language instruction and support for three to four years. ESL “Pull-Out” instruction has been found to be among the least successful of instructional strategies for these students (Collier & Thomas, 2002). The dual language campus provides English as a second language to bilingual students with certified Bilingual/ELL teachers who speak the Spanish language and understand language acquisition development process. The dual language program provides the maintenance of the native Spanish language and English as a second language development for five years. In contrast, the bilingual transitional campuses provide ESL teachers who are not Bilingual/ELL certified, do not speak the ELLs native language, the teachers do not necessarily possess the required knowledge of the language acquisition process. Furthermore, some are unfamiliar of ELLs’ cultural background. The lack of knowledge regarding the fundamental characteristics of the ELLs’ primary language prohibits those crucial teachable moments that build valuable, lasting connections between the primary language and English (Collier & Thomas, 2002; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Maxwell, 2005).

Consistent with social, racial, ethnic or linguistic research, this study’s participants disclose that English language learners in transitional bilingual campuses are isolated on three campuses. This situation raises the concern that educational inequities are perpetuating the ELLs’ lack of academic success. Research on desegregation has established that minority students schooled in desegregated settings tend to have better occupational outcomes and overall life chances. Sociologists often explain this phenomenon as the impact of social capital which has negative outcomes. Therefore, one reason for concern about racial, ethnic, or linguistic isolation is potential effect on

limiting access to important social networks. However, a more immediate impact on linguistic isolation is the lack of appropriate English language models, which can result in both reduced opportunities to hear and interact with the language, and fewer opportunities to understand the ways in which the language is actually used in social and in academic contexts (August & Hakuta, 1997). Both are important features in development of high level of linguistic skill.

According to previous research, English language learners are more likely than any other children to be taught by less effective teachers (Gándara & Richardson, 2009). Wong-Fillmore and Snow's (2000) study, entitled *What Teachers Need to know about Language*, outlines the critical knowledge base that teachers and administrators implementing bilingual programs must have regarding language learning to effectively teach English language learners. Researchers argue that by knowing the fundamental characteristics of words in the primary language of the student's vocabulary, as well as their methods of word construction, teachers can facilitate more rapid acquisition of English vocabulary and word construction. In addition, research supports the notion that if teachers can offer greater support with reference to the students' home language, the higher long-term academic attainment and likelihood linguistic interdependence (Cummins, 1986, 2001a, 2001b; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Teachers and schools make judgment calls about students' abilities based on information accessible to them, including test scores. For instance, Varghese & Stitikus (2005) state the following:

Teachers are not seen as reproducers of a particular policy but are viewed simultaneously as agents who make specific choices based

on their own histories and their evolving professional lives as well as being constrained or shape to a content extent by the contexts in which they find themselves. (p. 75)

Schools make class placement decisions based – or at least in part – on students' standardized test scores. Moreover, when they do not speak the language of the child, teachers cannot communicate with the students' parents, and often have little other information to rely on; hence, test scores can take on even greater importance (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005)

Dissonance between the sociolinguistic reality of the U.S. and complex bilingualism has serious implications in the education of English language learners (who are the most rapidly growing population in the United States). The ambiguous federal guidelines related to English Language education and bilingual education have forced local districts and teachers to become the major shapers of the education for language and for the English language learners. This particular responsibility is typically viewed as dealing with a bundle of policies (what and how language is taught), evaluation policy (the assessment of the program and of students), and community (how the community is integrated). Thus, since teachers continue to assume increasing responsibility in shaping mandates related to Bilingual/ELLs' education, teachers' professional development must be adjusted accordingly (Varghese & Stritikus, 2005, p. 74). In fact, as suggested by educational research on the education of bilingual/ELLs, it is particularly important to offer supports that emphasize building linguistic and cultural strengths, and educational policy and practices. The outcome most closely associated with educational inequity for

bilingual learners is the continually growing academic achievement gap (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). The number of inconsistencies and areas of disconnection in instructional practices, including unreasonable schedules for ELLs, perpetuate the educational inequities experienced by the bilingual/ELL students. Between the various “ESL pull-outs” and Responses to Intervention (also known as RTI), the typical ELL student’s instructional day is often wastefully consumed by activities that bear little connection the areas of concern highlighted within the researcher literature.

Conclusion

How does one utilize the lessons learned in the current study and apply them to the advancement of Bilingual/ELL professional development in order to improve instructional quality for English language learners? First, educators must understand the normal variations in linguistically diverse ELLs. Educators must, for instance, clearly understand two critical edicts: (a) The ultimate goal of education is the improved learning of *all* students, and (b) that teacher quality is the most important factor to that end (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 1996; 1998; 2000, Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002). Therefore, many attempts must be made to improve the overall teaching profession via varied and relevant professional development programs and activities. The need for preparing teachers to work effectively with every student is now recognized as an ever more challenging endeavor, especially considering the nature of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Hence, focus of this particular study: Professional learning experiences for

Bilingual/ELL teachers, including professional development program content that meets their individual needs.

In recognizing the importance of professional-development for *all* teachers in improving the learning of *all* students, many studies have explored the important question of what makes the process of teacher training effective. Another crucial implication that needs to be considered is the way we approach the professional development of teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Varghese & Stritikus, 2005). The present study also sought to find answers to this important question, with a few important features that distinguish it from the previous ones (mainly the focus being the Bilingual/ELL teachers and their ELL students).

First, in addressing the topic of professional development for teachers, this study was grounded in Bandura's four kinds of experiences that influence efficacy (i.e., mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and emotional arousal) to provide a framework for understanding the perceptions of professional development held by the Bilingual/ELL teacher participants. Second, the study's focus related directly to the perceptions of high-efficacy Bilingual/ELL teachers' perceptions of effective professional development. Finally, taking into account the changing nature of current classrooms in the US, this study specifically investigated the impact of professional Bilingual/ELL teacher training aimed towards meeting the challenges brought forth by the increasing linguistic and culturally diversity among ELL student populations.

Recommendations

This study's results suggest three areas for the improvement of Bilingual/ELL teacher professional development: (1) Professional development needs to support Bilingual/ELL teachers' specific needs; (2) Administrators & staff must be knowledgeable about Bilingual/ELL program needs; and, (3) Inequities must be addressed among bilingual campuses and, by extension, between bilingual campuses and other campuses within a district. The demands placed on Bilingual/ELL teachers who face a double linguistic demand in their classroom are made clear in this study, which makes for an important contribution to the field.

Future Research

This study's literature review indicates the scarcity of research exclusively targeting teachers' professional development needs. Thus, future research in this specific area is sorely needed. Another area that may spark significant advancements in this area would be investigations related to possible relationships between Bilingual/ELL teachers' sense of efficacy and students' behavior in the classroom. Such studies should be conducted using a variety of methods including observations. Additional qualitative research studies are also needed to better understand Bilingual/ELL teachers' needs and how they might best be addressed (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Labone, 2004, Shaughnessy, 2004; Enderlin-Lampe, 2002; Coladarci, 1992; Poulou, 2007; Wheatley, 2005)

This study's current findings further suggest future research in several areas that may advance the instructional effectiveness of all teachers of ELLs. Some of the possible topics for future research include the following:

- Studies of collective efficacy among Bilingual/ELL teachers.
- Quantitative research investigating similarities and differences in academic achievement among dual language and transitional bilingual program models particularly for the Spanish native speaker students.
- Qualitative studies of teachers of ELLs' experiences when implementing curriculum changes for students with diverse needs (English language learners) and how changes in classroom practices affect their sense of efficacy.
- Quantitative or mixed-methods studies that address the quality of teachers coming into ELL teaching.

Three decades of research have shown a consistent relationship between student achievement and teachers' sense of efficacy. The emergent scholarship investigating the influence of professional development on teachers of English language learners holds tremendous promise. More importantly, research supports the notion that teachers' efficacy beliefs can be altered by professional development, especially if such activities utilize Bandura's four sources of efficacy information (i.e., mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and affective). With the increasing English language population in the U.S., and the ever-present accountability demands of NCLB, it behooves district and school administrators to begin to implement a program of professional development that targets all teachers of

English language learners. To ignore such an imperative – particularly in light of the present research findings – while claiming to provide a quality education for *all* students constitutes administrative ignorance, at best, or flagrant hypocrisy in its worse form.

Concluding Remarks

English language learners represent a growing demographic within the overall U.S. student population. And, if educators hope to meet these students' educational needs, teachers must first understand who these students are and where they come from. The teachers in this study have that understanding. Further, their commitment and thoughtfulness left me inspired and optimistic that there is hope that the goal of closing the achievement gap between the bilingual/ELL student population and their Anglo counterparts can be reached. At the same time, I have become more keenly aware of the enormous amount of work left to be done, and I am convinced that changes must be made if we are to provide all teachers with the tools and knowledge they need to successfully educate what August & Shannahan (2006) identify as the nation's 5 million ELL learners.

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APPENDIX A

CENTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

June 11, 2010

Ms. Gloria E. Gomez
c/o Dr. Patricia E. Holland
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Ms. Gomez:

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "Bilingual Teacher Self-Efficacy and Professional Development" on June 4, 2010, according to institutional guidelines.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your proposal protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately respond to those contingencies made by the Committee, and your project has been approved. However reapplication will be required:

1. Annually
2. Prior to any change in the approved protocol
3. Upon development of the unexpected problems or unusual complications

Thus, if you will be still collecting data under this project on **May 1, 2011** you must reapply to this Committee for approval before this date if you wish to prevent an interruption of your data collection procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

for
Dr. Scott Stevenson, Chairman
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: (1) All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document. If you are using a consent document that requires subject signatures, remember that signed copies must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, or 5 years for externally supported projects. Signed consents from student projects will be retained by the faculty sponsor. Faculty are responsible for retaining signed consents for their own projects; however, if the faculty leaves the university, access must be possible for UH in the event of an agency audit. (2) Research investigators will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects and others.

Protocol Number: 10366-01

Full Review _____

Expedited Review X

APPENDIX B
DISTRICT APPROVAL LETTER



DEER PARK
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
A Texas RECOGNIZED School District

203 Ivy Avenue
Deer Park, Texas 77536
832.668.7000
www.dpod.org

Bilingual Teachers' Perception of Their Effectiveness and Professional Development
University of Houston, College of Education
Gloria E. Gómez, Doctoral Candidate

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the bilingual teachers' education and their view of their effectiveness and professional development. Teachers' effectiveness or "Self-efficacy" is an important characteristic for teacher success, (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Differences in teachers' ability to perform at the highest levels of achievement show wide variances in self-efficacy. Investigations of possible correlation among bilingual teachers' self-efficacy and professional development can contribute a knowledge base for bilingual education and teacher efficacy which have great implications in student achievement. Understanding the dynamics of self-efficacy in this selected group of high performing bilingual teachers may illustrate the skills of educators who persistently set high expectations for student performances. Teacher efficacy is an important indicator because individual perceptions of the school's vision and mission are essential to the success of school goals; a significant factor when looking at ways to raise student achievement. Clearly, the efficacy of the teacher is one of the most significant factors in student achievement. These areas that investigate selected groups such as bilingual teachers are underdeveloped, and such research adds to the current knowledge base, and provides additional information that may in the future studies, direct additional research. Investigations of bilingual teacher education and teachers' view of their effectiveness and professional development can contribute a knowledge base for bilingual education and teacher efficacy.



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Initial Research Question(s)

What are teachers' perceptions of effective professional development in a given school(s)? To what extent do teachers' levels of self-efficacy affect their perception of professional development? What resources, means of delivery and organizational support at the school level do teachers perceive as promoting effective professional development?

The methods and/or techniques

The methods and/or techniques that will be implemented to carry out my study are; a mixed methods designed research with teacher survey and bilingual teacher interviews. *The bilingual teacher survey group will consist of all DPISD elementary bilingual teachers and the interviews will be volunteers and will consist of 5-7 bilingual teachers, principals and assistant principal.*

Deer Park ISD Consent:

Victor E. White, Jr.

Printed Name: Victor White, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

5-12-10

Date


Signature: Victor White, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

APPENDIX C
TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

BILINGUAL TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Age _____ Country of Birth: _____

Campus name: _____ Grade(s) teach: _____

1. **Circle** the opinion that best describes your educational level.

Bachelor

Bachelor and some graduate credit

Masters

Beyond Masters

Doctorate

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have? _____

3. How many years have you taught in bilingual education? _____

4. Identify your Spanish proficiency level (please circle one) _____

Very fluent

Fluent

Average
average

Below

No fluency

5. In which areas do you hold a teaching certificate? (Please circle all that apply or fill in if it is not listed.)

Bilingual
Elementary

ESL

Secondary Education
Management

Supervisor

Mid

Diagnostician
Childhood

Principalship

Early

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Informed Participant Consent

High Efficacy Bilingual Teachers' Perception of Effective Professional Development

My name is Gloria E. Gómez, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Houston. As part of my dissertation at the U of H, I am conducting a research study on bilingual teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and their professional development experiences under the supervision of Professor Dr. Patricia Holland of the U of H. You were selected as a possible participant because of the program you are currently assigned to teach.

Purpose of the Study

Investigations of bilingual teacher education and teachers' views of their effectiveness and professional development can contribute a knowledge base for bilingual education and teacher efficacy.

Explanation of Procedures

I am asking that you answer a survey, consisting of questions relevant to your self-perceived abilities as a teacher (confidence in personal teaching.) The survey should take about 10 minute. In addition, I am asking you to answer some demographic questions that should take approximately 5 minutes. I am also asking that you volunteer to be interviewed at some times after the survey that are convenient for you. Please check the box at the bottom of this letter that indicates your willingness to be interviewed. The interviews will take place approximately 3-5 times and take about 45-60 minutes each. There will be approximately 50-60 total participants in the survey and approximately 5-10 in the interview process.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

I don't foresee any potential harm, except that some may feel uncomfortable talking about the difficulties in your teaching experiences, teaching practices or professional development needs. You may wonder if anything that you say in the interviews may be reported back to the school staff. ***Be assured, they will not!*** What is said in response to interview questions is your choice and you can decline to answer any questions. No names will appear on the interviewer's notes, and because the interviewer will respect your privacy and the confidentiality of your interview responses. Therefore, there is little risk in your participation.

Benefits

While participants will ***not*** directly benefit from their participation in this study, your participation may benefit in a greater awareness, knowledge and motivation to improve bilingual teacher professional development which in turn will improve student learning outcomes.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private and kept at my home. Only my advisor and I will have access to them. Responses will ***not*** be shared with the any district staff member or administer. The data coding system will generate 6-8 alpha-digit numbers (not the date or social security number. The consent letter which will record your actual name and signature will then have a code assigned to each person and only that code will be on the survey and interview data.

I, (the researcher) will be the only person with access to this code and only the code will appear on the survey and interview data. I, (the researcher) will be the only one to see the actual match of names and coded data. Any report used will ***not*** include any information that will make it possible to identify a school or an individual participant. Upon completion of the study, the collected forms will be destroyed and any links to identify teachers will be stored for three years. I may publish results of the study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics will not be used in any of the publications.

Withdrawal from the Study

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may decide to stop participating in this project at any time. ***You may decline any interview request.*** Your withdrawal will not affect your current or future relations with your school, the University of Houston.

Who to Contact and Questions

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (832)-573-3182 or gloria.r.gomez@gmail.com or my advisor Dr. Patricia Holland at (713) 743-5034 or patholland@uh.edu.

What Signing This Form Means

By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in this research project. The purpose, procedures to be used, as well as, the potential risks and benefits of your participation have been explained to you in detail. You can refuse to participate or withdraw from this research project at anytime. ***You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.***

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and understand that my participation is voluntary. I consent to participate in the study.

☐

I volunteer to be interviewed for this study (agree to be audio-taped).

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. All procedures have been explained to me and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me.
4. Any benefits have been explained to me.

5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact, Gloria E. Gómez at 832-663-2000 or I may also contact Dr. Patricia Holland, faculty sponsor, at 713/743-5034.
6. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.
7. All information is obtained in connection with this project and that can be identified with me will remain confidential as far as possible within legal limits. Information gained from this study can be identified with me may be released to no one other than the primary investigator, Gloria E. Gómez and her faculty sponsor, Dr. Patricia Holland. The results may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations without identifying me by name.

I HAVE READ (OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME) THE CONTENTS OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS. I HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS. I GIVE MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I HAVE RECEIVED (OR WILL RECEIVE) A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR MY RECORDS AND FUTURE REFERENCE.

Printed Name of Participant

Today's Date

Participant Signature

I HAVE READ THIS FORM TO THE SUBJECT AND/OR THE SUBJECT HAS READ THIS FORM. AN EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH WAS GIVEN AND QUESTIONS FROM THE SUBJECT WERE SOLICITED AND ANSWERED TO THE SUBJECT'S SATISFACTION. IN MY JUDGMENT, THE SUBJECT HAS DEMONSTRATED COMPREHENSION OF THE INFORMATION.

Printed Name of Research/Study Investigator

Today's Date

Signature of Research/Study Investigator

APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANT RESPONSE TABLE

Table 1: Participant Response Frequency Table

| Participant | Category 1 | Category 2 | Category 3 | Category 4 | Category 5 |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| A003 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| A004 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| B017 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| B018 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| B019 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| C002 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C003 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| C016 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| D002 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| D003 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 |

Note: This table reflects data from the ten participants' response to each category of the interviews.